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

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 Australia 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 CCP2016. Aspect is also authorised to fundraise in Northern Territory and Tasmania.

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 2018, 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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Cover image: Aspect student Andy Matthew

Photographer: Dave Thomson

This page: Aspect satellite class student Tess and her mum Kate

Photographer: Dave Thomson



**a different brilliant<sup>®</sup>**

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





# Our Patron, Life Governors & Life Members

## Our Patron

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

## Life Governors

Ian Barnett	Gerry Harvey
Rick Damelian	Betty Hatch
John Doyle AM	Larry A Rawstorne
David Epper OAM	Peter Werner
David Foster	
Hilton Grugeon AM	

## Life Members

Roger Allen OAM	John Gerahty	Keith Perkin
Clasina Andrews	Sybil Joel	Robert Pesavento
Julie Anthony AM OBE	Judith Johnson	Kathleen Pigram
Mark Bowen	Errol Larbalestier	Ostilio Pisanu
Judy Brewer AO	P Mayne	Gretchen Poiner
Geraldine Bryant	Michael McColm	A H Polyblank
John Crow	Malcolm McEwen	Jacqueline Roberts
Barbara Cummins	Jill McGrath	Weston Ryan
Peter Dodd	Tony McGrath AM	Basil Sellers
Peter Drayton	Shirley McIntosh	John Shand
H Emanuel	Cath Mount	Jean Slaughter
Tim Fischer AC	Claire O'Keefe	David Starte OAM
Mark Fogerty	Richard Owens AM	Margaret Stead
		Andrea Werner

## Remembered

Aspect Life Governor Mr A G Whelan sadly passed away recently. He is remembered for his unwavering commitment to supporting people on the autism spectrum and their families.

Aspect Life member Marie Goodare sadly died in 2018. We remember her for her commitment to supporting people on the autism spectrum and thank her for her generosity in leaving a gift to Aspect in her Will.





# Message from the Chair

**It is with great pleasure that I present Autism Spectrum Australia's (Aspect) 2018 Annual Report.**

2018 marked a number of significant achievements for Aspect. Of central importance was the launch of our new Purpose Statement - our core reason for existing. It is: *a different brilliant® - understanding, engaging and celebrating the strengths, interests and aspirations of people on the autism spectrum*. The importance of this statement is that for the first time it provides a unifying principle which underpins Aspect and its operations. It applies across the whole of our services and has struck a chord among our staff - it represents our burning ambition in the work that we do.

Within this broad Purpose, the Core Strategies that drove Aspect's Strategic Plan in 2018 were:

- be person-centred, family-focused and customer-driven;
- be the national autism-specific service provider and knowledge leader for autism; and
- continue to build capacity and reach.

The clarity of our strategy was crucial in a year when there were very substantial changes taking place in the external environment in which we work.

First, the rollout of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) was completed in New South Wales (where most of our participants live) resulting in all disability funding in that state moving to individualised funding packages and no further funding for services coming to Aspect from the NSW Government. Meanwhile, the rollout was gathering pace in Victoria (where we have the second largest number of participants) as it prepares for its full transition to the NDIS in 2019. We welcome this fundamental change to disability funding in this country as being the right thing for the autism community, yet it has been enormously complex, requiring participants and service providers alike to learn completely new ways of operating in a competitive market place.

Second, Aspect worked closely during the year with the Commonwealth, NSW and South Australian governments as long term decisions were being made about education funding for the third decade of this century and beyond. The previous arrangements for funding education had been in place for many decades, where the major funding for independent schools, such as those run by Aspect, came from the state governments while the smaller proportion of funding came from the Commonwealth.

In 2018, the Commonwealth Government decided that over the coming decade, it would be responsible for 80% of education funding for independent schools, while

state governments would become responsible for 20% of the funding. While this very significant reversal of responsibilities for education funding by governments was negotiated, there was much discussion between the two levels of government as to how the transition would occur and over what timeframe. By year end, the decisions by these governments were becoming clearer, but were still not finalised. This meant that Aspect, like other organisations in the sector, had to manage considerable uncertainty about future education funding, while still continuing to offer its services to as many people on the spectrum as possible. At the same time, we have been exploring new options for the provision of education services within the future funding environment.

At a time of such change in the education sector, we are proud that Aspect was able to continue to grow the number of student places it offered in its nine schools across NSW and in Adelaide with a total of 1,136 student places, the largest number of student places ever offered by Aspect. The number of participants on the spectrum receiving individualised funding packages for disability services in NSW, the ACT and Victoria also rose to 3,820, nearly 500 more than in 2017. This result was most important as it confirmed for the Board that Aspect was on the right trajectory and ready for the new world of disability service provision under the NDIS.

Aspect's income for 2018 exceeded \$100m for the first time, with a total income of \$104.29m, nearly \$12m more than the previous year. The Total Comprehensive Income for the year of \$6.10 million was an exceptional result for Aspect and continues a consistent trend in recent years. It was mainly due to a very strong operating surplus of \$5.96m. I want to congratulate Aspect's management for this result during these uncertain times, along with Aspect's many supporters who generously gave to Aspect so that we could continue to offer the best opportunities to people on the spectrum and their families.

Importantly, Aspect has continued to engage people on the spectrum at all levels of the organisation. This was most apparent in the Board's ongoing support for the Aspect Advisory Council which formed in August 2017. The Council comprises seven people on the autism spectrum who advise the Board and Executive on Aspect's governance, strategy and risk. During 2018, the partnership between the Council and the Board continued to strengthen with the active participation by Council members in numerous meetings throughout the year. It culminated in a revised set of Regulations developed by the Council and approved by the Board in December 2018 that ensure that the Council's important role within Aspect is permanently embedded in our governance.





The major event in 2018 was Aspect staging the third Autism in Education Conference, which this time was held in Brisbane. A total of 521 delegates from 9 countries attended the conference. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, especially regarding the inclusion of nine presenters on the autism spectrum in the keynote and symposia speaker line up.

Aspect also announced a major collaboration with the Sylvia Rodger Academy of the Autism Cooperative Research Centre to deliver the Future Leaders Program in 2019 and 2020. The Future Leaders Program is Australia's first holistic leadership capacity-building program for autistic adults. Co-designed and delivered by autistic adults, it is designed to empower autistic adults with leadership potential who want to make a positive impact in their communities. Aspect has supported this exceptional program since its inception 2013, and is now delighted to be formally part of its management over the coming two years.

I want to thank my fellow office bearers, the committee chairs and the members of the Board for their continued thoughtful dedication to Aspect and its governance. I particularly want to acknowledge Jenny Young who stepped down from the Board in 2018 after eight years of outstanding service as a Board Director, during which she was the Chair of the Board from 2013 to 2015. Her passionate commitment to Aspect and her leadership at Board level was invaluable as Aspect continued to mature into a national organisation. I am delighted we can recognise Jenny's contribution at the 2019 AGM by making her a Life Governor.

Also my sincere thanks to the Executive team at Aspect. It is the Executive's commitment and dedication to this organisation that drives Aspect's vision to provide the best opportunities for people on the spectrum. My thanks also to all the staff, whose focus on understanding, engaging and celebrating the strengths, interests and aspirations of people on the spectrum is unwavering.

Finally, Adrian Ford will be stepping down from his roles as Chief Executive Officer and Company Secretary later this year. As this is the last AGM at which Adrian will be in these roles, I would like to thank him on behalf of the Board for his contribution to Aspect over these past nineteen years. The evolution of Aspect to the organisation it is today has only been possible because of the extraordinary talent, vision and leadership Adrian has demonstrated throughout his time as CEO. He has been a truly exceptional CEO, showing a rare ability to steward the organisation through a period of enormous growth and change. He can be proud to leave as his legacy a strong and flourishing organisation intensely committed to engaging with and serving the autism community.

Julie Hamblin  
Chair of the Aspect Board

# Message from the Chief Executive Officer

Amid the changing external environment highlighted in Julie Hamblin's report, 2018 was a year marked by solid financial performances and continued growth in our service provision.

To support these outcomes Aspect continued to invest in its two main points of difference, the deployment of the Aspect Comprehensive Approach (ACA) and Aspect's commitment to research in autism practice.

Aspect began rolling out the Aspect Comprehensive Approach in 2017. The Aspect Comprehensive Approach includes eight key elements that Aspect has identified through its research as being essential to good practice, and combines it with the Five Point Star, developed by Autism Initiatives in the UK, which puts the relationship between the participant and the staff member at the core of achieving beneficial outcomes.

In 2018 more than 800 Aspect staff were trained in the application of the Five Point Star to provide a consistent approach to our work across all business units. It is very exciting to see this important work being adopted so readily across the organisation. The work of implementing the Aspect Comprehensive Approach will continue in 2019 led by specialist experienced practitioners whose sole task is to train and support their colleagues in its application.

