



Annual Impact Report
2025

**Every aspect
of our year**

Sharing our brilliant year...



Aspect (Autism Spectrum Australia) 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 2025, 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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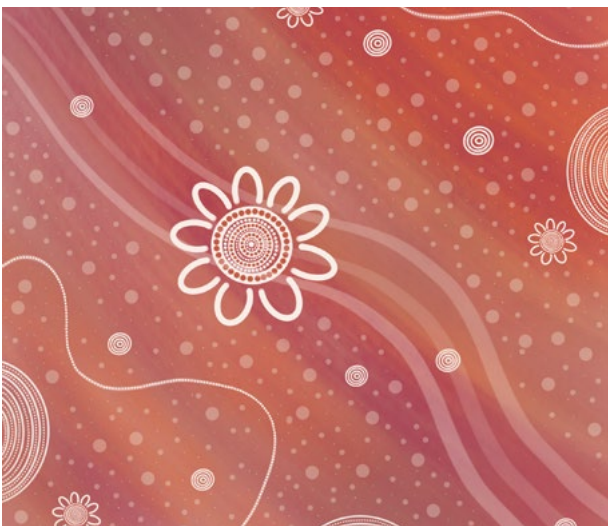
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Aspect (Autism Spectrum Australia) acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the Traditional Custodians of the many lands on which we work and live. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.



Our Aboriginal Affairs strategy

In 2025, Aspect introduced its Aboriginal Affairs Strategy, guided by Aboriginal-led co-design and strong governance. The strategy focuses on strengthening culturally responsive education and services, and building a culturally safe and responsive workplace, while deepening partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to support equitable access.

We thank Brittney Paulson for this inspired artwork.

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.



ASPECT AT 60

As Aspect approaches its 60th year in 2026, this marks a significant milestone in the organisation's history. Founded in 1966, Aspect is a not-for-profit organisation that has grown to become one of Australia's largest autism-specific service providers, delivering one of the world's most extensive autism-specific educational programs.



Building momentum from strong foundations

2025 has been a year of momentum for Aspect – a year where purpose, partnership and innovation have come together to strengthen our impact.

As we concluded our 2023–2025 Strategic Plan, we continued to translate vision into action, advancing outcomes across each of our four core strategies.

We delivered outstanding progress – strengthening autism-specific education, transforming Individual and Community Services (ICS) and advancing ground-breaking research.

Partnerships continued to grow, with universities, businesses and community organisations extending our reach and impact. Autism Friendly initiatives and campaigns, including World Autism Understanding Day (WAUD), deepened community understanding and inclusion. Innovation projects such as the opening of Aspect Hills Shire School and the design and planning of the ICS Hub reimaged how services can be delivered.

These achievements are outlined throughout this report, and I am proud of the work of all staff across Aspect who have brought them to life.

In a changing and complex landscape, our commitment to delivering high-quality services, informed by research and co-designed with Autistic people and their families, has remained constant.

Our transformation journey continues across the organisation, including the development of a new five-year Strategic Plan, alongside a new vision and organisational values – all delivered in partnership with Autistic people.

Leading inclusive education

With the increasing focus on inclusive education for students on the autism spectrum, much of our work this year focused on demonstrating the important role that Aspect Education plays.

Aspect's autism-specific satellite education model, which embeds autism-specific classrooms within

mainstream schools, represents a unique and proven approach to integrated education. It addresses systemic gaps and delivers strong outcomes for students on the autism spectrum, while also contributing to inclusive culture within host schools.

With close to 60 years' experience supporting students on the autism spectrum, Aspect is well placed to support the broader sector to build capability in supporting Autistic students. Aspect's education model can play a significant role in the future of inclusive education.

Individual and Community Services in a changing landscape

Across ICS, we continued to navigate a changing external environment.

Changes to NDIS funding created challenges, including adjustments to travel costs, no price increases for therapy services, changes to funding periods, delays in practitioner registration and increased market competition.

Despite these pressures, ICS continued to provide quality supports across assessments, therapy, positive behaviour support and adult community services.

We also engaged in national discussions on the future of foundational supports for children under 9 years following the announcement of the Thriving Kids Program, contributing our position through a written submission and participation in the inquiry process.

Evolving as an organisation

As the environment continues to evolve, so too does Aspect.

Together with the Executive Team and members of the Aspect Advisory Council, the Board developed and endorsed a bold new five-year Strategic Plan.

Given the ambitions of this new plan, we revised our vision to reflect our goals and introduced new values to guide how we work with each other, the people we support and our partners, funders and suppliers.



A strong financial foundation

Aspect has maintained a position of financial strength, with revenue exceeding \$153.5 million and a Total Comprehensive Income of \$10.4 million.

Fundraising efforts once again delivered vital support, raising \$7.15 million.

We are deeply grateful to our supporters, whose generosity enables us to extend our reach and impact.

Digital transformation

As the organisation grows and evolves, so too must our systems and digital infrastructure.

Our focus has been on establishing and strengthening our digital foundations, while uplifting internal capability.

This work is enabling us to build momentum, reduce risk and equip our people with the tools and knowledge they need to drive sustainable change.

At the same time, we continue to strengthen our cyber security to manage the ongoing and increasing risk of cyber attacks.

Continuing to build for the future

We are nearing completion of our Capital Works program, reinforcing our commitment to autism-friendly learning environments.

In 2023, we opened the new Aspect Hills Shire School, welcoming 24 students and bringing our total to 10 schools. We also delivered key refurbishments across multiple campuses, alongside new classrooms, outdoor learning spaces and staff facilities.

Construction also commenced on our new Port Macquarie campus, which will further expand access to autism-specific education for students from Kindergarten to Year 6.

Strengthening our Board

In 2025, we welcomed Kathi Boorman, who joined the Aspect Board in December.

Kathi brings more than 30 years of leadership experience across government and community-managed mental health services, along with a strong track record in program design and organisational leadership. She also brings lived experience as a family member of an Autistic person and a deep commitment to person-centred support.

Sadly, we farewelled Pam Rutledge, who retired from the Board in May.

Pam joined the Board in 2018 and served on the People, Culture & Safety (PCS) Committee and as Chair of the Governance Committee. I thank Pam for her significant contribution during her time with Aspect.

The journey 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 ongoing 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 work to drive meaningful change and shape a future where Autistic people are seen, valued and have access to the supports they need to live, learn, work and play.

Paul Khoury
Chair of the Aspect Board



A year of progress and impact

Aspect is on the cusp of celebrating 60 years.

Over this time, much has changed. The prevalence of autism has increased significantly – from 1 in 70 in 2005 to 1 in 40 today – driven by greater awareness, broader diagnostic criteria and improvements in diagnosis. We are also seeing increased adult diagnosis and greater recognition of previously underdiagnosed groups, including girls.

There has been a shift from the medical model, which focused on deficits, to the social model, which recognises strengths, removes barriers and embraces diversity. Funding models have also evolved, moving from block funding to individualised funding under the NDIS.

The neurodiversity movement has further shaped this landscape, with the principle of “nothing about us without us” reflected in the growing number of Autistic voices driving advocacy, increasing participation in research and contributing to co-production and co-development.

We are also seeing a broader shift from individual-focused intervention to social and systemic change, with an emphasis on inclusive education, workplaces, services, places and spaces.

A changing environment

The environment in which we operate continues to evolve.

The development of the first National Autism Strategy has been a major step, highlighting the need for systemic change to support the diverse needs of Autistic Australians. In January this year, the National Autism Strategy was released, to be delivered over seven years alongside the First Action Plan, which lays the foundations for achieving the commitments outlined in the strategy.

In August, the Australian Government announced the Thriving Kids program as a \$4 billion, five-year initiative to reform support for children aged 8-years and under with developmental delay or autism. The announcement generated significant discussion, leading to the establishment of an Advisory Committee and an inquiry to gather community input and feedback. The rollout is expected to commence from October 2026.

I am immensely proud of the role Aspect has played in contributing to both these developments – collaborating or advising on recommendations under the First Action Plan, as well as making a submission and attending the inquiry for Thriving Kids.

In addition, we continued to deliver key government initiatives, including the Sector Capacity Building Program and Building Tots.

We were also successful in our tender for the Side-by-Side program, a peer support initiative that will commence in 2026.

Our autism services

In 2025, student numbers grew by 3 per cent, driven in part by the opening of Aspect Hills Shire School and increasing interest in Distance Education.

We concluded another year of the Aspect Learning and Improvement Collaborative (ALIC) program, including engagement with Dr Lyn Sharratt. The focus now shifts to deepening teaching pedagogies that support continuous improvement in student learning outcomes.

As part of the ongoing transformation of Individual and Community Services, we introduced a new participant portal for Therapy and Positive Behaviour Support, improving access to services while enabling more efficient delivery through better data and scheduling.



Building autism-friendly environments and employment pathways

Making places and spaces autism friendly remains a key goal for Aspect.

In 2025, we grew our Autism Friendly work in Victoria through Information, Linkages and Capacity (ILC) Building funding, working with sporting organisations, arts and culture, councils and public spaces to create inclusive environments for Autistic people.

Employment continues to be a key outcome for many Autistic people; however, many workplaces are not well set up to support them. In response, we developed the foundations of Aspect Autism Friendly Employment services.

This work will focus on supporting organisations to become autism friendly across the full employment journey – from recruitment and onboarding through to ongoing support for Autistic employees.

Working in partnership with Autistic people

Partnership with Autistic people remains central to what we do at Aspect.

In 2025, we continued to ensure that the voices of lived experience are reflected at every level of the organisation, through the development of a new Autism Action Plan.

This plan will bring together our priorities and commitments across Aspect, supporting Aspect students, ICS participants, people supported by Aspect Employment, our staff and the broader Autistic community. It will align with Aspect policies and the core outcome areas of the National Autism Strategy.

Looking ahead: Strategic Plan 2026–2030

As outlined in the Chair report, during 2025 we worked with the Aspect Board, Executive and members of the Advisory Council to develop our new 2026–2030 Strategic Plan.

The new strategy builds on the successes of the current plan and is guided by four key pillars: Influence, Access, Strength and Impact.

The evidence-based services and strong systems we have established now underpin our focus on measurable outcomes (Impact) and organisational resilience (Strength).

Our partnerships and inclusion initiatives will continue to evolve into system-level collaboration and policy leadership (Influence), while innovation, digital investment and inclusive design will open new pathways for participation (Access).

Over the next five years, this strategy will support Aspect to evolve from a trusted provider to a transformative leader.

With gratitude

As we reflect on another year of progress and 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.

Jacqui Borland
Chief Executive Officer

Our strategic plan

Aspect continues to be one of Australia's leading providers of autism-specific education and support services. Our 2023–2025 Strategic Plan shaped and progressed our vision, while building on our 60 years of experience in delivering evidence-based knowledge, informed by lived experience. Our priorities reflected the changes in the external environment and a renewed focus on innovation to take us into the future.