Secondly, Aspect renewed and re-invigorated its commitment to advancing our knowledge of autism practice through research. Research into autism practice has been a feature at Aspect for the last fifteen years. However in 2018 we agreed this work would become a distinguishing characteristic for Aspect, recognised by all staff and by our external stakeholders, whether they be governments, trusts & foundations, corporations or the community at large. This decision was reinforced in late 2018 when Aspect's work in research, and our commitment to co-producing our research with people on the spectrum, was recognised by the Autism Cooperative Research Centre (Autism CRC) and we became one of its first Research Co-production Partners.

With these two points of difference guiding our work in 2018, Aspect provided services to 6,386 participants and their families across our schools and our many disability services ranging from assessment and diagnosis, through to employment and community access services for adult participants. Aspect also continued to grow its network of therapy services, which represents our largest single form of service delivery to people on the spectrum of all ages, by providing therapy services to 2,905 participants in 2018.

Aspect also invested in building capacity in our autism community, with 7,524 people attending workshops delivered by Aspect. Of these more than 1,500 people attended 70 workshops delivered by Aspect Practice focused on helping to build a more autism-friendly Australia.

Aspect's largest community is on social media where we had over 111,670 followers at the end of 2018, an 18% increase in just twelve months.

Meanwhile, Aspect maintained a Net Promoter Score (NPS) of 80% in 2018, the same high level we achieved in 2017. The NPS is Aspect's measure of our customers' experience and satisfaction over the previous 12 months. This score means that four out of five people rated Aspect's service as a nine or ten out of ten - a terrific achievement.

Aspect's flagship fundraising event, *Walk for autism*, saw more than 9,450 supporters join us in 2018 to raise more than \$1,000,000 gross from this event. This was 6,500 more supporters than 2017, or an increase of 89%, an amazing achievement for an event which is only in its third year. Aspect also launched a new fundraising event in 2018, *Ride for autism*, which attracted close to 200 riders.

Overall, Aspect's generous donors and supporters gave a total of \$4.9m gross to support the work not funded by governments. Without these many gifts Aspect would not be able to make its many innovative contributions to better support individuals and their families through its services and research. I want to sincerely thank every person who has given to Aspect.

From a compliance perspective, Aspect had a number of important achievements in 2018, including passing the National Standards for Disability Services audit in all states and in all services. As well, Third Party Verification was completed in NSW, SA & ACT with no non-conformances and Victorian services completed its mid-cycle accreditation audit against the NSDS and the Victorian DHHS Standards with no non-conformances.

As part of its partnership strategy, Aspect continued to be an important contributor to the Australian Advisory Board on Autism and the Australian Autism Alliance, and was directly involved in the formation of the NDIA Autism Advisory Group, a development that marks the first formal engagement by senior executives of the NDIA with the autism sector since the beginning of the NDIS in 2014.

Finally, as Julie's has noted, I have decided to step down from my roles as Chief Executive Officer and Company Secretary later this year. It has been an extraordinary





privilege to serve this organisation over these past nineteen years and I am delighted that together we have achieved so much. Through it all Aspect has stayed true to its purpose of being a specialised autism-specific service provider so that people on the spectrum can generate the best possible opportunities in their lives.

I would like to thank Julie Hamblin and the Aspect Board for their guiding vision, leadership and governance, but most importantly for their unwavering commitment to Aspect's purpose. The Board Directors generously give their time and expertise to meet Aspect's governance responsibilities, as well as drive the high level thinking about Aspect and its future direction. The Aspect family is fortunate to have such a capable Board led by an exceptional Chair, Julie Hamblin.

I also want to acknowledge the Executive team and the Management Network for their outstanding leadership and tenacity in achieving the many goals and actions that comprise our strategic plan, and finally the Aspect staff, without whose dedication, commitment and passion we would not be able to deliver the services, support, opportunities and practices for which we have become renowned.

I look forward to watching Aspect strengthen, evolve and progress even further in the coming years and decades.

Adrian Ford  
Chief Executive Officer

# Aspect Advisory Council

2018 was the Council's first full year of activity. We spent it busily developing our relationship with the Aspect Executive and Board, and establishing mechanisms that enable the Council to function smoothly.

Over the past 12 months we have had significant input into a number of key Aspect documents, including the 2019 - 2021 Strategic Plan and Aspect's Inclusion and Diversity Strategy. We have also had the opportunity to visit a number of Aspect sites and services, meet regularly with the Aspect Board and Executive, and participate in a number of high-level strategic planning meetings.

Members of the Council work as a collaborative team, and model a collaborative decision-making approach to the Aspect Board. Since the Council's

establishment, we have developed a strong sense of belonging and shared direction as a group. Encouraged by each other and the Aspect Board, we are confident that the work we are doing is making a difference.

The Council provides an autistic perspective to Aspect's work and strategic planning. This engagement with the autistic community is a critical step for an autism service provider. Aspect plays an important role in providing much needed services to the autism community, and our aim is to ensure that the voice of the autistic community guides the development and delivery of those services.

The Council is proud of both our and Aspect's work, and we look forward to building on this work next year and into the future.





We would like to recognise each member of the Aspect Advisory Council - *Paul Micallef, John Brawley, Tori Haar, Jac den Houting, Ainslie Robinson, Krishna Sadhana and Spence Thew* - and acknowledge the work of Asher Scobie, who stepped down from the Council in late 2018.

- The Aspect Advisory Council  
(Pictured below, from left to right - *Spence Thew, Krishna Sadhana, John Brawley, Jac den Houting, Tori Haar, Paul Micallef and Ainslie Robertson*)

**The Aspect Advisory Council, which comprises 7 people on the autism spectrum, is an essential part of the governance of Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect). The Council provides independent advice to the Board and Aspect's Executive team on governance issues, including the management of corporate strategy and risk, based on the Members' own insights and experiences.**





*Jeremiah and his father Joel*

Photographer: Elite Photography Norfolk Island



# Aspect Therapy opens new world on Norfolk

Aspect Therapy has over 30 years' experience in providing early intervention, screening, individual and group services for people of all ages on the autism spectrum. Our therapy team can visit you in the home, early childhood setting, school or community setting, or at one of our therapy centres. Families and individuals are involved in all facets of a decision making and our services and supports can be delivered individually or in small groups. Aspect also offers a unique Tele-Therapy service to rural and remote areas.

With a population of just over 2,000 people, Norfolk Island is a small volcanic outcrop lying approximately 900km off the coast of Australia. In 2018, this small community celebrated the roll out of the NDIS and Aspect employed its first local Norfolk resident, Aidan Bruce.

Aidan's appointment was welcomed by many residents on Norfolk, who, until the roll out, had only experienced sporadic therapy services from mainland Australia. But none were more welcoming than 13 year old Jeremiah and his family.

Jeremiah was born on Norfolk Island and first diagnosed with autism at 4 years of age. A non-verbal communicator, Jeremiah enjoys playing with magnets and watching superhero movies, but has had difficulty communicating his needs and interests. This has led to feelings of frustration and confusion for both Jeremiah and his family, and limited his attendance at the local school.

But not anymore.

Before the arrival of new Aspect services on Norfolk, Jeremiah had only received therapy services twice in his entire life! Now with the help of a dedicated Allied Health Assistant, Jeremiah is receiving regular therapy sessions at home and at school. These therapy sessions include speech therapy, where Jeremiah is learning to sign and communicate his needs, and occupational therapy, to assist with his behaviour.

*"Our aim is provide Jeremiah with the skills and support he needs, and deserves, to communicate with his family and the wider community, but it is also about ensuring that his family and immediate network have the tools they need to understand and support his learning and development." - Aidan*

Jeremiah's parents, Joel and Nicole, are extremely proud of their son's achievements over the past few months and credit Aspect with helping their family to better understand his particular needs.

*"Jeremiah has only been receiving regular therapy for a short time but the changes we are seeing are amazing. After receiving just a couple of weeks of signing therapy, Jeremiah was using signs to indicate what he wanted for the first time. This is a tremendous step forward." - Joel*

Aspect recently spent a day on Norfolk Island with Jeremiah's community network - family, friends, school teachers and more - to give them a better understand of Jeremiah's needs and to show them how to communicate with him using the signs he has been learning in therapy.

*"The group sign training provided by Aspect for key members of Jeremiah's community has opened up new possibilities for us. It is such a joy for us to see Jeremiah understanding what we are saying to him, and for us to finally be able understand what he is trying to communicate with us." - Joel*

## Our impact



**3,820**

people accessed  
Aspect services using  
their individualised  
funding

**1,136**

Aspect School  
students across  
our **9** schools



**58**

Aspect Capable  
participants placed  
in paid employment  
(full-time, casual  
and part-time)

**6,386**

people accessed Aspect  
services, including school  
services, therapy and  
assessment, employment  
and community access  
services for adults



**7,524**

Aspect workshop  
participants



# Our future

In August 2018 the Aspect Board signed off on the 2019 - 2021 Strategy Plan which refers to four Core Strategies.

These four Core Strategies build on our strengths as an organisation around practice and research and continues our growth strategy, but importantly places our engagement with people on the spectrum, in every facet of our work, as our number one priority.

## Aspect's Core Strategies: 2019 - 2021

1. Engage people on the autism spectrum in Aspect's governance, research, service planning and service delivery
2. Innovate and deliver high quality autism-specific person-centred services.
3. Extend Aspect's capabilities and reach nationally
4. Be a knowledge leader in autism practice

The Strategic Plan 2019 - 2021 charts Aspect's course over the coming three years.

Aspect's strategic plan has been designed to be flexible in order to cope with any future changes in the sector. Aspect is committed to monitoring the plan at its Board meetings, Executive meetings and Management Network meetings, to ensure that the plan is being implemented. Any changes which impact the plan are progressively factored in.

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

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

### The Planning Guidelines

Strategy development takes place within a scope defined by the following guidelines:

- Always plan three years ahead;
- Have goals and milestones for the immediate year ahead;

- Have measurable key performance indicators; and
- Be financially sustainable.

### Aspect's planning process

In order to have a rolling three year plan, Aspect has to manage two ongoing parallel planning processes. One is stepping out the current strategic plan by one more year (which is a nine month planning process) and the other is reporting on the implementation and outcomes of the current annual business plan for the current three-year strategic plan.

Below is the process for stepping out the current strategic plan by one more year:

- » A strategic audit of Aspect's external and internal environments
- » Management's vision for the organisation three years ahead
- » The development by the Board and the Executive of Aspect's Core Strategies for the next three years. These form the foundations of the next Strategic Plan; and
- » Finally the Business Plan for the coming year is developed, to drive the budget.

# Autism tele-therapy for remote locations - Building Connections

Research plays a vital role in Aspect's work and practices. We conduct regular research to inform many of our practices and programs, and routinely review new national and international research to ensure that Aspect is aware of and adopting the most up-to-date research and knowledge in autism practice.

Importantly, Aspect's research focus is not on finding a cure for autism, or on finding the causes of autism. Our focus is on providing the best possible services and programs for people on the autism spectrum here and now; the best practice, informed by evidence from around the world, to provide the best possible opportunities for the people we support.

Since 2015, Aspect has been researching the delivery of autism services into regional, rural and remote locations of Australia via tele-therapy. Families of children on the autism spectrum in these locations have reported experiencing long waiting lists, extensive travel times and lack of choice of specialist disability services. A key reason for this is that autism service providers find it difficult to recruit and retain suitable professionals to work in these locations.

However, technology delivered intervention, also known as e-health, tele-health or tele-therapy, has been used successfully in the Australian disability sector to both train and support therapists and deliver services in a range of other areas such as speech pathology, adult autism assessment, occupational therapy, and all studies have reported favourable outcomes, providing a timely, low-cost means of delivering services where face-to-face specialist disability support is unavailable or inaccessible.

In 2018 Aspect completed the second stage of the Building Connections project which aimed to develop, trial and evaluate:

- An online platform to deliver interactive group webinars and individualised support sessions to a range of disability workers working with children on the autism spectrum in rural and remote communities across New South Wales; designed to build capacity in service providers

in rural and remote areas to work with children on the autism spectrum; and

- A collaborative autism-specific tele-therapy service using videoconferencing to deliver autism services to clients in rural and remote communities.

The evaluation of the online platform to support disability workers showed that it was not only possible to use an interactive, technology-based platform to deliver training and support for disability workers in regional, rural and remote communities across Australia, but that such a platform could provide significant benefits for these workers that would increase their retention in their communities.



Photographer: Genevieve Johnsson





The evaluation of the tele-therapy service found that we were able to successfully target a wide range of goals including self-care, Positive Behaviour Support, communication and social skills. Reported benefits included that it was autism-specific, collaborative, and improved access to specialist support.

**Following the positive results from this research, Aspect Therapy began offering tele-therapy services in July 2018, and these services have now reached clients and service providers in the Northern Territory, New South Wales, South Australia and Victoria, with specially trained Aspect staff providing this service, including speech pathologists, occupational therapists, psychologist, teachers and social workers.**

These new Aspect tele-therapy services are removing the burden and cost of travel for families and local support teams so that they can easily access autism-specific support from the comfort of their homes, schools and offices in areas where this much-needed support is otherwise limited and at times inaccessible.

This new mode of service delivery has the potential to be replicated across many other Aspect services for people on the autism spectrum and their families, and work has already started on this for Aspect's Education services. Aspect will also continue to partner with the University of Sydney as we begin to undertake new research on the delivery of Positive Behaviour Support services via tele-practice.

## Aspect's fundraising

Aspect thanks all our donors and supporters for their generous gifts throughout the year - all of you are helping to ensure that no-one on the autism spectrum is left behind.



**46,436**  
supporters



**34**  
organisations  
partnered with  
Aspect

**\$4.93**  
million  
raised



# Our supporters

## Platinum

Aberdeen Standard Investments  
Accident & Health International Underwriting Pty Limited  
ASX Refinitiv Charity Foundation  
Dee Why RSL Club Ltd  
Department of Family and Community Services  
John Doyle AM  
David Epper OAM  
Shane & Michelle Finlay  
Kenneth & Peter Gibbs Foundation  
McCloy Group  
Parents & Friends Committees of Aspect Schools  
The Bluesand Foundation  
The Primary Club of Australia Inc  
The Redan Foundation Limited  
Western Suburbs (N'cle) Leagues Club (West's Newcastle)  
Westfield Community Program  
Woodend Foundation

## Gold

Chelsea Albert  
Alfieris Foundation  
AMP Foundation  
Clasina Andrews  
AON  
Apex Foundation  
Australian Sports Commission  
Joseph Ayoub  
Con Bellos

Ralph Bierbaum  
Camden Council  
Cessnock Rugby League Supporters Club Ltd  
Barbara Cummins  
Dooleys Lidcombe Catholic Club  
Ernst & Young  
Experian Asia Pacific  
Adrian Ford  
Forestville RSL Club Limited  
Guy Carpenter & Co Pty Ltd  
Hornsby RSL Club Limited  
Illawarra Catholic Club Ltd (Club Central)  
Illawarra Police Charity Ball  
Inner Wheel Club of Wollongong Inc  
Judith Ann Johnson  
Liangrove Foundation Pty Ltd  
Macquarie Group Foundation  
Marsh Pty Ltd  
MasoniCare  
Michael and Mary Whelan Trust  
Neil & Norma Hill Foundation  
Network Ten Pty Limited  
Northern Beaches Council  
NSW Ministry of Health  
Omniwealth  
Optus Pty Ltd  
Kathleen Pigram  
Pittwater RSL Club Limited  
Propertylink  
Quatttro Risk Services

Annie Rose  
Rotary Club of Frenchs Forest Inc  
Rotary Club of The Entrance  
Rotary Club of Wetherill Park  
Kelly Shaw  
SLE Worldwide Australia Pty Limited  
Geoffrey Stevens  
Irene Stone  
Terrigal Trotters Incorporated  
The Isabel & John Gilbertson Charitable Trust  
The James N Kirby Foundation  
The R A Gale Foundation  
Jan Theil  
Thomas Bros Group  
University of Wollongong  
Simone Van den Berg  
Walter Campbell Memorial Trust  
West's Tigers Rugby League Football Pty Ltd  
Woonona Womens Bowling Club  
Wyong Rugby League Club

## Gifts in Will

Laksiri De Silva  
Marion Armstrong Kingston  
Gerald Emanuel Goldberg  
Valve Klavins  
Susan Francis Murdoch  
Ethel May Murray  
Patrick Stewart  
John Torrice

Photographer: Dave Thomson

**2,994**  
monthly gift  
donations made  
through our Aspect  
Partner in Change  
program

**8** gifts in  
wills left to  
Aspect

**4,674**  
participants



# OnOn's journey

Aspect operates one of the world's largest educational programs for children and young people on the autism spectrum. Our special education teachers work in conjunction with occupational therapists, speech therapists and psychologists to develop intensive, autism-specific programs within small classes that have a high teacher to student ratio, and teacher aide supports. By working closely with parents and carers we aim to collaboratively achieve positive outcomes not just at school, but at home and in the community.

OnOn is your fairly typical 7 year old boy. He enjoys the Wiggles, kid's cartoons, playing with his cars and trucks, and he loves tickles from his family. What makes OnOn special is the journey he and his family have taken to arrive where they are today.

OnOn and his family live in Western Sydney NSW and OnOn is the third of four children. OnOn's mum, Lily, suspected fairly early in OnOn's life that something wasn't quite right with his development, particularly around social and verbal skills.

*"I had two children previously, so I could see that OnOn wasn't meeting some of the developmental milestones that I had watched my other children make. Milestones such as talking and interacting with others." - Lily*

Lily sought help quite early from her local GP and OnOn was diagnosed with autism when he was 2½ years old.

*"It was quite an isolating time for me after the diagnosis. I really struggled to understand what the diagnosis meant for OnOn's future and for myself, while continuing to deal with the demands of a young family." - Lily*

Lily felt helpless. She wasn't sure how to help OnOn and she didn't feel that anyone understood what she was going through. She was starting to lose hope and realised that not only did OnOn need help, but that she needed support as well to deal with the changes in her family.