OUR PURPOSE

**a different
brilliant®**

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



Our values

Our values guide the way we work, connect and grow. We chose the word THRIVE because it reflects what we want for everyone at Aspect – for Autistic people, their families and our staff. It's about growing, achieving and connecting.



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.



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



\$153.58m

Schools and satellite classes



10 schools
100+ satellites



Locations

75



Students
(main campus and satellite)

1,308

Participants



3,084

Page views on website
(across the year)

1.95 million



Social media followers

228k



People reached
through all media

239 million



Podcast
downloads

37,868

People receiving
external newsletter

8,042

Media
mentions

1.71k

Therapy
hours

57,184

Assessment
NPS*

+81

Assessments
completed



687

Teletherapy hours provided

4,265



Autism Friendly
training NPS*

+77

Workshops and
webinar participants

479

Relationship
NPS*

+62

* 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 2025, the Aspect Learning and Improvement Collaborative (ALIC) continued to drive meaningful improvement across Aspect's schools and satellite classrooms. ALIC is a shared framework across Aspect schools, strengthening teaching practice, building leadership capability and improving outcomes for Autistic students.

Strengthening learning through the ALIC program

This year marked an important milestone with the publication of ALIC case studies, capturing the progress made across the network and their impact on students. The ALIC Learning Fair showcased this work, inviting educators from across sectors to connect, share and learn alongside Aspect staff.



Building professional capability

ALIC provides ongoing, structured professional learning tailored to autism-specific education. Across Aspect schools, teams are working more consistently and collaboratively, with a clear focus on student progress.

By using student information more effectively and strengthening team discussions about learning and support, schools are bringing greater clarity and consistency to classroom practice. Leaders reported growing staff confidence, stronger instructional leadership and more intentional planning aligned to student needs.

"From isolated practice to collective responsibility – a shared language and consistent approach to teaching and learning have made all the difference."

MICHELLE ZIKMUNDOVSKY
Principal, Aspect Western Sydney School

Embedding consistent practice and collaboration

Key improvement practices are now embedded across schools, helping to make student progress more visible and ensuring earlier and more targeted support, where needed. Teachers are increasingly confident in explaining what they are doing, why they are doing it and how it supports each student's learning.

The Learning Fair highlighted this collective progress, with schools sharing examples of growth and impact. By welcoming educators from other sectors, Aspect strengthened cross-sector collaboration and reinforced its leadership in autism-specific education.

IMPACT

950

Staff delivering ALIC improvement practices

15%

Growth in students demonstrating independent literacy skills

33%

Growth in staff capability to use assessment evidence

49%

Growth in capability in evidence-informed teaching and learning practice

42%

Growth in leadership capability

1.

Strong foundations in a landmark first year: Aspect Hills Shire School

In 2025, Aspect proudly opened Aspect Hills Shire School, expanding access to specialist education for Autistic students in Sydney's growing Hills region.





The school's purpose-built facilities were recognised with the 2025 Master Builders Association Excellence in Construction Award.

In its inaugural year, the school, led by Principal Shane Morris, welcomed 24 students, who were supported by a team of nine educators and three support staff. The education team established a calm, structured learning environment designed to nurture student success. From the outset, the focus was on predictable routines, clear expectations and personalised supports, enabling students to transition confidently and build strong foundations for learning.

Guided by the vision "empowering every mind, embracing every difference, encouraging growth together," the school community focused on learning and wellbeing. Across the year, students developed positive peer relationships, strengthened communication skills and demonstrated growing confidence in their learning.

"Our first year has been about building strong foundations – not only in learning, but in trust, connection and high expectations for every student. We are proud of the progress our students have made and the collaborative culture we have established with families."

SHANE MORRIS
Principal, Aspect Hills Shire School

Official opening

A significant milestone was the school's official opening, attended by more than 100 guests including families, Aspect Executive and Board members, community leaders and local Members of Parliament.

The Deputy Premier and Minister for Education and Early Learning, the Hon. Prue Car MP, shared a congratulatory video message welcoming the school to Western Sydney's education landscape. The Hon Warren Kirby MP, Member for Riverstone, spoke about the importance of specialist education in meeting the needs of the growing Hills community.



A parent address during the ceremony reflected on the positive impact of access to autism-specific education and reinforced the importance of expanding specialist school options in the region.

Student engagement and support

Student engagement was a strong outcome of the foundation year, with the school achieving a 93 per cent attendance rate.

Aspect's integrated education and therapy model was embedded from the outset. Onsite Aspect Therapy supported 16 students, ensuring close alignment between therapeutic goals and Individual Education Plans and strengthening collaboration between educators and therapists.

Investment in learning and play environments including communication boards, active play equipment, and enhanced shared spaces supported student participation, independence and communication across the school day.

Another key milestone was the establishment of the Hills Shire School Parents and Friends Committee. The Committee has already strengthened partnerships between families and the school, playing a central role in the success of the school's Christmas Concert, a celebratory conclusion to the inaugural year.

Growing demand

Interest in Aspect Hills Shire School was strong, with well-attended tours and information sessions throughout the year. Enrolments are projected to grow to 48 students in 2026, with the school community expected to double in size.

The successful establishment of Aspect Hills Shire School reflects Aspect's ongoing commitment to expanding high-quality, autism-specific education. With strong foundations now in place, the school is well positioned for continued growth and impact in the years ahead.





On the field: 15th Aspect Schools Sports Carnival

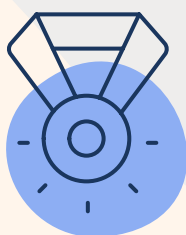
The 15th Annual Schools Sports Carnival brought together students, teachers and volunteers at Sydney Olympic Park on 17 October, with more than 500 students and staff participating.

Students took part in obstacle courses, sprints, tug-of-war, long jump, high jump and relay races, and cheered on the mascot race. The day commenced with each school presenting its war cry, with Aspect Hunter School receiving the Spirit of Aspect Award for participation. Aspect Central Coast School was named overall winner.

"It's a wonderful day for our young people, a chance to get together, have fun and feel part of something special."

PARENT OF ASPECT STUDENT

Thank you to the staff, families and volunteers whose planning and support contributed to the success of the event.



Improving systems and processes

As part of the Individual and Community Services transformation program to be more sustainable and improve staff experiences and participant outcomes, this year the Therapy and Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) teams worked closely with the Business Solutions team to launch a participant portal for enquiries.

The portal provides participants, families/carers and referrers with an easy, online way to sign up for Therapy and PBS services. Managers and operational leaders are provided with richer data, allowing participants to access services sooner.

The portal includes an availability feature for participants' families to update details and availability at any time, allowing the team to book therapists more efficiently. It also assists with targeting locations where participants need services, allowing Aspect to expand its reach over time.

The portal is another example of how the transformation program offers a streamlined experience for participants and supports staff to deliver services efficiently.



Supporting Aboriginal students through culture and connection

In October 2025, Aspect Central Coast School welcomed The Hon. Kate Washington MP, Minister for Disability Inclusion and Minister for Families and Communities, to mark the launch of a new initiative supporting Aboriginal students on the autism spectrum.

The visit began with a smoking ceremony and an Acknowledgement of Country, paying respect to Elders past and present.

Research shows that Aboriginal children on the autism spectrum are underdiagnosed and underrepresented in support programs, often due to cultural, geographic and systemic barriers.

Aspect was awarded \$65,000 under the NSW Government's Disability Advocacy Futures Program (DAFP) to develop culturally responsive education resources for Aboriginal students on the autism spectrum.

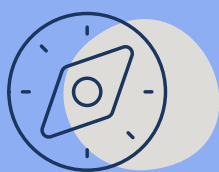
The project, Development of Resources to Empower Autistic Aboriginal Students in Education, is being delivered across Aspect Central Coast School and Aspect Hunter School, which support some of the highest proportions of Aboriginal students across Aspect's network. Currently, 11 per cent of students at Central Coast and up to 20 per cent across Hunter campuses identify as Aboriginal.

Co-designed with Aboriginal families, Elders and local educators, the initiative strengthens cultural inclusion, family engagement and learning outcomes through community-led resources and training. Aspect worked with Aboriginal Education Consultant, Peter Coombes, to embed Aboriginal perspectives on learning, family and community connection into the curriculum, with a focus on cultural identity, belonging and respect for difference.

Teachers from Aspect Central Coast School and Aspect Hunter School spent three days on Country with local Elders. More than 900 staff participated in cultural responsiveness workshops.

Aspect employs Indigenous Liaison Officers to support Aboriginal students and families and strengthen relationships between schools and local communities.

This initiative builds on Aspect's Aboriginal Education Strategy, reinforcing equity, cultural recognition and meaningful partnerships with community.



Navigating the forest

How early support empowered one family on their autism journey

When Pat and her husband Alan first began parenting a child on the autism spectrum, they felt as though they had stepped into a dense, dark forest without a map.

"Every parent wants their child to thrive and be happy," Pat said. "But without guidance, that forest can feel overwhelming and full of uncertainty."

Pat and Alan are parents to three boys – Hayden, Brendan and Jono. Hayden and Jono were both diagnosed as Autistic at three years of age. Like many families, Pat and Alan were navigating unfamiliar territory and learning as they went.

A challenging start

Hayden, their first child, was an energetic and curious toddler. He struggled to sit still, found it hard to listen and experienced challenges forming friendships in early childhood settings.

"Parent–teacher meetings were reactive," Pat recalled. "They were triggered by challenging behaviours. As parents, we felt helpless. We didn't have solutions, only apologies."

When their paediatrician suggested Aspect as a potential kindergarten option, Pat admitted she felt hesitant.

"We didn't really understand what autism meant yet," she said. "I remember thinking, how could our happy little boy fit into a school full of children with autism?"

What changed her mind was a simple but powerful statement from an Aspect enrolments coordinator: "We'd like to help Hayden learn to learn."



Transitioning with confidence

Midway through Year 1, teachers began conversations with Pat about transitioning Hayden to mainstream schooling. With careful planning, collaboration and ongoing support, the move was successful. In time, Jono followed a similar path.

These transitions reflected the foundations built in those early years – foundations grounded in understanding, structure and partnership.

Today, Hayden, now 17, is exploring his passion for visual arts, while Jono is thriving in mainstream schooling.

Empowering the whole family

Looking back, Pat no longer sees those early years as a time of fear, but of growth, learning and possibility. What once felt like a dark, uncharted forest became a landscape with pathways, signposts and trusted guides.

"The special needs setting wasn't just about supporting our children," Pat reflected. "It empowered us as parents."

"Aspect helped us see our children for who they are, not what they struggle with. They didn't just support our boys – they walked alongside our whole family."

We thank Pat, Alan, Hayden and Jono for sharing their journey. Their experience highlights the importance of early support, strong partnerships and understanding each child for who they are.

Feeling seen and understood

From the moment Hayden started at Aspect South East Sydney School, Pat felt a sense of relief.

"For the first time, we felt seen and understood – without judgement," she said.