When OnOn was 4 years old, Lily found Aspect's Western Sydney School in Wetherill Park and enrolled her son in kindergarten. The support she received from teachers and the wider autism community was instant and welcoming.

*"Meeting other parents who had been through similar experiences was such a relief, I finally felt like I wasn't alone. I had found somewhere that we both belonged and where we were fully accepted. Being a part of the Aspect autism community is now so important to me, and to OnOn." - Lily*

Now in Year 2 at Aspect Western Sydney School, Lily says the changes to OnOn's character have been incredible and he is able to concentrate for longer periods of time, take turns, get involved in classroom activities and communicate through the use of single words and an iPad.

*"The one on one attention that he has received from the Aspect teachers has been so amazing and the community at the school so supportive. I can't express strongly enough how life changing finding the Aspect Western Sydney School has been. We are just so grateful to have a happy boy who is learning and improving every day. OnOn has taken us all on an amazing journey and we have all changed and benefited from it. He is happy and our family is happy. It has given us all hope" - Lily*





*Aspect student OnOn and his mum Lily*  
Photographer: Adrian Koch

# Treasurer's report

## Overview

It is with pleasure that I present another wonderful operating result for Aspect for the 2018 financial year. The Total Comprehensive Income for the year of \$6.10m was an outstanding achievement and continues to strengthen Aspect's capacity to meet its strategic objectives. It was due to the combination of a strong operating surplus for the period of \$5.96m, the income received from bequests \$0.17m and capital donations of \$0.42m, offset by the net negative returns from Aspect's investment portfolios (\$0.45m).

Aspect continued to extend its footprint in 2018, highlighted by the capital works commencing at a number of sites, including Aspect Hunter School and two new therapy clinics based in Baulkham Hills, NSW and Flemington, Victoria. Additionally, there was further significant investment in Aspect's Enterprise Resource Planning system to enhance our efficiency in resource deployment to better respond to the needs of our participants as part of Aspect's commitment to quality and efficiency under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

During 2018, Aspect further developed its service offerings. The total number of registered student places in its schools increased by 34 to 1,136 in 2018 (2017: 1,102). Aspect's NDIS Services also continued its ascending trajectory with 3,820 participants choosing Aspect as their preferred service provider, an increase of 448 participants compared to 2017.

Under the expanding NDIS funding environment, an increasingly competitive market and changes in education funding for schools, the strong result reflects the operating efficiency of Aspect's services and the continued effective management of resources. A number of consecutive years of surplus provides some of the necessary funds to allow Aspect to invest in areas that are pivotal to its future success including potentially some of the following initiatives:

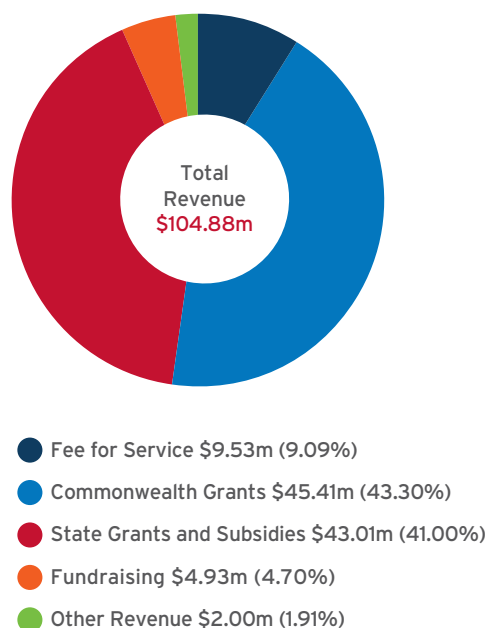
1. Expand the reach of Aspect Education through distance education and the establishment of new school campuses such as the work that has commenced on the Loftus campus in southern Sydney, part of the Aspect South East Sydney School;
2. Further investment into Aspect's research and to training its staff in the Aspect Comprehensive Approach to strengthen Aspect's points of difference;

3. Collaborate with the Autism Cooperative Research Centre to deliver Future Leaders Program which is Australia's holistic leadership capacity building program for autistic adults designed by and for autistic people, to learn from, empower and encourage one another to pursue their goals and positively impact their communities;
4. Deliver Autism Friendly Projects which provide opportunities for those on the autism spectrum to be included in communities and work places in a safe and meaningful way;
5. Invest in capital projects in existing Aspect schools to meet the changing educational environment; and
6. Continue to enhance the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system aiming to further deliver superior customer service and better meet the needs of participants.

## Income

Total income, which passed the significant milestone of \$100m in 2018 was \$104.88m (Graph 1), an increase of 11.67% or \$10.96m from 2017. Government funding continued to be the major source of income for Aspect representing 84.30% of total income, which is greater than 2017 highlighting the Commonwealth and State Governments' commitment to invest in education and the NDIS.

Graph 1:  
Source of funds



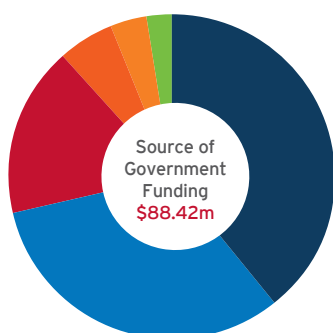


Total fees for services including school fees was \$9.53m (\$11.17m in 2017) which accounted for 9.09% (11.89% in 2017) of total income. The decrease in fees for services income was due to participants transitioning to the NDIS as reflected in the increase in government grants.

Gross fundraising income for 2018 was \$4.93m, which was consistent with 2017. Aspect appreciates the continuing support from donors during the year. Fundraising continues to represent a vitally important part of Aspect's income as it allows Aspect to provide services that are either not funded by government, or where the costs are not fully met.

Government grants income increased by \$13.18m to \$88.42m (Graph 2) which reflected a higher level of government subsidies due to the increase in student numbers and NDIS participants. Grant income from the Catholic Education Office for teacher aides at Aspect satellite classes, included in Other Revenue, was consistent with the prior year.

**Graph 2:  
Source of Government funding**

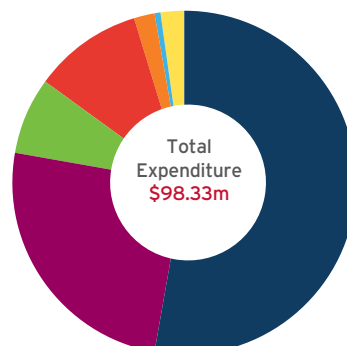


- NSW Department of Education \$34.78m (39.34%)
- Commonwealth Department of Education & Training \$28.33m (32.05%)
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) \$15.03m (16.99%)
- VIC Department of Health & Human Services \$4.88m (5.52%)
- NSW Department of Family & Community Services \$3.35m (3.79%)
- Commonwealth Department of Social Services \$2.05m (2.31%)

## Expenses

Total expenses for 2018 increased by 9.29% over prior year to \$98.33m in 2018 (Graph 3). Each business unit manager was responsible for their unit's expenditures and monitor expenses closely to ensure Aspect resources are being used efficiently.

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



- Aspect Education \$51.71m (52.59%)
- NDIS Services and Strategic Partnering \$25.07m (25.50%)
- Positive Partnerships \$7.12m (7.24%)
- Aspect Shared Services \$9.81m (9.98%)
- Aspect Investments & Loans \$0.18m (0.18%)
- Aspect Fundraising \$1.91m (1.94%)
- Aspect Practice \$0.56m (0.57%)
- Aspect Research \$1.97m (2.00%)

By group, Aspect Education accounted for 52.59% of total expenses, which was consistent with 2017 (54.06%). The Shared Services costs were higher than 2017 at 9.98% (2017: 8.57%) of the total expenditure. This reflects an increase in the compliance and management overheads imposed by the NDIS due to the volume of transactions despite Aspect's ongoing focus on administrative cost management during 2018.

By expense type, salary costs were \$79.10m representing 80.44% of total expenditure, which was consistent with 2017 (81.58%). All business units managed their staffing mix to take account of the demand for services.

The overall total of other expenses excluding employee expenses increased by \$2.65m, from \$16.58m in 2017 to \$19.23m in 2018. Within this, total consultant costs represented the highest non-salary expense item at \$3.73m, which was higher from 2017 (2017: \$2.42m). The majority of consultant expenses related to the engagement of facilitators and learning specialists for workshops in the Positive Partnerships program. Phase Three of the Positive Partnerships program was commenced in late 2015 and the increase in consultant costs reflected a significant increase in the number of workshops delivered during the year.

Capital expenditure in 2018 was \$3.06m compared to \$2.07m in 2017, a great portion of which was related to the implementation of Aspect's ERP system. The remainder related to a range of improvements in Aspect's schools such as playground upgrades and interactive smartboards and other technology upgrades across the whole organisation.

### Assets & Reserves

Overall net assets of the organisation increased by \$6.10m to \$34.00m in 2018 from \$27.90m in 2017, putting Aspect in a very strong financial position.