Aspect's approach focused on understanding Hayden's strengths, learning style and needs – not just his challenges. Teachers worked closely with therapists, and Pat was included in every step of the learning journey. Collaboration was central to the process.

For both Hayden and later Jono, emotional regulation was a significant focus. Aspect's holistic approach extended beyond academic milestones, taking into account sensory needs, social communication, emotional wellbeing and confidence.



Today, Hayden and Jono are thriving in their own unique ways, grounded in the foundations laid during those early years. As Pat reflected, when families are supported early, no one has to walk the forest alone.



Nurturing powerful partnerships

In 2025, Aspect strengthened its commitment to inclusive education through the theme: Inclusion through Collaboration. Throughout the year, we created meaningful opportunities for policymakers, educators, Autistic advocates, families and community partners to come together, strengthening shared understanding and advancing practical change.

Inclusion through Collaboration



Engaging policymakers

The year commenced with **A Brilliant Brunch at NSW Parliament House**, held during World Autism Understanding Day and attended by more than 25 parliamentarians alongside educators, families and advocates.

Importantly, the event created space for people with lived experience of autism to contribute directly to discussions with policymakers. Their perspectives reinforced the importance of listening to Autistic voices and grounding policy in real-world experience.

The Hon Natasha Maclaren-Jones MLC presided, with contributions from the Hon Kate Washington MP and Aspect leadership, reflecting a shared commitment to advancing inclusion across the education system.

Aspect continued this momentum in Canberra, joining Members of Parliament and sector leaders at Parliament House for the federal launch of the Parliamentary Friends of Autism. This cross-party group, co-chaired by Phillip Thompson OAM MP and Carol Berry MP, has been established to strengthen parliamentary engagement on issues impacting Autistic Australians.

The event reflected collaboration across multiple areas of Aspect's work, including education, therapy, employment and community supports. Senior leaders spoke to the importance of systemic reform to ensure Autistic Australians can thrive across all aspects of life, while team members from diverse roles, including those with lived experience of autism, contributed to discussions shaping policy and practice.

IMPACT

144

People attended

100%

Surveyed found the event beneficial

42K

Media coverage reach

60

People joined the Community of Practice network

2.



Inclusion through Collaboration continued ...

Community of Practice

Collaboration was also central to the inaugural Aspect Community of Practice: Inclusion through Collaboration event.

Hosted by the Hon Greg Warren MP, the event brought together 144 delegates, including educators from public, Catholic, independent and specialist settings, alongside policymakers, researchers, community organisations, students and families. The strong cross-sector representation reflected one of the core purposes of the Community of Practice, to bring educators together across sectors and create space for meaningful dialogue.

The event was also designed to build a shared commitment and vision for inclusive education. Throughout the day, participants engaged in workshops, panel discussions and networking sessions that explored common challenges and priorities, including school transitions, family engagement and inclusive classroom practice. These conversations strengthened alignment around what effective inclusion looks like and reinforced a collective responsibility to improve outcomes for Autistic learners.

A third purpose was to showcase evidence-informed practice and practical strategies. Sixteen sessions highlighted successful models, tools and classroom approaches grounded in research and lived experience. Participants engaged in case studies and collaborative discussions that supported practical application within their own settings.

Feedback showed high levels of satisfaction, with many participants describing the event as relevant, practical and valuable to their work. The Community of Practice also raised the visibility of inclusive education more broadly, generating strong media and digital engagement and reinforcing Aspect's leadership in autism-informed education.

Building momentum

In 2025, inclusion was strengthened through collaboration across systems, sectors and communities. By strengthening relationships between government and the education community, Aspect reinforced its leadership in autism-informed education and laid strong foundations for continued collaboration in 2026 and beyond.

Aspect Advisory Council

The Aspect Advisory Council (AAC) met four times this year, including its first in-person meeting since COVID-19, strengthening relationships among new and continuing members and enhancing collaborative governance.

The AAC played a significant role in shaping Aspect's new five-year Strategic Plan, contributing lived experience insight at every stage of the process. This engagement extended to Board level, with two Council members invited to participate in the Board Strategy Day, ensuring Autistic perspectives directly informed strategic decision making.

The Council also contributed to the redevelopment of Aspect's organisational values and provided input into the advancement of Aspect Autism Friendly Employment initiatives. In response to Council feedback, the development of new accessibility guidelines commenced, reinforcing Aspect's commitment to inclusive, accessible and co-produced governance practices.

Think Tank

The Think Tank, Aspect's lived experience group focused on operational practice, met four times this year and continued to embed Autistic partnership across the organisation. Members worked with multiple teams to ensure initiatives were informed by authentic Autistic perspectives, from design through to delivery.

Key collaborations included input to the design stage of an Autism Friendly Fundraising Guide, contributions to the World Autism Understanding Month campaign, and partnership input into an Aspect Autism Friendly research survey. The group also partnered with Education to develop a Peer Education workshop and an Autistic Identity Guide, collaborated with the Marketing and Communications team on an Autism Friendly Media Guide, and contributed to the development of autism-friendly resources.

In addition, members reviewed a Visual Story to support Autism Friendly's relationship with BreastScreen NSW. Through this work, the Think Tank strengthened Aspect's commitment to practical, lived experience-led improvement across programs, resources and community engagement.

Working in Partnership

This year, Autistic partnership has remained central to our organisation-wide work, shaping strategy, campaigns and service development in meaningful and practical ways.

Autistic advisors partnered across major initiatives including the 2025 World Autism Understanding Day campaign, philanthropy engagement activities including A Night at Google, and the Driving Change luncheon, ensuring messaging, storytelling and donor engagement authentically reflected lived experience. Autistic partnership has also been foundational in the development of Aspect's first Autism Plan, providing strategic guidance to replace the previous Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP), which will be launched in 2026.

Beyond campaigns and strategy, Autistic partners contributed to sector influence and knowledge sharing, including presenting at the Individual and Community Services National Conference and inclusion of partnership as a core theme within the AWWA project. Across fundraising initiatives, Walk for Autism, Run for Autism, tax appeal, Christmas appeal, and Shine for Autism, Autistic voices were included in storytelling and campaign development.





Aspect Study Tours: a case study in global collaboration

AWWA, a leading disability service and education provider in Singapore, has been partnering with Aspect since 2024 to strengthen its autism-inclusive education practices.

This partnership demonstrates the impact of intentional, values-aligned collaboration in transforming educational practice across organisations and systems.

In 2025, 17 leaders, teachers and therapists participated in a five-day study tour which was co-designed and delivered in New South Wales.

Participants engaged in school visits, professional learning workshops and planning sessions, interacting with Aspect educators, school leaders, students, Autistic staff and those with lived experience.

Professional learning and practice change

The tours were designed to increase confidence in including Autistic voices in decision making, developing strategies to support sensory and communication needs and building capability in coaching peers on using student profiles for curriculum differentiation.

From learning to action: Project Inspire

Following the work in 2024, AWWA launched Project Inspire to embed the strategies and learnings across the organisation.

Initiatives included piloting structured teaching across seven classrooms, developing live data walls, implementing person-centred planning using individual student profiles and reimagining classroom environments to better support sensory needs.



Cultural and organisational change

Aspect's emphasis on collaboration, data-informed decision making and inclusion of Autistic voices influenced AWWA's internal practices. The tours have fostered a shared project identity and consistent messaging to support change.

Partnership in autism education

The collaboration between Aspect and AWWA has evolved into a sustained partnership.

Sustainability and broader impact

The innovations introduced through Project Inspire are being scaled across AWWA's schools and shared with broader networks in Singapore.

IMPACT

17

People attended

100%

AWWA staff reporting greater confidence in including Autistic voices in decision making

100%

AWWA staff reporting learning new strategies to support sensory and communication needs

100%

AWWA staff felt capable to coach peers on using student profiles for curriculum differentiation



Aspect and Victoria University extend Memorandum of Understanding

Three years ago, Aspect and Victoria University signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to boost the disability sector workforce, make tertiary education more accessible for neurodivergent students and support Autistic adults with an on-campus adult community hub.

Due to the successful partnership, the two organisations have extended the MOU until 2028, allowing the expansion of existing programs and the introduction of new projects and research.

Since the partnership began

Aspect opened an Adult Community Services Centre in St Albans, welcoming 20 participants to the community hub, where they have access to Victoria University's state-of-the-art facilities to develop their independent living, social and wellbeing skills.

Twenty-four Victoria University students studying speech pathology, psychology, Certificate IV in Mental Health and Certificate III in Individual Support have completed student placements with Aspect.

Following the student placements, four students have gone on to work in graduate roles with Aspect.

The Victoria University Accessibility Services team has opened four quiet rooms on campuses for neurodivergent students and held multiple staff training workshops led by Aspect.

The next three years

As well as ongoing work in student employment, community services and improving accessibility, the organisations will focus on:

Improving neurodivergent patients' experiences in health and emergency settings

As part of the extended partnership, Victoria University's College of Health, Science and Engineering is working closely with Aspect on a range of programs that aim to improve patient experiences in health and emergency settings.

Research collaboration to build a national network for Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) practitioners

Dr Vicki Gibbs, Head of Research at Aspect and Professor Debra Smith from Victoria University, and their research teams have received a grant from the Department of Home Affairs to develop and evaluate a nationwide Community of Practice. This initiative will support professionals working with radicalised young people by sharing learnings, strengthening skills and fostering a deeper understanding of autism among those in the CVE field.



2.



Strengthening inclusive practice through professional learning

In 2025, Aspect delivered professional learning workshops to two major education networks in New South Wales: the North West Professional Development Group (NWPD) and Sydney Catholic Schools.

These sessions strengthened educators' knowledge of autism and provided practical strategies to support inclusive practice in both mainstream and supported classrooms.

More than 350 participants from six independent schools attended the NWPD workshops, including classroom teachers, specialists and school leaders. A further 70 Learning Support Officers participated in workshops delivered to Sydney Catholic Schools, with a focus on practical classroom strategies for Autistic students in mainstream settings.

The sessions combined evidence-based knowledge with classroom application. Core content included understanding autism and co-occurring conditions, sensory processing and communication differences, behaviour regulation and de-escalation strategies, reducing masking, and developing neuro-affirming Individual Learning Plans. Participants were also introduced to practical tools such as the Five Point Star profile, social stories, visual schedules and Universal Design for Learning strategies.

IMPACT



95%

NWPD respondents rated the sessions as highly relevant



60%

Respondents expressed interest in ongoing collaboration with Aspect



Supporting educators and families nationwide

Positive Partnerships is funded by the Australian Government Department of Education and implemented by Aspect.

Since its inception in 2008, Positive Partnerships has delivered evidence-informed resources and professional learning to support Autistic children and young people, and the families and educators who work alongside them. Access to all Positive Partnerships resources was free in 2025.

These include:

- In-person and online workshops (one and two-day events)
- Live and recorded webinars across a range of topics
- Online learning modules
- A website featuring downloadable information sheets, videos and animations
- Translated resources in more than 20 languages
- Dedicated resources for First Nations communities



A highlight for the project was the May event, where members of the First Nations Reference Group, Multicultural Engagement Group and Autism Advisory Group were brought together. This was the first time representatives from all three advisory groups had met together within the project. It was two days of sharing, collaboration, reflection and learning. The event reinforced for members the importance of their work and the impact they have on the implementation of different programs.

IMPACT

173

Workshops facilitated
in-person and online

2,999

Educators
reached

2,240

Number of
parents reached





A more
inclusive
world

Aspect Autism Friendly continued to expand its impact across media, healthcare and employment, demonstrating how practical adjustments and genuine partnership can create meaningful change for Autistic people.

Aspect Autism Friendly: embedding inclusion

Amplifying Autistic voices on national television

Aspect once again partnered with ABC TV's *The Assembly* for Seasons 2 and 3, embedding autism-friendly practices at the heart of production. From environmental adjustments and clear communication supports to tailored training for cast and crew, the collaboration ensured Autistic participants were supported to thrive on set.

By working closely with producers to implement inclusive frameworks behind the scenes, the series not only showcased Autistic talent on screen but also modelled best practice across the broader screen industry. The partnership continues to demonstrate how thoughtful design and proactive adjustments enable authentic storytelling and greater representation.

Improving access to essential healthcare

In healthcare, Aspect partnered with BreastScreen NSW to make breast screening more accessible for Autistic women. Through staff training, environmental guidance and communication supports, the initiative focused on reducing anxiety and sensory overwhelm – common barriers that can prevent Autistic women from accessing preventative care.

The partnership equips clinicians and frontline staff with practical strategies to deliver respectful, supportive screening experiences, helping to address health inequities and ensure Autistic women feel understood and safe when accessing critical services.



Creating inclusive, autism-friendly organisations that work for everyone

This year saw the continued development of Autism Friendly Employment, Aspect's evidence-informed service that partners with organisations to create inclusive, autism-friendly workplaces.

Through tailored assessments, strategy development, implementation support and capability building, Autism Friendly Employment helps organisations identify and embed sustainable change across their environments, practices and behaviours. These changes create more inclusive workplace experiences for Autistic employees – and for everyone.

This work reflects Aspect's commitment to driving industry-wide change – strengthening organisational capability and understanding, shifting workplace culture and ensuring Autistic people can participate fully in meaningful employment. By partnering with organisations, we are building workplaces that work for everyone, now and into the future.

IMPACT

People received individual support[^]

4,425

Staff trained

4,847

Training NPS*

+77

Service delivery NPS*

100

[^] Relaxed performances and *The Assembly*

* 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!



World Autism Understanding Day reaches over 9 million Australians and wins national award

Aspect was recognised at the Australian Marketing Institute's (AMI) Marketing Excellence Awards – winning the Not-for-Profit category for our World Autism Understanding Day (WAUD) 2025 campaign.



This is the second time Aspect has received this award and recognises the collaboration across our community – from Autistic advocates and the Working Communications Group to corporate partners, satellite schools and staff.

The 2025 campaign was built on the insight that while awareness of autism is growing, genuine understanding remains low. Independent YouGov research showed that:

- Only 50% of Australians say they have a good understanding of autism.
- 1 in 3 would not know what to say if someone disclosed they are Autistic.
- 2 in 5 feel uncertain about how to offer meaningful support.

Guided by Autistic voices, Aspect shaped the campaign around the Know, Say, Do framework – giving Australians simple, practical tools for everyday inclusion.





The response was overwhelmingly positive across the general public, the autism and Autistic communities. Aspect stakeholders, with teachers, employers, parents and community leaders reported that the resources were practical and easy to use.

Aspect's World Autism Understanding Day contributed to shifting the conversation from awareness to understanding. Aspect acknowledges and thanks everyone who contributed to the 2025 campaign including the Autistic advocates who shared their stories, staff across Aspect who helped deliver the campaign, and our partners who amplified the messages and acknowledged the day.

IMPACT AT A GLANCE

9m+

People reached via digital, social and traditional media

4.2m

People reached through partner donated digital advertising displays

45k+

Website visits

4,159

Partnership pack downloads

1.2k

New newsletter subscribers

914k

Social media reach

with

31k

engagements – a 315% increase!

Aspect's new TikTok channel:

39k

Views

408

Followers





Autism Friendly Melbourne: building momentum in year one

In its first full year of operation, Aspect's Autism Friendly Melbourne team built strong momentum across Victoria – working in long-term partnership with sporting, cultural and community organisations to embed practical inclusion.

Established in mid-2024 following the success of the Sunflowers in Sydney project, the Melbourne team delivered Autism Friendly resources to 20 partner organisations over two years.

Partnerships spanned organisations such as Football Victoria, Sovereign Hill, Zoos Victoria, Orienteering Australia, Basketball Victoria and Hepburn Library Services. Tangible outcomes include quiet spaces at Football Victoria's All Abilities Gala Day, sensory adaptations at Sovereign Hill's Winter Wonderlights, accessible seating at Zoos Victoria and improved wayfinding signage at Hepburn Library Services.

In November 2025, the team hosted a Partnership Showcase event, bringing organisations together to share learnings and strengthen a growing community of practice committed to accessibility.

These achievements reflect Aspect's goal of driving systemic change, building capacity across Victoria so Autistic people can participate fully in community life.

IMPACT

26+

Environmental
assessments

637

Staff
trained

15

Visual story
resources created

4

Autism Friendly
events



David runs into Aspect's St Albans centre and leaves skipping

David finds his place and helps others to better understand autism

For two days each week, 20-year-old David Yong arrives at Aspect's Adult Community Services St Albans centre, ready to join his peers and support workers for a day of learning and growth.

David is Autistic and non-speaking. He communicates through gestures and vocal sounds but although he doesn't speak, he comprehends everything that is said to him. And when his needs are met, his whole face lights up, a moment that brings joy to everyone around him.

At home in his Singaporean Australian family, David has always been cherished. But in public spaces, his family has often felt judged or misunderstood, especially at the local swimming pool, where community members didn't always welcome his presence. "It's not anger," his mother, Serene, explained. "It's that they don't understand. They've never met someone like David before."

Aspect's St Albans centre has become a place where David feels included and where his needs are recognised and his strengths supported.

At the centre, David's day is filled with meaningful activities shaped around his goals. These include learning to use public transport, practising everyday routines and accessing community spaces like the gym. He's working on life skills that help him become more independent, such as preparing simple meals, organising his belongings and managing transitions with the help of visual routines and structure.

With consistency and support, David is making significant progress, showing increased confidence, flexibility and participation in group activities.

For his family, the changes have been substantial. "Before, we didn't know how to help him grow outside our home," Serene shares. "Now we see him becoming more independent, even in little things. He's part of something."

David's story highlights the role of structured support in enabling non-speaking Autistic people to communicate in their own way and be understood.



Innovating
every
aspect

An Australian-first research study by Aspect Research Centre for Autism Practice (ARCAP) into the perinatal experiences of Autistic people has driven a significant innovation in neuroaffirming healthcare with the launch of Australia's first pregnancy and parenthood digital resource for Autistic people, their families and perinatal practitioners.

Australia's first Autistic pregnancy and parenthood hub

Developed in response to critical gaps identified in research and through close collaboration with Autistic parents and community members, the Aspect Autistic Pregnancy and Parenthood Hub (Hub) is a major step forward in translating evidence into practical, accessible resources that improve experiences of pregnancy and early parenthood.

The research highlighted that Autistic people often face substantial barriers in perinatal care, including sensory challenges in clinical settings, communication mismatches with healthcare providers and a lack of autism-informed practice. These gaps contribute to poorer health experiences and outcomes. In direct response, Aspect co-produced a comprehensive, evidence-informed digital hub designed to help perinatal professionals embed neuroaffirming principles into everyday practice and empower Autistic people with accessible, relevant information.

The Hub's outputs demonstrate both innovation and scale. It includes freely available online training modules to build professional knowledge and confidence, with 120 subscribers to date. Seven additional professional practice resources provide step-by-step guidance for implementing neuroaffirming care. Lived experience is central with personal stories shared across videos, blogs and articles, alongside video recordings capturing diverse perspectives. Nine informational articles respond to key and emerging issues, and six interactive tools, including a neuroaffirming birth plan, support informed decision making and communication between parents and providers. The Hub also features ten Easy Read research articles and other accessible formats, ensuring that evidence is usable by Autistic people, families and professionals.



These achievements reflect just two years of development. The Hub is an evolving platform, with new resources added regularly and connections growing across projects and initiatives nationwide, strengthening its impact over time.

Building capability of healthcare professionals has been a key focus. Sixteen professional development sessions have been delivered nationally, and the *Towards inclusive perinatal care for Autistic parents* webinar attracted 75 live attendees and 146 recording views. Findings were also presented at five major conferences – INSAR (2025 and 2026), Doula Conference 2025, APAC 2025 and PSANZ 2025 – strengthening engagement with clinicians and researchers.

Community and sector reach has been substantial. In 2025 alone, the Hub recorded 12,553 views from 4,296 unique users. Media coverage across national television, print, online platforms and podcasts has amplified awareness, while strong social media engagement and newsletter features have extended reach to thousands of professionals and community members.

The research project and development of the Hub were funded by the Victorian State Government's Diverse Communities, Mental Health and Wellbeing Grants program, auDA Foundation and Woodend Foundation.





New guide to improve police interactions with Autistic people

Drawing on ARCAP's expertise in autism and the criminal justice system, the team transformed research on Autistic people's experiences with law enforcement into a practical, evidence-informed resource tailored for police.

ARCAP's study found that many Autistic adults reported misunderstandings and dissatisfaction in encounters with police, often linked to communication differences and a lack of awareness about autism characteristics among officers. These findings highlighted the need for autism-specific training and targeted supports within policing contexts.

Responding to this need, ARCAP developed *Interacting with Autistic People: A Guide for Australian Police*, a 12-page resource designed to improve safety, respect and outcomes during police interactions. Developed from best-practice approaches and rich research insights, the guide offers clear, practical strategies for recognising autism characteristics, adapting communication and de-escalating situations effectively. Topics include understanding autism, recognising Autistic traits, strategies for general encounters, interviewing Autistic people and guidance for when Autistic people go missing.

The guide was downloaded over 100 times during 2025 and has been circulated widely among staff at Victoria Police and Queensland Police Service.



Leading innovation in autism research translation

In 2025, ARCAP received the Autism CRC Award for Achievement in Autism Research (Translation of Autism Research). The award recognises two years of pioneering research by the team of Autistic and non-Autistic researchers, practitioners and Autistic advisors leading to the development of the **Aspect Autistic Pregnancy and Parenthood Hub (Hub)**.

The Hub is a first-of-its-kind digital resource offering accessible, evidence-informed information for expectant and new parents, as well as tools to help healthcare professionals better understand and support Autistic people during this important life stage.