Aspect's Long Term Investment Reserve decreased by \$0.14m as at December 2017 to \$4.09m at 31 December 2018 owing to the downward market movement in the last quarter. The portfolio is actively managed in conjunction with Aspect's investment advisers, JBWere and the performance of the portfolio is measured against defined benchmarks that are aligned with the long-term strategic objectives, liquidity considerations and risk profile. The Long Term Reserve is intended to be used in the event where Aspect needs to fund a major long term Board approved capital investment that is consistent with Aspect's strategic plan or to address a major adverse financial event.

Aspect also maintains a Tactical Reserve to provide a funding base for medium term projects that require capital funding. The balance of this reserve as at 31 December 2018 was \$1.51m, which was a \$0.24m increase from 2017. The operating surplus for the 2018 year will be added to the Tactical Reserve when the financial statements have been formally adopted.

The cash position fluctuates throughout the year and is influenced by the timing of government grants and school fees which are invoiced in three instalments. Ending period cash and cash equivalent balances increased to \$25.90m in 2018, up from \$25.65m in 2017.

Management continually focuses on cash flow and the improvement of operating margins in order to position Aspect well for the future as it prepares for the full

implementation of the NDIS in 2019. In addition, Aspect has in place a bank overdraft facility and also maintains a level of liquidity in the investment portfolios to cover potential temporary shortfalls. The overdraft facility was not drawn upon during 2018.

The trade payables balance of \$7.03m primarily reflects government grant income, which has been received in advance and will be expended on programs during 2019. The provisions balance, which totals \$11.31m, mainly comprises of annual leave and long service leave liabilities accrued for Aspect staff members.

### Conclusion

A strong financial base is an essential element of delivering sustainable quality services. The robust financial result for 2018 enables Aspect to execute its strategic plan, increase the range of services and the geographical area in which it delivers its services. The continued phased implementation of the NDIS and changes in education funding provides ongoing challenges and opportunities that Aspect can best respond to from a sound financial base. The Board recognises the fine margins that apply to the services Aspect provides and Management has been continually developing tools and processes to enhance Aspect's ability to proactively engage with the changing environment.

I would like to acknowledge the contribution of the Finance team in Aspect who have continued to improve effective financial reporting processes during 2018 and to the Executive team as a whole for their continued focus on Aspect's financial dimensions.

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

Henry Capra  
Honorary Treasurer

22 March 2019





# Directors' report

The Directors present their report together with the financial report of Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) for the year ended 31 December 2018 and the auditors' report thereon.

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

## Directors

The names of the Directors in office at any time during the year or since the end of the year are:

### Julie Hamblin, Chair of the Board

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



### Henry Capra, Deputy Chair of the Board & Honorary Treasurer

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

### Robert J. Brown, Director

**Robert J. Brown** GAICD, B.Sc., M.A. (Applied Mathematics), Grad. Dip. Applied Finance, is the founder of management consultancy firm Alford Brown & Associates, and also executive officer of the Australian Custodial Services Association. Rob has previously held senior executive roles with HSBC, Westpac, the Commonwealth Bank and State Street Bank. He is experienced in the governance of not-for-profit organisations, and has a personal interest in special education and the needs of children with learning difficulties. Rob joined the Board in June 2008, formerly held the position of Honorary Treasurer, and is a member of the Fundraising & Communications Committee. Rob is a Board appointed Director.



### Annette Gallard, Director

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



### **Laurie Horin, Director**

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



### **Ian Joseph, Director** (resigned 29 May 2018)

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

### **Paul Khoury, Director** (appointed 23 March 2018)

**Paul Khoury** B.Sc, GD Ed, MA, GD App Finance, SF Fin, GAICD is the CEO of Link Fund Solutions, a Board member of St Patrick's College Strathfield and consultant to the financial services industry specialising in business strategy, governance and operations transformation. Previously, he held senior roles in the areas of investment management, operations management and actuarial consulting for a number of domestic and international investment managers and industry service providers including State Street Corporation, Focus IM, Hambros Hopkins, GIO, MIRA Consultants and IFA Australia. Paul was appointed to the Board to fill a casual vacancy in March 2018. He is a member of the Finance, People & Audit Committee and the Strategy Committee. Paul is a Member-elected Director.



### **Marielle Latour, Director** (appointed 31 October 2018)

**Marielle Latour** B.Ec, Exec MBA, GAICD, has over 30 years' experience within the financial services industry. She is currently a non-executive director of CBHS Health Fund Limited and CBHS Corporate Health Fund Pty Ltd. Her previous board directorships include My Credit Union Limited and the Australian Handball Federation. Her professional experience is in consulting, marketing and distribution, stakeholder management and managing businesses. She has held senior executive positions at Colonial Group, Commonwealth Bank, TAL and a start-up business. Marielle was appointed to a casual vacancy on the Board in August 2018 and is a member of the Strategy Committee and the Fundraising & Communications Committee.

### **Pamela Rutledge, Director** (appointed on 23 March 2018)

**Pamela (Pam) Rutledge** BA Dip Social Work, MAICD, FIPAA, has over 40 years' experience managing and leading complex health, community services and mental health services. Pam was the Executive Officer of the Richmond Inquiry, which influenced the delivery of services for people with a mental illness and those with a developmental disability. Pam had extensive experience in senior roles in the NSW government, including health, housing, and ageing and disability. In 2009 Pam became CEO and Company Secretary of Richmond Fellowship of NSW and then CEO of the merged Flourish Australia (RichmondPRA Ltd), a role she retired from in 2017. Pam was appointed to the Board to fill a casual vacancy in March 2018. She is a member of the Strategy Committee and the Fundraising & Communications Committee. Pam is a Member-elected Director.



**Paul Stevenson, Director** (resigned 30 May 2018)

**Paul Stevenson** was the Acting Chief Marketing Officer and Customer Segmentation lead for Prosopa Advance Ltd. He was previously Qantas Airlines Group Head of Customer Insight. Before that Paul has held senior roles in Foxtel, Vodafone and Virgin Media in the UK. Paul has a son on the autism spectrum. Paul was appointed by the Board to fill a casual vacancy in September 2017 and was a Member of the Fundraising & Communications Committee and the Strategy Committee.



**Paul Ververs, Director** (appointed 1 August 2018)

**Paul Ververs** PSM, GAICD, BA (Hons), CQSW, Dip Management Studies is a Deputy Secretary at the Department of Family and Community Services where he manages three of the Department's Districts which provide child protection, out of home care and public housing services and coordinates the management of public housing tenancies across NSW. Paul worked for one year as a group parent in a Rudolph Steiner home in Switzerland before embarking on a career in child protection in London, UK. He subsequently worked for Fujitsu UK (ICL) and then joined the UK Audit Commission. Since 2000, Paul has worked in various regional management roles in the then Housing NSW and now in the Department of Family and Community Services. Paul was appointed to a casual vacancy on the Board in August 2018 and is a member of the Governance Committee and the Strategy Committee.



**Jeanie Young, Director** (resigned 22 August 2018)

**Jeanie (Jenny) Young** B.Bus., FAICD, leads the Technology, Media & Entertainment and Telecommunications segment, and is a Customer Advisory Partner at Ernst & Young. She was formerly Executive Director, NBN Transition at Telstra Corporation Limited. Jenny has held senior marketing positions for Unilever, Lion Nathan, Pepsi and Telstra, and has worked in New Zealand, the United Kingdom and Australia. Jenny has a son on the autism spectrum. She joined the Board in March 2010 and at the time of her resignation was the Chair of the Fundraising and Communications Committee and a member of the Governance Committee. Jenny formerly held the positions of Chair of the Board and then Immediate Past Chair. Jenny was a Member-elected Director.



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



Aspect acknowledges the contributions of Jenny Young who stepped down from the Board in 2018 after eight years of service as a Board Director, during which she was the Chair of the Board from 2012 to 2015, and Immediate Past Chair (Deputy Chair) from 2015 - 2018. Her dedication and commitment to Aspect at the Board level was invaluable.

*Thank you Jenny.*



## Meetings of the Directors in 2018

	Directors' Meetings		Audit & Risk Committee		Strategy Committee		Governance Committee		Fundraising and Communications Committee	
	No. of meetings attended	No. of meetings held	No. of meetings attended	No. of meetings held	No. of meetings attended	No. of meetings held	No. of meetings attended	No. of meetings held	No. of meetings attended	No. of meetings held
Ms J Hamblin	7	7	9	10	3	4	3	3		
Ms J Young	5	5					3	3	2	2
Mr H Capra	7	7	10	10						
Mr R Brown	4	7	4	4					1	1
Ms A Gallard	6	7			3	4	3	3	2	2
Mr L Horin	7	7	8	10	3	4				
Mr I Joseph	2	3			2	2			1	1
Ms M Latour	1	2			0	0			1	1
Mr P Khoury	5	5	7	7					1	1
Ms P Ruteledge	5	5			3	3			1	2
Mr P Stevenson	2	3			0	2			1	1
Mr P Vevers	3	3			1	1	0	1		

## Company Secretary

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

### Name & Qualifications:

Mr Adrian Ford FAICD, B. Soc.Stud

Appointment date:  
2000

## Principal activities

The principal activities of Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) are to provide a range of services to children, young people and adults on the autism spectrum that are person-centred, family-focused and customer-driven. These include customer engagement services, diagnostic and assessment services, therapy services (speech pathology, occupational therapy and psychology) including behaviour support programs, educational services for school-aged children to prepare them for transition to environments that are not autism-specific, short term accommodation services, individually-

funded and block-funded programs for children, young people and adults in response to their individual needs, strengths and capabilities. A range of support services are provided to families of people on the spectrum. As well the provision of workshops, training and consultation to other professionals and parents in ways of working with people on the spectrum continues as does Aspect's research program. There were no significant changes in the nature of its activities during the year.