Award reviewers described the project as an exceptional example of research translation, recognising its success in addressing a critical gap in perinatal care by transforming co-produced research into accessible, evidence-informed resources for Autistic parents and clinicians.

They praised the Hub's strong foundation in lived experience and its wide-ranging impact across professional training, media coverage and academic contributions. The project was also commended for its deep community engagement and exemplary collaboration with Autistic advisors throughout the research process, ensuring authenticity, inclusion and real-world relevance.

This is the fourth Autism CRC Award received by ARCAP since its inception in 2018, a testament to the research team's unwavering commitment to inclusive research that turns lived experience and evidence into meaningful change.



Setting our sights on more accessible eye care

Pioneering research conducted by ARCAP is supporting meaningful improvements in the delivery of eye care for Autistic people.

This multi-stage study explored the experiences of Autistic adults, parents of Autistic children and eye care professionals. We found that some common clinical practices can unintentionally create barriers, such as using bright examination lights without preparation or relying on fast, verbal-only instructions during vision tests. Sensory challenges, unfamiliar environments, rushed communication and limited autism understanding were also highlighted as key factors affecting equitable access to care.

Importantly, the research moved beyond identifying problems to developing evidence-informed guidance. Findings directly informed the development of *Accessible Eye Care for Autistic People*, a guide for vision professionals that offers practical strategies to reduce barriers and improve the accessibility and inclusivity of eye care for Autistic people.

Recommendations include sensory-aware scheduling, plain language communication, pre-appointment information and flexible pacing. Co-designed with Autistic people and clinicians, the guide reflects Aspect's commitment to research that is participatory, practical and grounded in lived experience.

The impact of this work is already evident, with Aspect delivering professional development sessions for vision professionals, developing tailored resources for clinics and preparing to share its findings internationally in the United States. Professional development workshops will also be presented by Aspect at the Optometry Clinical Conference 2026.

Supporting
understanding
through assessment:

Fiona's story





Dr Fiona Aldridge's path into clinical psychology began almost by accident.

After finishing school, she took a gap year to travel, unsure of what to study. Having enjoyed psychology in Years 11 and 12, she enrolled in a science degree majoring in psychology and, as she reflects, "the rest is history."

During her university studies, Fiona was consistently drawn to roles that involved working directly with people. As a therapy assistant and disability support worker, she supported individuals across a range of ages and needs. Through this work, she met many Autistic people and found the experience both rewarding and instructive. It was during this time that her interest in neurodevelopmental assessment began to take shape.

She later completed a combined PhD and Masters of Psychology (Clinical) at the University of New South Wales (UNSW) and joined Aspect in February 2008, where she has worked for more than 18 years.

Now Manager of Aspect Assessments, Fiona believes a high-quality assessment process is holistic, respectful and centred on the participant and their family. The process is collaborative and values the input of participants and families as experts in their own lives. The clinician's role, she explains, is to bring professional knowledge, evidence-informed practice and compassion to help make sense of each person's profile. A comprehensive assessment supports participants and families to better understand their neurotype and access the supports, accommodations and environments that enable them to reach their goals and thrive.

One assessment in particular has stayed with her. Several years ago, she assessed a man who had been highly successful in his career yet struggled socially and experienced several mental health challenges. Despite his achievements, he felt he did not fit in and believed something was "wrong". Receiving an autism diagnosis gave him a framework for understanding why he approached the world the way he did and helped him realise that he wasn't "broken", but that autism meant he saw and experienced the world in a different way. It also helped him recognise his strengths as well as his challenges.

The diagnosis opened the door for him to connect with the Autistic community, which provided a sense of belonging and helped him see that he was not alone in his experiences. The assessment process

also gave him clear guidance on the supports and workplace adjustments that would assist him.

Mentoring emerging clinicians is also central to Fiona's role. She focuses on supporting clinicians to practice from a person-centred, neuroaffirming perspective that emphasises respect, collaboration and genuine curiosity about each participant. She also supports clinicians to recognise their strengths, develop their clinical skills and judgement, and continue to learn and grow so they can provide an excellent service.

In late 2024, Fiona oversaw the introduction of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) assessments as part of the continued development of Aspect's assessment services, with plans to expand the service to include learning assessments in 2026. This development reflected research highlighting the high rates of autism co-occurring with conditions such as ADHD and learning disorders. Through this work, Fiona aims to provide a more streamlined assessment process while supporting clinicians to develop a deeper understanding of each person's profile and support needs.

Fiona believes that sharing knowledge creates opportunities to learn from diverse perspectives and contributes to the continuous improvement of clinical practice. Engaging with clinicians and researchers from other organisations to discuss what works, what doesn't and how services approach assessment also supports the sharing of emerging best practice and ultimately benefits the families we support.

Fiona describes her work as rewarding and meaningful. She values learning from participants and families and supporting them through the assessment and diagnosis process. "It's a privilege," she says, "to have people share their lives and stories with you."



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

Fundraising: extending reach and impact

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.		Fundraising and philanthropy revenue \$7.15m	
Regular givers 4,402		Regular giving revenue \$1,239,055	
New supporters acquired for appeals 1,261	Revenue raised from Golf Day for fee relief for disadvantaged families \$80,148 		
Revenue from Walk and Run campaigns \$2.03m 	Participants in Walk and Run campaigns 15,972	Media reach from Walk and Run campaigns 3.78m	
Revenue raised in appeals \$564,829 			



A Night at Google: celebrating innovation, inclusion and Autistic voices

In May 2025, Aspect Philanthropy partnered with Google to host A Night at Google – an inspiring evening exploring how technology can enhance inclusion for Autistic people.

Held at Google's Sydney headquarters and MC'd by award-winning journalist Rae Johnston, the event brought together more than 150 leaders, advocates and community members to examine how innovation can drive meaningful accessibility across education, workplaces and everyday life.

Delivered in close collaboration with Google, the event reflected a shared commitment to inclusive design and practical change. Together, we created an experience that modelled accessibility in action, with thoughtful consideration of sensory and communication needs throughout the evening.

The program featured thought-provoking presentations from experts with both professional and lived autism experience. Dr Tom Tutton and Emma Beardsley from Aspect's Autism Friendly team highlighted how virtual and augmented reality walkthroughs can reduce anxiety by helping Autistic people prepare for unfamiliar environments. Speakers from Google Maps shared how navigation tools can build confidence and independence, while discussions on artificial intelligence explored the role of personalised digital learning in supporting educators and students.

A powerful segment also spotlighted lived experience, with Aspect South East Sydney School's Principal, Jo Tisdell and a current student sharing how assistive technology strengthens communication, connection and participation.

A Night at Google exemplified how strong partnerships, technology and Autistic voices came together to shape a more inclusive future.

Active Events: a milestone fundraising year

2025 marked a milestone year for Aspect's Active Events program, with our community turning major running events into powerful platforms for impact.

At the Sydney Marathon – now an Abbott World Marathon Major – #TeamAspect delivered an extraordinary result, raising \$116,000 in support of our Autistic community. Runners from across Australia and around the world joined the team, including first-time marathoners, seasoned athletes and even a Guinness World Record breaker.

This year also saw the introduction of 25 inaugural charity place VIP runners, each committing to raise a minimum of \$2,400 to secure their place on the start line. Their dedication, alongside the wider team's efforts, reflected the growing strength and reputation of Aspect's fundraising community.

Aspect staff were proudly on the ground, cheering runners across the finish line and celebrating every achievement.

The momentum extended beyond the Sydney Marathon, with strong participation across City2Surf and many other events around the country. Together, these events not only raised vital funds but also amplified awareness, with every kilometre run contributing to a more autism-friendly world.

Through grit, generosity and collective determination, our Active Events participants continue to demonstrate that when community meets purpose, extraordinary things happen.



IMPACT

\$227K
Raised



Moving with purpose: Run for Autism and Walk for Autism 2025

In 2025, our community stepped up and laced up in extraordinary numbers across Walk for Autism and Run for Autism to support Autistic children and adults.

Walk for Autism saw more than 8,000 passionate supporters who collectively took an incredible 620 million steps, raising \$1,064,633. Across Aspect, schools, staff and families embraced the challenge by walking 7,000 steps a day throughout May, raising awareness of the mental health challenges experienced by 70 per cent of Autistic people.

Aspect schools played a pivotal role, raising \$128,275 – up more than \$40,000 on last year – through vibrant Colour Runs, obstacle courses and community walkathons uniting families and communities in celebration of inclusion.

Run for Autism continued this momentum in October, with almost 7,000 participants covering 182,989 kilometres and raising \$1,125,754, setting a new record. Each runner completed 70km in recognition of the 70 per cent of Autistic people who experience mental health challenges, turning every kilometre into a powerful act of advocacy and support.

Together, these campaigns demonstrate the power of collective action. Every step, every kilometre and every dollar raised is helping create a world where Autistic people feel understood, supported and empowered to be their authentic selves.



IMPACT



\$1.1m

Raised through
Walk for Autism



\$1.1m

Raised through
Run for Autism

Our supporters and donors 2025

Major donors

- ANZ Community Foundation
- Brenda Shanahan Foundation
- Chehab Foundation
- Clubs NSW
- CMV Group Foundation
- Collier Charitable Fund
- Councils NSW
- David O'Dea
- Dee Why RSL Club
- E A and N Hulak Foundation
- Endeavour Energy
- EnergyAustralia
- ERDI Foundation
- Estate of Kathleen Breen
- Guy Reynolds AO & Jenny Reynolds
- JACE Foundation
- Land Eco Consulting
- NSW Community Building Partnership Program
- NSW Department of Communities and Justice
- Suan Yeo & Family
- The Bluesand Foundation
- The James N Kirby Foundation
- The Kenneth & Peter Gibbs Foundation (Perpetual)
- The Primary Club of Australia
- The Redan Foundation Limited
- The Woodend Foundation (Perpetual)
- Transurban
- VIC Department of Health
- Walter Richard Salmon Foundation
- Waratah Education Foundation
- Western Suburbs Leagues Club (West's Newcastle)

Corporate support

- Ability Action Australia
- ACRWORLD powered by Morson EDGE
- CompNow
- Northern Inland Credit Union
- Public Sector People

In-kind

- Good360 Australia
- Google Australia
- Jean-Christophe Novelli
- Perpetual

Gift in Will

- Estate of the Late Leslie Bruce Blackshaw
- Estate of the Late Judith Ann Buckley
- Estate of the Late Shirley Estelle Buxton
- Estate of the Late Kathleen Malicia Chanter
- Estate of the Late Fay Patricia Harrison
- Estate of the Late Rita Lillian Keating
- Estate of the Late Christine McDowell
- Estate of the Late Jennifer Ann Messenger
- Estate of the Late Gerard Richard Rochat
- Estate of the Late Margaret June Stevens
- Estate of the Late Phillipa Barbara Walsh



An evening to remember with Jean-Christophe Novelli

In May, Aspect's Philanthropy team coordinated a bespoke event at The Black Sheep in Hawthorn for a truly special evening in support of Aspect Adult Community Services (ACS).