## Short- and long-term objectives

Aspect's long-term objective or vision is the best opportunities for people on the autism spectrum. It does this through its mission by working with people of all ages on the autism spectrum, delivering evidence-informed solutions that are person-centred, family-focused and customer-driven.

Its short-term objectives for the next three years are:

1. Engage people on the autism spectrum in Aspect's governance, research, service planning and service delivery;



2. Innovate and deliver high quality autism-specific person-centred services;
3. Extend Aspect's capabilities and reach nationally, and
4. Be a knowledge leader in autism practice.

## Strategies for achieving those objectives

Aspect's strategies for achieving these objectives include:

- achieve its point of difference in service delivery through the Aspect-wide implementation of the Aspect Comprehensive Approach with autism-specific person-centred practice at its centre;
- continue to engage with people on the spectrum at all levels of the organisation including through the Aspect Advisory Council comprising people on the spectrum who advise the Board and Executive on governance, strategy and risk and through the co-production of research with people on the spectrum;
- continue to focus on growth opportunities in both education and disability nationally under the ongoing education funding reforms and the rollout of the NDIS;
- consolidate its position as knowledge leader for services and supports that work for people on the spectrum and their families;
- encourage supporters to continue to donate to Aspect; and
- attract the best people to work at Aspect, and aim for high levels of engagement and staff retention.

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

## Financial result

The surplus for 2018 was \$6,549,961 (2017: surplus \$3,947,890).

## Review of operations

Government grants continued to provide the major operational income for Aspect, supported by fundraising

and contribution by clients' families for some of the services through a fee for service charge. Income from these three sources increased in 2018 to \$102,882,603 compared with \$91,400,190 in 2017. This represents 98.1% of Aspect's total income.

## Contribution on winding up

The company is incorporated under the Corporations Act 2001 and is a company limited by guarantee. If the company is wound up, the constitution states that each member is required to contribute a maximum of \$20 towards meeting any outstanding obligations of the entity. At 31 December 2018, the total amount that members of the company would have been liable to contribute if the company was wound up was \$2,960 (2017: \$3,500).

## Significant changes in state of affairs

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

## Events after the reporting date

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

## Auditor's independence declaration

A copy of the auditor's independence declaration as required under section 60-40 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 for the year ended 31 December 2018 has been received and can be found on page 34 of the financial report.

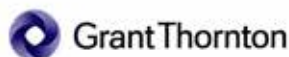
Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Board of Directors:



Julie Hamblin  
Chair of the Board

Dated this 22nd day of March 2019 at Sydney

# Auditor's Independence Declaration



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Sydney NSW 2000

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W [www.grantthornton.com.au](http://www.grantthornton.com.au)

## Auditor's Independence Declaration

To the Directors of Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect)

In accordance with the requirements of section 60-40 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012, as lead auditor for the audit of Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) for the year ended 31 December 2018, I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, there have been no contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.

Grant Thornton Audit Pty Ltd  
Chartered Accountants

C F Farley  
Partner - Audit & Assurance

Sydney, 22 March 2019

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# Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income

For the year ended 31 December 2018

	Notes	2018 \$	2017 \$
Revenue from rendering of services		9,532,689	11,170,479
Federal/state grants and salary subsidies		88,419,375	75,244,799
Fundraising		4,930,539	4,984,912
Other revenue		1,999,771	2,518,868
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>104,882,374</b>	<b>93,919,058</b>
Employee expenses		(79,102,145)	(73,393,981)
Transportation costs		(2,884,194)	(2,749,572)
Insurance expense		(1,358,180)	(1,207,759)
Depreciation and amortisation expenses	4	(1,340,474)	(1,190,328)
Finance costs	4	(43,015)	(46,907)
Services		(5,100,963)	(3,898,944)
Other expenses from ordinary activities		(8,503,442)	(7,483,677)
<b>Total Expenses</b>		<b>(98,332,413)</b>	<b>(89,971,168)</b>
<b>Surplus for the year</b>		<b>6,549,961</b>	<b>3,947,890</b>
<b>Other comprehensive income</b>			
Net gain/(loss) on revaluation of investments		(403,795)	215,589
Net gain/(loss) on sale of investments		(46,115)	83,455
<b>Other comprehensive income for the year</b>		<b>(449,910)</b>	<b>299,044</b>
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>		<b>6,100,051</b>	<b>4,246,934</b>

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

# Statement of financial position

As at 31 December 2018

	Notes	2018 \$	2017 \$
<b>Current assets</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents	6	25,900,915	25,651,289
Trade and other receivables	7	745,103	603,149
Other financial assets	8	303,974	529,078
Other assets	9	1,765,210	1,392,541
Total current assets		28,715,202	28,176,057
<b>Non-current assets</b>			
Other financial assets	8	4,092,606	4,226,946
Property, plant and equipment	10	20,504,626	19,060,353
Total non-current assets		24,597,232	23,287,299
Total assets		53,312,434	51,463,356
<b>Current liabilities</b>			
Trade and other payables	11	7,033,595	12,272,185
Short term borrowings	12	108,915	109,246
Short term provisions	13	9,167,480	8,182,900
Total current liabilities		16,309,990	20,564,331
<b>Non-current liabilities</b>			
Long term borrowings	12	860,318	969,636
Long term provisions	13	2,140,481	2,027,795
Total non-current liabilities		3,000,799	2,997,431
Total liabilities		19,310,789	23,561,762
<b>Net assets</b>		34,001,645	27,901,594
<b>Equity</b>			
Asset revaluation reserve	14	(242,715)	161,080
Asset realisation reserve	14	(835,335)	(789,220)
Accumulated surplus		35,079,695	28,529,734
<b>Total equity</b>		34,001,645	27,901,594

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



# Statement of changes in equity

For the year ended 31 December 2018

	Asset Revaluation Reserve	Asset Realisation Reserve	Retained Earnings	Total
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Balance at 1 January 2017	(54,509)	(872,675)	24,581,844	23,654,660
Surplus for the year	-	-	3,947,890	3,947,890
Total other comprehensive income for the year	215,589	83,455	-	299,044
Balance at 31 December 2017	161,080	(789,220)	28,529,734	27,901,594
Surplus for the year	-	-	6,549,961	6,549,961
Total other comprehensive income for the year	(403,795)	(46,115)	-	(449,910)
Balance at 31 December 2018	(242,715)	(835,335)	35,079,695	34,001,645

# Statement of cash flows

For the year ended 31 December 2018

	Notes	2018	2017
		\$	\$
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>			
Receipts from customers and grants		99,055,360	91,597,611
Payments to suppliers and employees		(96,630,703)	(87,965,872)
Interest received		780,355	632,397
Dividend received		304,170	148,365
Interest paid		(43,015)	(46,907)
<b>Net cash provided by operating activities</b>		3,466,167	4,365,594
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>			
Proceeds on disposal of investments		48,492	1,099,403
Payments for investments		(315,570)	(391,277)
Purchase of property, plant and equipment		(3,064,918)	(2,065,099)
<b>Net cash used in investing activities</b>		(3,331,996)	(1,356,973)
<b>Cash flows from financing activities</b>			
Repayment of borrowings		(109,649)	(105,757)
<b>Net cash used in financing activities</b>		(109,649)	(105,757)
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents held		24,522	2,902,864
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		26,180,367	23,277,503
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year</b>	6	26,204,889	26,180,367

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

# Notes to the financial statements

## For the year ended 31 December 2018

### 1 General information and statement of compliance

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

The financial statements are general purpose financial statements that have been prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards - Reduced Disclosure Requirements and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*. Aspect is a not-for-profit entity for the purpose of preparing the financial statements.

The financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2018 (including comparatives) were approved and authorised for issue by the Board of Directors (who are Aspect's Responsible Entities under the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*) on 22 March 2019.

### 2 Statement of significant accounting policies

#### Changes in accounting policies

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

#### New and revised accounting standards that are effective for annual periods beginning on or after 1 January 2018

A number of new and revised standards became effective for the first time for accounting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2018. There was no material impact on the financial statements as the changes are largely clarifications of existing requirements.

#### Summary of accounting policies

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

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

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

#### a. Income tax

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

#### b. Property, plant and equipment

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

##### Property

Freehold land and buildings purchased are recorded at cost.

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

##### Plant and equipment

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

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

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

##### Depreciation

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



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

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

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

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

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

### **c. Leases**

#### **Operating leases**

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

### **d. Financial assets**

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

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

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

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

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

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

Aspect early adopted AASB 9 *Financial Instruments* in 2010 and therefore all investments form part of Aspect's investment portfolio and have been classified as available for sale financial assets at fair value through other comprehensive income.

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

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

##### *Financial liabilities*

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

##### **Fair value**

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

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

AASB 9's impairment requirements use more forward looking information to recognize expected credit losses - the 'expected credit losses (ECL) model'. Instruments within the scope of the new requirements included loans and other debt-type financial assets measured at amortised cost and fair value reported in Other Comprehensive Income (FVOCI), trade receivables and loan commitments and some financial guarantee contracts (for the issuer) that are not measured at fair value through profit or loss.

Aspect considers a broader range of information when assessing credit risk and measuring expected credit losses, including past events, current conditions, reasonable and supportable forecasts that affect the expected collectability of the future cash flows of the instrument.

##### **Trade and other receivables**

Aspect makes use of a simplified approach in accounting

for trade and other receivables and records the loss allowance at the amount equal to the expected lifetime credit losses. In using this practical expedient, Aspect uses its historical experience, external indicators and forward-looking information to calculate the expected credit losses using a provision matrix.

Aspect assess impairment of trade receivables on a collective basis as they possess credit risk characteristics based on the days past due. With the majority of Aspect's trade receivables on payment plans, Aspect only allows 85.52% for amounts that are 90 days past due and writes off fully any amounts that are more than 180 days past due and not on any payment plan.

#### **Derecognition**

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

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

At each reporting date, Aspect reviews the carrying values of its tangible assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have been impaired. If such an indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset, being the higher of the asset's fair value less costs to sell or value in use, is compared to the asset's carrying value. Any excess of the asset's carrying value over its recoverable amount is expensed to the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income. Where it is not possible to estimate the recoverable amount of an individual asset, the company estimates the recoverable amount of the cash-generating unit to which the asset belongs.

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

Provision is made for Aspect's liability for employee benefits arising from services rendered by employees up to the reporting date. Employee benefits that are

expected to be settled within one year have been measured at the amounts expected to be paid when the liability is settled, plus related on-costs.

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

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

#### **g. Provisions**

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

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

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

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

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

Revenue from the rendering of a service is recognised upon the delivery of the service to the stakeholders.

Interest revenue is recognised on a proportional basis taking into account the interest rates applicable to the financial assets.

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

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

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

If conditions are attached to a grant which must be satisfied before the company is eligible to receive the contribution, recognition of the grant as revenue is deferred until those conditions are satisfied.

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

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

#### **m. Comparative figures**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

	2018	2017
	\$	\$
School fees	6,458,960	6,145,844
Other fee for service	3,073,729	5,024,635
Federal grants	45,413,927	32,004,621
State grants and subsidies	43,005,448	43,240,178
Donations and bequests	4,930,539	4,984,912
Other revenue	1,999,771	2,518,868
Total revenue from ordinary activities	104,882,374	93,919,058



#### 4 Operating surplus from operating activities

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

	2018	2017
	\$	\$
Depreciation of:		
- Freehold buildings	88,278	88,278
- Leasehold buildings	260,218	262,230
- Office machines and equipment	391,363	349,102
- School library	273	678
- Software	164,670	-
Amortisation of:		
- Leasehold improvements	435,672	490,040
Total depreciation and amortisation	1,340,474	1,190,328
Finance costs		
- Bank loans and overdraft interest and fees	43,015	46,907
Net bad and doubtful debts expenses including movements in allowance for credit losses	19,949	(20,593)
Net expenses from movements in provision for employee benefits	3,838,598	3,675,513
Operating lease and other rental payments during the year	1,240,921	1,227,750
Net loss/(gain) on disposal of non-current assets	231,678	(249,403)

#### 5 Taxation

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

#### 6 Cash and cash equivalents

	2018	2017
	\$	\$
Cash at bank	25,897,749	25,641,395
Cash on hand	3,166	9,894
Cash and cash equivalents	25,900,915	25,651,289

#### Reconciliation of Cash

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

	Notes	2018	2017
		\$	\$
Cash at bank and on hand		25,900,915	25,651,289
Bank term deposits	8	303,974	529,078
		<u>26,204,889</u>	<u>26,180,367</u>

#### 7 Trade and other receivables

	2018	2017
	\$	\$
Fees and government subsidies	1,027,061	922,400
Less: allowance for credit losses	(298,596)	(331,489)
	<u>728,465</u>	<u>590,911</u>
Other receivables	16,638	12,238
	<u>745,103</u>	<u>603,149</u>

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

At 31 December 2018, the ageing analysis of trade receivables was as follows:

	Total	0-30 days	31-60 days	61-90 days	91+ days
2018	1,027,061	310,099	260,219	107,584	349,159
2017	922,400	385,608	101,971	74,539	360,282

Trade receivables are non-interest bearing loans and generally on 30-day terms. An allowance for credit loss is recognised when there is objective evidence that an individual trade receivable is impaired. A net expense of \$19,949 was recognised in 2018 (2017: reversal of expense of \$20,593).

	2018	2017
	\$	\$
Balance at 1 January 2018	331,489	486,240
Charge for the year	19,949	(20,593)
Amounts written off	(52,843)	(134,158)
Balance at 31 December 2018	<u>298,595</u>	<u>331,489</u>

Receivables past due but not considered impaired are:

31-60 days	\$260,219	(2017: \$101,971)
61-90 days	\$107,584	(2017: \$74,539)
91 days and over	\$50,564	(2017: \$28,793)

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

## 8 Other financial assets

	2018	2017
	\$	\$
<b>Current</b>		
Bank term deposits	303,974	529,078
<b>Non-current</b>		
Available for sale financial assets	4,092,606	4,226,946

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

## 9 Other assets

	2018	2017
	\$	\$
Accrued income	1,043,985	943,502
Prepayments	721,225	449,039
	1,765,210	1,392,541

## 10 Property and equipment

	2018	2017
	\$	\$
Freehold land and buildings - at deemed cost	6,193,461	6,193,461
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(589,683)	(501,405)
	5,603,778	5,692,056
Leasehold buildings - at cost	10,734,921	10,501,200
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(2,923,816)	(2,738,074)
	7,811,105	7,763,126
Leasehold improvements - at cost	7,367,956	7,028,578
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(3,403,304)	(3,297,674)
	3,964,652	3,730,904
Office machines and equipment - at cost	4,931,840	4,548,019
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(3,882,258)	(3,735,722)
	1,049,582	812,297
School library - at cost	26,288	27,873
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(26,287)	(27,494)
	1	379
Software - at cost	2,240,115	1,061,591
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(164,607)	-
	2,075,508	1,061,591
<b>Total property, plant and equipment</b>	<b>20,504,626</b>	<b>19,060,353</b>

	Freehold land and buildings	Leasehold buildings	Leasehold improvements	Office machines and equipment	School library	Software	Total
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
<b>Asset gross carrying amount</b>							
Balance at 1 Jan 2018	6,193,461	10,501,200	7,028,578	4,548,019	27,873	1,061,591	29,360,722
Additions	-	356,489	799,614	729,339	-	1,179,476	3,064,918
Disposals	-	(122,768)	(460,236)	(345,518)	(1,585)	(952)	(931,059)
Balance at 31 Dec 2018	6,193,461	10,734,921	7,367,956	4,931,840	26,288	2,240,115	31,494,581
<b>Accumulated depreciation</b>							
Balance at 1 Jan 2018	(501,405)	(2,738,074)	(3,297,674)	(3,735,722)	(27,494)	-	(10,300,369)
Depreciation	(88,278)	(260,218)	(435,672)	(391,363)	(273)	(164,671)	(1,340,475)
Disposals	-	74,476	330,042	244,827	1,480	64	650,889
Balance at 31 Dec 2018	(589,683)	(2,923,816)	(3,403,304)	(3,882,258)	(26,287)	(164,607)	(10,989,955)
<b>Carrying amount 31 December 2018</b>	<b>5,603,778</b>	<b>7,811,105</b>	<b>3,964,652</b>	<b>1,049,582</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2,075,508</b>	<b>20,504,626</b>

## 11 Trade and other payables

	2018	2017
	\$	\$
<b>Current</b>		
Trade creditors	1,401,362	345,863
Other creditors and accruals	2,430,067	2,948,760
Goods and services tax payable	-	782,314
Government subsidies in advance	3,202,166	7,463,653
	<u>7,033,595</u>	<u>12,272,185</u>

## 12 Borrowings

	2018	2017
	\$	\$
<b>Current</b>		
Bank loan - secured	<u>108,915</u>	<u>109,246</u>
<b>Non-current</b>		
Bank loan - secured	<u>860,318</u>	<u>969,636</u>

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

The bank loan with Westpac is secured by first mortgage over Aspect's land at Thornton and Corrimall, as well as the lease at Terrigal and a fixed/floating charge over Aspect's assets. The business loan bears interest at 4.76% (2017: 4.22%) per annum, payable monthly and is expected to be repaid by 2029. The purpose of the loan was to finance the upgrade project of Vern Barnett School.