The event brought together supporters, partners and participants to celebrate creativity, connection and inclusion — with internationally renowned French chef and MasterChef Australia judge Jean-Christophe Novelli as special guest.

Guests enjoyed an exquisite fine dining experience, with each course thoughtfully prepared and paired with wines curated by Master of Wine Kate McIntyre. Jean-Christophe then took to the stage for a live cooking demonstration, sharing his culinary expertise, warmth and unmistakable passion for food. His generosity and genuine commitment to inclusion created an atmosphere that was both inspiring and celebratory.

At the heart of the evening were the voices of our ACS participants. Kailan, Imogen and Ruby shared personal reflections on their journeys, highlighting the confidence, skills and creativity they have developed through the programs. Their stories were a powerful reminder of the impact of creating environments where Autistic adults feel supported to express themselves and pursue their goals.

The event was a memorable celebration of community and possibility. With the support of advocates like Jean-Christophe, Aspect continues to foster inclusive spaces where Autistic adults can thrive, connect and showcase their extraordinary talents.



Facilities: strengthening learning environments through sustained capital investment

In 2025, Aspect marked the fifth year of a long-term \$80 million investment to enhance staff and administration spaces and improve outdoor and shared facilities across key school sites.

This program continued to deliver consistent, purpose-built environments aligned to Aspect's design standards, supporting improved student engagement and staff capability.

During the year, major projects were completed at Aspect Riverina School, Albury Campus, and Aspect Western Sydney School, Wetherill Park Campus, delivering upgraded outdoor learning and play spaces. The restoration of Ashford House at Aspect Treetop School also reached completion, preserving a significant heritage building while supporting its continued use within the school. At the same time, the next phase of growth commenced, with construction underway on the new Aspect Port Macquarie campus to meet increasing demand for autism-specific education in regional New South Wales.



The opening ceremony included the planting of Australian native plants with Dr Hugh McDermott MP and other dignitaries, followed by students planting herbs and vegetables in the sensory garden.

New outdoor learning spaces open at Aspect Western Sydney, Wetherill Park

In November 2025, Aspect Western Sydney School's Wetherill Park campus officially opened its newly enhanced outdoor learning and play spaces.

The upgrades transformed the school grounds into a purpose-built outdoor learning hub with shaded classrooms, sensory-friendly play equipment, landscaped gardens and improved accessibility pathways.

The revitalised outdoor area includes eight large shade sails, new climbing structures, swings, a sky climber, trampolines and slides set within soft-fall surfacing. A covered outdoor amphitheatre provides space for group learning, performances and assemblies, while break-out areas adjoining classrooms create calm transition zones.

New acoustic boundary fencing installed along Victoria Road has significantly reduced external noise levels.





Aspect Port Macquarie campus is scheduled to open in 2026.

Laying the foundations at Port Macquarie

Construction of Aspect's new Port Macquarie campus reached an important milestone on 27 November 2025, as families, community members and staff gathered in Thrumster to mark the laying of the foundations.

The purpose-built K–6 campus is being developed to meet growing demand for autism-specific education in the Mid North Coast region of NSW. The new school will include eight classrooms, specialist learning areas, outdoor play spaces and sensory-friendly facilities to support students. The project involves refurbishing existing structures as well as constructing new facilities.

There are also plans for a yarning circle and Aboriginal artwork throughout the school, creating spaces that recognise the history of the land and encourage connection, storytelling and shared learning.

The event also highlighted student and community involvement. Leteasha Ruttle, Aboriginal Education Learning Officer at Aspect Hunter School, presented three Aboriginal artworks created by students for the new campus. Local Aspect high school students prepared and served morning tea and participated in a podcast interview with local member Robert Dwyer MP.

Restoration of Ashford House, Aspect Treetop School

Ashford House, the oldest building on the Aspect Treetop School site, was constructed in 1881 and is locally heritage listed. In 2025, significant restoration works were completed to stabilise and renew this important building, supported by a Federal Government grant.

Over time, ongoing deterioration and safety concerns had limited the building's use. The 2025 restoration addressed structural, roofing and conservation works to ensure the building was safe, compliant and suitable for contemporary school use.

Externally, works included roof replacement, drainage upgrades, structural stabilisation and restoration of key heritage features including masonry, cast iron elements, verandah steps and original joinery.



Internally, structural strengthening was undertaken, alongside restoration of ceilings, mouldings, wall finishes and floor tiling. The building was also upgraded to support its role, with improvements to services, acoustic treatments and new furniture, fittings and equipment.

The completed works stabilised and restored Ashford House while respecting its heritage significance. We acknowledge the Federal Government and all those involved in delivering this restoration.

New spaces for learning, connection and play at Aspect Riverina, Albury campus

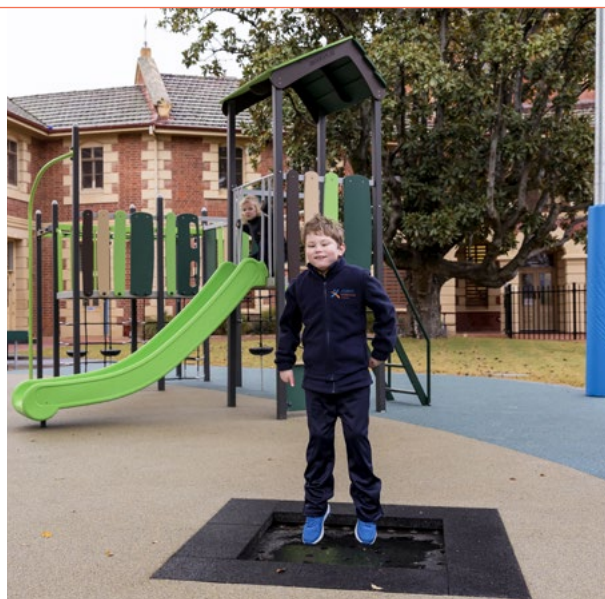
In October 2025, students, families and staff at Aspect Riverina School, Albury campus gathered to celebrate the official opening of the school's newly upgraded playgrounds and outdoor learning spaces.

Justin Clancy MP, Member for Albury, and Mayor Kevin Mack attended the ceremony and toured the upgraded facilities.

The event also marked the official opening of the Brewer Building by Judy Brewer AO, a Life Member of Aspect and former Patron of the organisation. Judy and her late husband, the Hon. Tim Fischer AC, served as Aspect's Patrons from 2000 to 2006. The building was named in recognition of Judy's long-standing contribution to autism advocacy and her family's connection to the autism spectrum, including her son, who is on the autism spectrum.

The upgrades were completed in under 12 months and delivered in three stages to minimise disruption to learning and ensure safe access throughout construction.

The senior school playground now includes a multi-use sports area with soft-fall surfacing, coloured concrete and shaded seating. The Brewer Building Courtyard has been transformed into a flexible, all-weather space with artificial turf and new plantings. The junior school playground features new climbing and play equipment, shaded seating and dedicated water play areas.



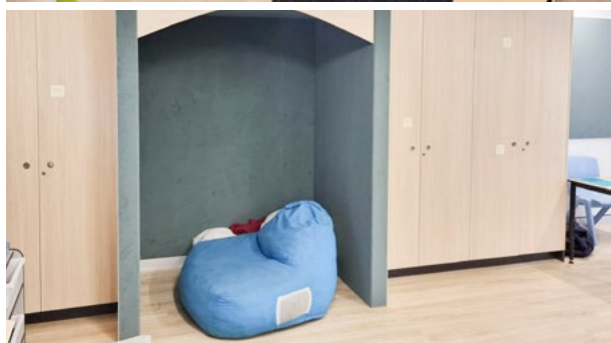
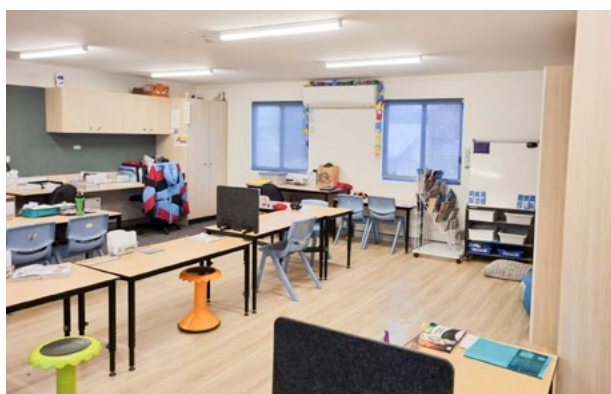
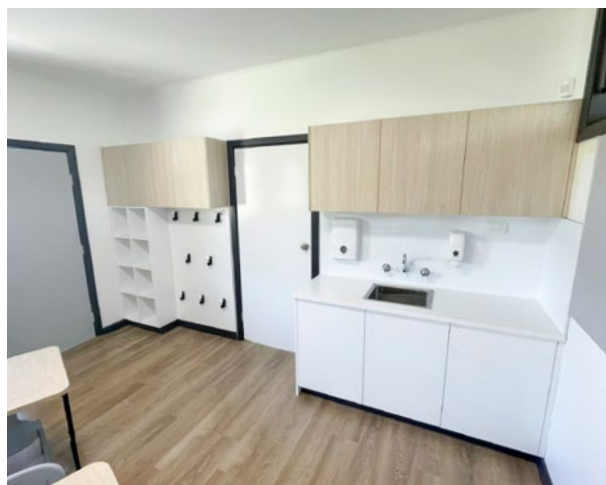
New learning spaces at Aspect Macarthur School, Cobbitty

Aspect Macarthur School's Cobbitty campus refurbished two buildings to create additional learning and therapeutic spaces for students.

The former Nun's Quarters has been converted into a classroom, providing additional teaching space. The refurbishment included the installation of a new bathroom and the development of an adjoining outdoor play area featuring an amphitheatre, astroturf, a covered play space and an integrated audio-visual system.

The former laundry building has been renovated to include a new laundry, a student bathroom and a multipurpose therapy space.

Additional landlord works were undertaken, including mesh flyscreen upgrades, gutter guard installations and fire trail works around the school in line with bushfire regulations.



A new learning space for Unanderra

In 2025, Aspect completed the installation of a new demountable building at Unanderra, replacing the existing structure located within the grounds of St Pius X Unanderra.

Purchased as a permanent asset for Aspect, the new building is larger and includes more spacious classrooms and a dedicated staff room. The design and fit out align with Aspect's design guidelines, incorporating the same colour palette and layout used in other recent capital works projects to support consistency across sites.

The project included new classroom furniture and a complete internal fit-out of the building.

The modular structure also provides flexibility for future relocation if required, while continuing to offer a modern learning and teaching environment.



Site improvements at Aspect Adult Community Services Heatherton

During the year, a series of capital works were completed at Aspect Adult Community Services in Heatherton.

A substantial extension to the existing deck was completed, along with the installation of shade sails and a dedicated BBQ area to work on cooking skills. In addition, a multisport surface was installed over an existing car park area, incorporating a specialised impact-absorbing tile system. The multisport surface is now used for a range of different sports-based activities, providing participants an opportunity to work on movement and teamwork skills, as well as health and exercise.

The works also included a better drop-off/pick up traffic management system, leading to a dedicated entry driveway from Old Heatherton Road and a one-way traffic flow, which allows for a safer environment for participants, staff and families, when arriving or leaving the centre, or when participants or staff access the Aspect vans to go out into the community. Due to the proximity of several large trees, a permeable roadway solution was required to meet council tree root protection requirements.

Digital transformation

In 2025, Aspect continued its digital transformation journey with a clear focus on creating a simpler, more reliable and more inclusive digital environment for our people.

The objective of this work was to ensure technology supported, rather than distracted from, Aspect's purpose. By modernising our digital foundations, we enabled staff to spend less time navigating systems and more time focused on supporting the Autistic community and their families.

Throughout the year, investment was made in uplifting workplace technology to improve collaboration, consistency and security across the organisation. This included establishing a more connected digital workspace, reducing complexity in how staff accessed systems, and improving the reliability of devices and tools used every day.

Alongside this, a strong emphasis was placed on building staff capability through training, guidance and hands-on support, recognising that successful transformation is as much about people as it is about technology.

Importantly, 2025 was a year of laying the groundwork for the future. New technology leadership and specialist roles were introduced to strengthen long-term capability and ensure closer partnership between technology teams and the broader organisation. These foundations positioned Aspect to continue evolving its digital environment in a way that was sustainable, secure and aligned with our strategic goals.

This work marked an important step in Aspect's broader transformation journey. By creating a stronger digital foundation in 2025, Aspect was better placed to support innovation, improve service delivery and respond to future opportunities.

Our people: our team in 2025

Every day across Aspect, our people bring knowledge, care and professionalism to their work.

Reflecting the diversity of the communities we support, they contribute a broad range of perspectives and experiences. Together, this enables consistent and meaningful outcomes for Autistic people and their families.

We acknowledge the commitment and contribution of our team and are privileged to share this journey together.



Number of staff

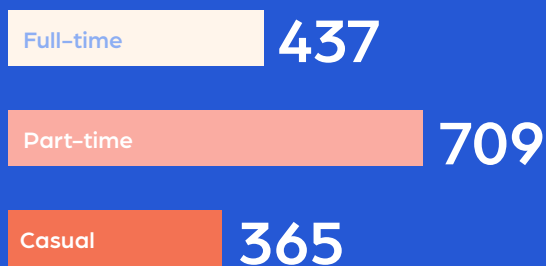
1,511



Average length of service

5.3 years

Staff breakdown



85%

Said their manager demonstrates Aspect's values*



84%

Said their team demonstrates Aspect's values*

Long service awards

10 years	15 years	20 years
38	24	10

25 years

5

Ann Rogers
Aspect Macarthur School

Raeleigh Kerr
Aspect South Coast School

Sue Anderson
Aspect Central Coast School

Jacqueline De Graaf
Aspect South East Sydney School

Jackie Chan
Aspect South East Sydney School

30 years

3



Margaret Hayes
Aspect Vern Barnett School

Catherine Paix
Aspect Hunter School

Stuart Davis
Aspect South Coast School



Celebrating excellence: ICS Staff Recognition Awards

The Individual and Community Services (ICS) Staff Recognition Awards were presented on Day 1 of the ICS National Conference 2025, honouring outstanding individuals and teams across ICS who demonstrate excellence, innovation and deep commitment to the people and communities they support.

This is the second year the awards have been presented in recognition of the skill, care and collaborative spirit that define the ICS team.

This year, 81 nominations were received across 13 award categories, showcasing the exceptional talent and impact of ICS staff.

During the conference, eight staff were also recognised for more than 10 years of service at Aspect.

"The awards acknowledge the outstanding work our clinicians, therapists, PBS practitioners, support workers and support staff do each day, and also serve as a way of knowledge sharing and learning for all of ICS."

RACHEL KERSLAKE
National Director,
Individual and Community Services, Aspect





Celebrating intersectional pride at Sydney Mardi Gras

On 1 March 2025, Aspect took part in the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade, celebrating the intersection of neurodiversity and LGBTQIA+ pride.

This marked the seventh year that The Neurodivergent Rainbow participated in the parade. More than 30 Aspect staff, students, participants and Autistic community members marched together under the theme “Free to Be: Intersectional”.

Inspired by a bold and colourful 1980s aesthetic, the group used geometric designs and Venn diagrams to visually represent intersectionality – the way multiple identities, such as being Autistic and LGBTQIA+, shape unique experiences. The energy and unity within the group reflected the significance of the moment.

A powerful moment occurred as the group passed a section of the crowd and people called out “Me too! Me too!” in recognition and solidarity.

The spontaneous response highlighted the importance of representation and the impact of seeing Autistic pride on display.

To support accessibility, Aspect operated two quiet tents – one in the marshalling area and another in the accessible viewing area, providing calm, sensory-friendly spaces for those needing a break from noise and crowds.

Each tent included bean bags, refrigerated water, fidget toys and earplugs to support comfort and sensory regulation. Feedback was positive, with attendees appreciating having a space to refresh, recharge and return to the celebrations on their terms.

Through participation in the parade and the provision of quiet tents, Aspect supported inclusion at the event, enabling neurodivergent and LGBTQIA+ community members to take part in a way that worked for them.





Launching THRIVE: our refreshed organisational values

In August, Aspect introduced a refreshed set of organisational values, captured in the acronym THRIVE – Teamwork, Honesty and integrity, Respect, Inclusion, Vibrant and Excellence.

Aspect's purpose, a different brilliant®, continues to guide everything we do. It reflects our commitment to recognising and celebrating the strengths, interests and aspirations of people on the autism spectrum, and to creating inclusive environments where everyone can thrive.

While our purpose defines why we exist, our values define who we are. They shape how we work with one another; with the people we support and with the broader community.

THRIVE was developed following feedback from staff across all areas of Aspect, alongside input from Autistic team members. Each of the six values is supported by practical behaviours to guide everyday actions across every team and every role.

THRIVE provides a clear and shared framework for how we work together, grounded in our purpose and reflected in our everyday practice.

Investing in professional growth: 2025 Professional Development Grants

In 2025, Aspect endorsed 17 applications through the Professional Development Grants Program, supporting professional learning across all business units.

For the first time, an additional \$20,000 was committed to support Teacher Aides in completing their final teaching placement. Five of the successful recipients were Teacher Aides.

Applications aligned with Aspect's strategic learning categories and focused on strengthening capability across teams. Supported activities included short courses, group workshops, presentations from leading experts and undergraduate degrees.

Thank you to all applicants for the time and effort invested in their submissions, and congratulations to the 2025 recipients.



Education leadership development programs

Developing strong educational leaders remained a priority across Aspect schools in 2025.

Two programs aligned to the Aspect Leadership Framework for educators supported staff at different stages of their leadership journey: the Aspiring Leaders Program, designed for emerging leaders preparing for their first formal leadership roles, and the Middle Leadership Matters Program, which strengthened the capability of current middle leaders.

Aspiring Leaders Program

Targeting middle and senior leaders ready to take the next step in their leadership journey, the six-month multimodal program deepened participants' understanding of the knowledge, skills and dispositions required to lead high-performing teams.

Grounded in evidence-informed leadership practice, the program emphasised emotional intelligence, authentic leadership and psychologically safe, collaborative team cultures. Participants engaged in face-to-face and online workshops, professional readings and collaborative inquiry to build capability in areas such as vision and values, influence, feedback and change leadership.

A distinctive feature of the program was the development of a strategic improvement initiative aligned to each school's improvement plan. Participants each presented a poster on their initiative at the ALIC Learning Fair. Initiatives in 2025 focused on building staff capability through professional learning, improving consistency of practice and strengthening instructional quality. The program received 11 successful applications from across the organisation,

Middle Leadership Matters Program

The Middle Leadership Matters Program supported 14 middle leaders through six one-hour online workshops aligned to the Aspect Leadership Framework. The first five sessions focused on leading self, leading others, leading strategy, leading operations and leading innovation and change.

The final session centred on developing an ongoing leadership growth plan. Principals also provided mentoring throughout the program.

Our Patron, Life Governors and Life Members

Our Patron

Mr John Doyle AM

Life Governors

Mr John Doyle AM
Mr David Epper OAM
Mr Adrian Ford
Mr Hilton Grugeon AM
Mr Gerry Harvey
Ms Cheryl Hatch
Mr Peter Werner

Life Members

Mrs Clasina Andrews	Mr Michael McColm
Ms Julie Anthony	Mr Malcolm McEwen
Mr Mark Bowen	Mrs Shirley McIntosh
Ms Judy Brewer	Mr Richard Owens
Mrs Diane Brown	Mr Keith Perkin
Mr Robert Brown	Mr Robert Pesavento
Mr Henry Capra	Mr Ostilio Pisanu
Mrs Barbara Cummins	Dr Gretchen Poiner
Professor Peter Dodd	Dr Jacqueline Roberts
Mr Peter Drayton	Mr Weston Ryan
Mr Mark Fogarty	Mr Basil Sellers
Ms Annette Gallard	Mr John Shand
Mr Richard Gelski	Dr David Starte
Mr John Gerahty	Mrs Margaret Stead
Mrs Amanda Green	Ms Catherine Storey
Ms Julie Hamblin	Mr Jeremy Sutcliffe
Mr Laurie Horin	Mrs Andrea Werner
Ms Judith Johnson	Ms Jenny Young
Mr Peter Mayne	

OUR PEOPLE

Our Board of Directors


Paul Khoury
CHAIR OF THE BOARD

Paul joined the Board in March 2018 and has been Chair of the Board since May 2023. Paul is also a member of the Finance, Audit & Risk Committee; the Education Strategy Oversight Committee; and the Digital Innovation & Technology Committee.


Karen Orvad
DEPUTY CHAIR

Karen joined the Board in 2019 and is a member of the Finance, Audit & Risk Committee; the People, Culture & Safety Committee; and the Digital Innovation & Technology 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 & Risk Committee and a member of the Governance Committee, and the Digital Innovation & Technology Committee. Marielle is a member-elected Director.


Pamela Rutledge
DIRECTOR

Pamela joined the Board in 2018 and was Chair of the Governance Committee and a member of the People, Culture & Safety Committee until her retirement from the Aspect Board in May 2025.


Dr Emily Russo
DIRECTOR

Emily joined the Board in March 2020 and is Chair of the People, Culture & Safety Committee and a member of the Education Strategy Oversight Committee. Emily is a member-elected Director.


Tori Haar
DIRECTOR

Tori joined the Board in December 2020 and is Chair of the Governance Committee and a member of the People, Culture & Safety Committee. Tori is a member-elected Director.