In addition, interest on the above mentioned loan is partly subsidised by the Department of Education NSW. The rate varies and is currently reimbursed at about 4.15% per annum.

### Financing arrangements

Aspect has access to the following financial facilities:

	2018	2017
	\$	\$
Total facilities available:		
Bank overdraft	150,000	150,000
Bank loans	<u>969,233</u>	<u>1,078,882</u>
Facilities utilised at the reporting date:		
Bank loans	<u>969,233</u>	<u>1,078,882</u>

## 13 Provisions

	2018	2017
	\$	\$
<b>Current</b>		
Provision for remediation of leasehold properties	145,000	180,000
Provision for long service leave	7,013,593	6,197,682
Provision for annual leave	2,008,887	1,805,218
	<u>9,167,480</u>	<u>8,182,900</u>
<b>Non-current</b>		
Provision for remediation of leasehold properties	1,027,685	760,000
Provision for long service leave	1,112,796	1,267,795
	<u>2,140,481</u>	<u>2,027,795</u>
	<u>11,307,961</u>	<u>10,210,695</u>

## 14 Reserves

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

## 15 Commitments and contingencies

	2018	2017
	\$	\$
<b>Non-cancellable operating lease expense commitments</b>		
Future operating lease rentals not provided for in the financial statements and payable:		
Within one year	1,160,236	1,102,031
One year or later and not later than five years	1,365,210	1,743,526
	<u>2,525,446</u>	<u>2,845,557</u>

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

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

There are no contingent liabilities that have been incurred by Aspect in relation to 2018 or 2017.



## 16 Fundraising Appeals conducted during the year

Fundraising appeals conducted during the financial period included mail and telephone appeals, payroll giving, raffles, Celebrity Golf Day, Walk for autism, merchandise sales, applications to trusts, foundations and registered clubs, donations provided by corporates, community groups and clubs and the general receiving of directly and indirectly solicited donations including gifts in will.

This helps Aspect to create a world where no-one on the autism spectrum is left behind. Money raised supports programs and initiatives not covered by government grants or the NDIS.

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

The cost of raising these funds was 39% (2017: 30%) of the gross revenue received. This included the costs of events, all promotional activity and the payment for all administrative services including salaries.

	2018	2017
	\$	\$
<b>Results of fundraising appeals</b>		
Community fundraising	1,830,181	1,501,718
Individual giving	1,667,841	1,663,532
Philanthropy	1,262,850	933,583
Bequest	169,667	886,079
Less: Total costs of fundraising appeals	(1,906,689)	(1,508,525)
Net surplus	3,023,850	3,476,387

## 17 Related party transactions

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

## 18 Transactions with key management personnel

Key management within the Company are the members of the Executive. A team of eight staff continued to fulfill the Executive roles.

Key management personnel remuneration includes the following expenses:

	2018	2017
	\$	\$
Total key management personnel remuneration	1,800,748	1,723,628

The Board of Directors of Aspect receive no remuneration.

## 19 Events subsequent to the reporting date

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

# Responsible Entities' Declaration

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

- a. The financial statements and notes of Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) are in accordance with the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*, including:
  - i. giving a true and fair view of its financial position as at 31 December 2018 and of its performance for the financial year ended on that date; and
  - ii. complying with Australian Accounting Standards - Reduced Disclosure Requirements (including the Australian Accounting Interpretations) and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013*, and
- b. There are reasonable grounds to believe that Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

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



Chair of the Board  
Julie Hamblin

Dated this 22nd day of March 2019

# Declaration by Chief Executive Officer in respect of fundraising appeals

## Opinion

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

- a. the financial statements give a true and fair view of all income and expenditure of Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) with respect to fundraising appeal activities for the financial year ended 31 December 2018;
- b. the statement of financial position gives a true and fair view of the state of affairs with respect to fundraising appeal activities as at 31 December 2018;
- c. the provisions of the *Charitable Fundraising Act 1991*, the Regulations under that Act and the conditions attached to the authority have been complied with during the period from 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2018; and
- d. the internal controls exercised by Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) are appropriate and effective in accounting for all income received and applied from any fundraising appeals.



Adrian Ford  
Chief Executive Officer

Dated this 22nd day of March 2019



# Independent Auditor's report



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## Independent Auditor's Report

To the members of Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect)

Report on the audit of the financial report

### Opinion

We have audited the accompanying financial report of Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) (the "Company"), which comprises the statement of financial position as at 31 December 2018, and the statement of comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies and the directors' declaration.

In our opinion, the financial report of Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect):

1. has been prepared in accordance with Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 ("ACNC Act"), including:
  - a. giving a true and fair view of the Company's financial position as at 31 December 2018 and of its financial performance for the year then ended;
  - b. complying with Australian Accounting Standards – Reduced Disclosure Requirements and Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013.
2. is in accordance with the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 ("the Act") and the Charitable Fundraising Regulation 2015 (the "Regulation"), including showing a true and fair view of the Company's financial result of fundraising appeals for the year ended 31 December 2018.

### Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report section of our report.

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

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

The Directors of the Company are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards – Reduced Disclosure Requirements and the ACNC Act, and for such internal control as the Directors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

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

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

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

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

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial report is located at the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board website at: [http://www.auasb.gov.au/auditors\\_responsibilities/ar4.pdf](http://www.auasb.gov.au/auditors_responsibilities/ar4.pdf). This description forms part of our auditor's report.

#### **Report on the requirements of the NSW Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 and the NSW Charitable Fundraising Regulation 2015**

We have audited the compliance of Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) (the "Company") with the requirements of Section 24(2) of the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 for the year ended 31 December 2018.

#### **Our Opinion**

In our opinion:

- a Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) has properly kept the accounts and associated records during the year ended 31 December 2018 in accordance with the NSW Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 and NSW Charitable Fundraising Regulations 2015 (section 24(2)(b) of the Act);
- b the Company, has, in all material respects, properly accounted for and applied money received as a result of fundraising appeals conducted during the year ended 31 December 2018 in accordance with section 24(2)(c) of the Act; and
- c there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due over the 12 month period from the date of this report (section 24(2)(d) of the Act).



#### Responsibilities of the Directors under the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991

The Directors of the Company are responsible for compliance with the requirements and conditions of the NSW Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 and NSW Charitable Fundraising Regulation 2015 and for such internal control as the Directors determine is necessary for compliance with the Act and the Regulation. This responsibility includes establishing and maintaining internal control over the conduct of all fundraising appeals; ensuring all assets obtained during, or as a result of, a fundraising appeal are safeguarded and properly accounted for; and maintaining proper books of account and records.

The Directors are also responsible for ensuring the Company will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

#### Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to form and express an opinion on the Company's compliance, in all material respects, with the requirements of the Act and Regulation, as specified in section 24(2)(b), 24(2)(c) and 24(2)(d) of the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991.

Our audit has been conducted in accordance with the applicable Standards on Assurance Engagements (ASAE 3100 Compliance Engagements), issued by the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board. Our audit has been conducted to provide reasonable assurance that Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) has complied with specific requirements of the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 and Charitable Fundraising Regulation 2015, and whether there are reasonable grounds to believe the Company will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due over the 12 month period from the date of this independent auditor's report (future debts).

Audit procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgement. The auditor designs procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances and incorporate the audit scope requirements set out in the Act. The audit procedures have been undertaken to form an opinion on compliance of that Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) with the Act and Regulations and its ability to pay future debts. Audit procedures include obtaining an understanding of the internal control structure for fundraising appeal activities and examination, on a test basis, of evidence supporting the Company's compliance with specific requirements of the Act and Regulation, and assessing the reasonableness and appropriateness of the Company's assessment regarding the Company's ability to pay future debts.

#### Inherent Limitations

Because of the inherent limitations of any compliance procedures, it is possible that fraud, error or noncompliance may occur and not be detected. An audit is not designed to detect all instances of noncompliance with the requirements of the Act and Regulation, as the audit procedures are not performed continuously throughout the year and are undertaken on a test basis.

Whilst evidence is available to support the Company's ability to pay future debts, such evidence is future orientated and speculative in nature. As a consequence, actual results are likely to be different from the information on which the opinion is based, since anticipated events frequently do not occur as expected or assumed and the variations between the prospective opinion and the actual outcome may be significant.

Grant Thornton Audit Pty Ltd  
Chartered Accountants

C F Farley  
Partner – Audit & Assurance  
Sydney, 22 March 2019



CONFERENCE  
*shaping successful futures*

# Robots in the classroom

Interactive demonstration  
Dr Susan Bruck and Yi Xiao

1.45 pm 30 August 2018



## 2018 Aspect Autism in Education Conference

was held in Brisbane on  
29 - 31 August at the Brisbane  
Convention Centre and proudly  
hosted the largest number  
of speakers on the autism  
spectrum of any conference,  
ever held in Australia.



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