Georgina Harrison
DIRECTOR

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


David Cowan
DIRECTOR

Dave joined the Board in September 2024 and is Chair of the Digital Innovation & Technology Committee and a member of the Finance, Audit & Risk Committee. Dave is a member-elected Director.


Jim Boynton
DIRECTOR

Jim joined the Board in September 2024 and is a member of the Governance Committee; and the People, Culture & Safety Committee. Jim is a member-elected Director.


Kathi Boorman
DIRECTOR

Kathi joined the Board in December 2025 and is a Board-appointed Director.



Year ended 31 December 2025

An overview...

I am pleased to present Aspect's financial results for 2025.

The year marked the successful completion of Aspect's 2023–2025 Strategic Plan, which delivered significant progress across the organisation. This included strengthening autism-specific education through the opening of a new school and expansion of satellite classes, ongoing transformation of Individual and Community Services (ICS) and advancing ground-breaking research that continues to inform practice across the sector.

Strategic partnerships with universities, businesses and community organisations continued to expand Aspect's reach and impact. Initiatives to promote inclusion, including Autism Friendly programs, and campaigns such as World Autism Understanding Day, further deepened community awareness and understanding. Innovation projects, including the Hills Shire School and the launch of Autism Friendly Employment reimagined a new approach to service delivery.

These achievements provided a strong foundation for the organisation's financial performance in 2025. Total revenue exceeded \$153.5m, and the organisation recorded a surplus of \$10.4m. This outcome reflects Aspect's ongoing financial resilience and disciplined financial management, while continuing to invest in the delivery of high-quality, autism-specific services.

Throughout the year, Aspect continued to enhance service quality through targeted investment in its workforce and infrastructure across multiple sites. Key initiatives included the ongoing implementation of the Aspect Learning Improvement Collaborative (ALIC), supporting consistent monitoring and improvement of student learning outcomes across the school system. Capital investment during the year included upgrades at Aspect Western Sydney School, Aspect Treetop School and the Port Macquarie campus of Aspect Hunter School. Aspect also continued to strengthen collaborative engagement with international partners in Singapore, supporting capability building and the sharing of best practice.

Looking ahead, Aspect is operating in a rapidly evolving environment that presents both challenges and opportunities. The introduction of Australia's first National Autism Strategy provides opportunities for leadership, influence and collaboration, alongside increased expectations for evidence-based outcomes and transparency. Concurrently, reforms to the NDIS are reshaping funding frameworks and performance measures, while broader social and technological shifts, including cost-of-living pressures, growing demand for services, and accelerating digital and AI-enabled innovation, continue to transform the context in which we operate.

Against this backdrop, the organisation's accumulated surplus provides a strong and sustainable financial foundation. This position enables Aspect to confidently advance its new 2026–2030 Strategic Plan, focused on four key areas:



1

Influence

Lead transformative change in policy and systems.



2

Access

Open doors to access and participation.



3

Strength

Build a resilient organisation for the future.



4

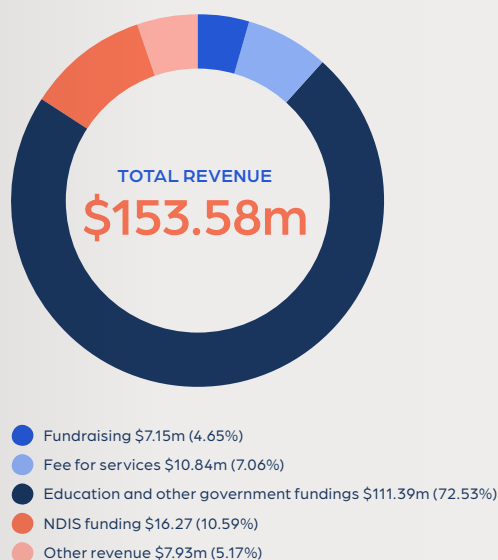
Impact

Measure what matters to maximise impact.

Revenue

Total revenue for the year was \$153.58m (Graph 1). Government funding (Education, NDIS and other Government funding) remained the primary source of revenue for Aspect, contributing 83.13% of total revenue. This represented a 1.65% decrease compared with the prior year, largely reflecting lower recognition of funds from the Western Sydney Infrastructure Grant and a relative increase in other revenue streams. Overall, the movement is consistent with the company's continued focus on diversifying funding sources.

GRAPH 1: SOURCE OF REVENUE

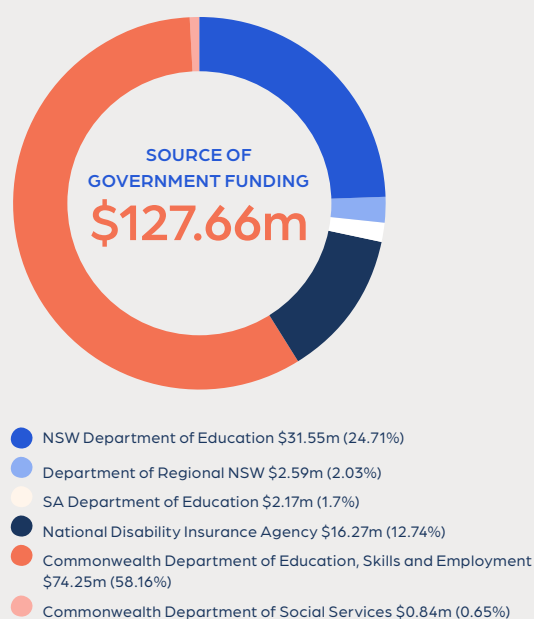


Total fees for services, including school fees, was \$10.84m (\$10.32m in 2024), which accounted for 7.06% (6.72% in 2024) of total revenue. The increase in fee for service revenue was primarily driven by the growth in student enrolments and modest indexation to Aspect's service fees.

Gross fundraising revenue for 2025 was \$7.15m, contributing 4.65% of Aspect's total revenue. We sincerely thank our donors and supporters for their continued generosity during a period of significant cost-of-living pressures. Fundraising remains an important component of Aspect's revenue, providing vital funding to deliver services and supports that are not government funded, or where government funding does not fully cover the cost of delivery.

Government funding decreased by \$2.56m to \$127.66m (Graph 2). The decline primarily reflects recognition of the Western Sydney Infrastructure Grant, with lower funding recognised in relation to the new ICS Hub in Liverpool this year compared with a larger amount recognised for the Hills Shire School in 2024.

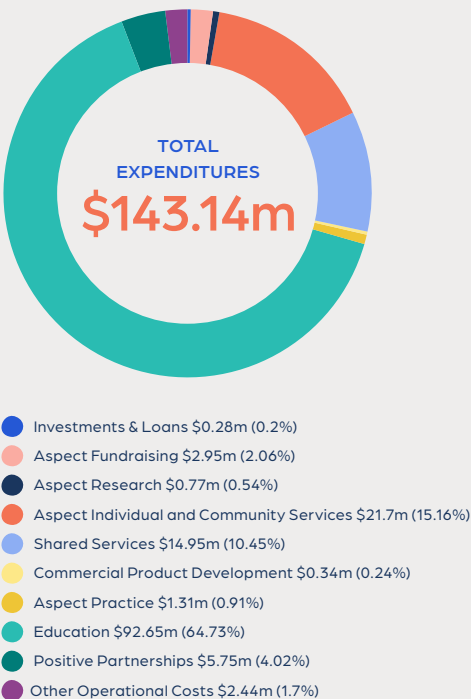
GRAPH 2: SOURCE OF GOVERNMENT FUNDING



Expenses

Total expenditure for 2025 increased by \$18.19m to \$143.14m (Graph 3). The rise was driven primarily by higher staffing costs, work health and safety provisions, and other operating expenses associated with delivering existing and new services. Business unit managers remained accountable for monitoring their respective financial performance to ensure Aspect's resources were deployed efficiently and effectively. The Board acknowledges and thanks management for its disciplined stewardship of this significant cost base, which has supported the organisation's continued growth.

GRAPH 3: WHERE THE MONEY WAS SPENT



Aspect Education accounted for 64.73% of total expenses by business group, followed by Aspect Individual and Community Services at 15.16%. Employee and related expenses were \$116.28m representing 81.24% 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 \$2.03m to \$26.86m in 2025.

Capital expenditure in 2025 was \$13.18m compared to \$18.83m in 2024, largely related to the settlement of the Liverpool Hub property and the upgrade of Aspect Western Sydney School, Aspect Treetop School, Aspect Riverina 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 2025, Aspect's net assets increased by \$11.13m to \$181.28m. This result reflects the organisation's continued financial strength and resilience, and positions Aspect well to support its purpose and long-term strategic objectives.

Cash and cash equivalents fluctuated during the year, primarily due to the timing of government funding receipts and the invoicing of school fees across three instalments. At 31 December 2025, cash and cash equivalents totalled \$52.73m.

Following a review of the investment strategy in late 2024, Evans and Partners were appointed as a second investment adviser, to complement Perpetual. Three additional investment portfolios were established: the Growth Pool, the Liquid Pool and the Impact Fund (made possible by the generosity of our donors). The Investment Reserve increased by \$43.26m, primarily due to the contribution of \$40.5m of capital to these portfolios, with the balance attributable to market performance and investment income, bringing the Investment Reserve to \$61.50m at 31 December 2025. Performance is assessed regularly against carefully selected benchmarks that reflect Aspect's strategic priorities, liquidity requirements and risk tolerance. Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) considerations are also incorporated in accordance with Aspect's Investment Policy Statement.

Reserves are a cornerstone of Aspect's financial strategy, underpinning long-term sustainability and organisational resilience. Reserves generated by each school are quarantined for that school's future needs, while other reserves support the delivery of Aspect's non-educational services and help manage periods of funding volatility. Together, these reserves provide the capacity and flexibility to fund Board-approved initiatives aligned to strategic priorities and to respond to significant business contingencies as they arise.

On the liabilities side, service contract liabilities were \$3.96m at year end, primarily representing government funding received in advance that will be applied to programs and capital projects in 2026. Total provisions were \$23.17m, comprising primarily work health and safety provisions and accrued staff entitlements.

Conclusion

A strong financial foundation is essential to Aspect's ability to deliver the 2026–2030 Strategic Plan, which sets our direction for the next five years. In 2025, our financial performance strengthened our capacity to implement strategic priorities and extend our reach and impact.

Aspect's financial stability ensures we are well positioned to adapt and respond effectively to the rollout of initiatives under the National Autism Strategy, NDIS reform, and opportunities that may emerge through the Thriving Kids program. The Board and management remain committed to strengthening financial management capability, refining processes and developing robust tools to navigate an increasingly complex operating environment.

I would like to acknowledge the management team for their continued focus on sound financial stewardship and strengthened oversight throughout the year. Finally, I extend my sincere gratitude to my fellow Board members, particularly the Finance, Audit & Risk Committee for their guidance and support during 2025.



Marielle Latour
Honorary Treasurer





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