

2020 Annual Report

Aspect Riverina School



autism
spectrum
AUSTRALIA

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Child safe statement

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

Acknowledgment of Country

Aspect acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the Traditional Custodians of the many lands on which we work, live and learn. We pay our respect to their elders, past present and emerging.

Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) is the country's largest service provider for people on the autism spectrum. Our specialised, evidence informed schools program is one of the largest in the world, with additional services that include information and advice, diagnostic assessments, behaviour support, parent and family support, and adult programs. We share evidence-informed autism practice and applied research nationwide.

Aspect schools provide specialised evidence-informed programs for children aged 4 to 17 on the autism spectrum, who require an autism specific program.

The primary focus of the schools is to equip students with the skills to become as independent as possible and enable them to transition into more inclusive settings. This is achieved through the application of the Aspect Comprehensive Approach. At the centre of the approach is the Autism Initiatives' (UK) Five Point Star to support autism-specific person-centred planning and respectful and positive relationships between the educator and student. It also focuses on the following elements: Individual Planning; Family & Community Engagement; Learning & Participation; Positive Behaviour Support; Structured Supports; Transition & Inclusion; Specialist Collaboration; and Health & Wellbeing.



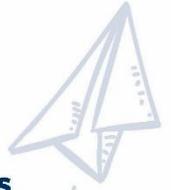
Aspect's Strategic Plan

Our purpose

Understanding, engaging & celebrating the strengths, interests and aspirations of people on the autism spectrum - *a different brilliant*®

Our vision

The best opportunities for people on the autism spectrum.



Strategic Plan 2021 - 2023



Work in partnership with people on the autism spectrum

- Implement our Disability Access and Inclusion Plan
- Work in Partnership with People on the Autism Spectrum Charter
- Employ Autistic people across a range of roles



Extend Aspect's reach and enhance people capabilities

- Well trained staff with enhanced critical skills
- Customer-centric culture
- Strong and trusted brand identity



Deliver best practice, evidence informed services

- Research activities prioritised to focus on the Aspect Comprehensive Approach
- Continuous improvements to our autism-specific education
- A diverse and inclusive workforce



Investment in physical and digital infrastructure

- Capital Works Program for Aspect schools
- Innovative facilities co-designed with Autistic people
- Digital platforms that facilitate collaboration and communication

Our strategic support

Our people who are highly trained and value diversity and inclusion

Our systems and processes which are built to enable smarter work practices and foster collaboration

Our supporters who help to create a world where no one on the autism spectrum is left behind

By 2023



6% of roles at Aspect held by Autistic people



7,000 active participants and students receiving autism-specific education and supports

1,600 employees who are proud to be working for Aspect



Message from the Principal

In presenting the 2020 annual report I would like to acknowledge the Wiradjuri peoples who are the traditional custodians of the land where our campuses are located.

Aspect schools all share Aspect's Vision to offer 'the best opportunities for individuals on the autism spectrum', through the delivery of evidence informed programs which are person-centred and family focused. At Aspect Riverina School, we pride ourselves on our team work with families, students and professionals to create an individualised learning program for each and every student.

Aspect Riverina School provides education for 96 students on the autism spectrum across our five sites. Class groups are small, with a high teacher to student ratio and a teacher's aide appointed to each class. 58 students are enrolled at the main school site at Olive Street, where we offer a K-12 curriculum, culminating in a Yr 12 HSC certificate. We currently have 4 students enrolled at our Aspect Kindergarten site, 9 students at our Xavier High School site, 11 students at our St Patrick's Primary School site and 14 primary school students enrolled at Sacred Heart School site in Wagga Wagga.

Our aim is to equip our students with the skills to become as independent as possible, within a safe learning environment, and provide them with a range of rich and meaningful learning experiences. We do this through focusing on their strengths and interests, and valuing that each student is a different brilliant®. We support our students to develop the necessary skills to experience successful transition and inclusion in their next educational setting, and within their local community. We provide support to students, families and schools with a robust transition program.

We place great value in professional learning that is focused on strengthening staff practices in autism and education provision. The focus of our professional learning this year has been on the curriculum and following the Aspect Comprehensive Approach (ACA), which maintains a lens of Individual Planning, Specialist Collaboration, Positive Behaviour Support and Structured Teaching Supports. To find out more about the ACA that underpins Aspect Education, please visit the Aspect [website](#). Supporting these approaches has been a particular focus on early years literacy development and teacher professional development.



2020 was also a year which demanded flexibility and agility from families, students and teachers as we navigated our way through the pandemic. Many new skills were learnt and taught over this time with Google Classroom becoming another strong learning platform.

Everyone in the school community contributed to a very successful year for the school and we are definitely entering 2021 stronger from the experience.

Jane Carrington

Principal

Message from the Student Representative Council

Hi! I'm Murray, the 2020 SRC Captain.

I'm here to tell you what the goals are for the SRC.

The main goals are to find ways to help the students and the teachers (aka the school).

We were able to help the school by having meetings and that allowed us to talk and set up stuff like cafes, board games and sport.

We are hoping that the SRC of 2021 can stand to the level we hope to see.

Have a good day!

Murray Evans

SRC Captain

Student outcomes in standardised national literacy and numeracy testing

Each student has an individual profile of characteristics that outlines strengths and interests, current levels of functioning and areas for development in the autism-specific areas of learning: social communication, social interaction, behaviours and sensory processing which are integrated into the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) mainstream. The school uses a multi-disciplinary team approach, working collaboratively with families to develop the best possible outcomes for the students. The school provides information and training workshops to families to help them support their child.

Literacy and Numeracy Assessments

As NAPLAN assessments were cancelled in 2020 due to COVID-19, the most recent information relates to 2019 NAPLAN results which are available on My School www.myschool.edu.au

The school administers Literacy testing across the school each year to help inform practice and monitor progress. We assess, sight words, phonemes, graphemes, spelling, reading accuracy, reading comprehension, spelling, and verbal working memory.

Senior secondary outcomes

Record of School Achievement

Aspect Riverina School did not have any students that required the award of a Record of School Achievement.

Higher School Certificate

In 2020, 4 students from Aspect Riverina graduated with a HSC Life Skills certificate. The College offered six Stage 6 Life Skills NESA-Developed courses. All students attended Work Experience during their final two years of schooling with two students working in paid employment by the time they left school and one student enrolled in TAFE.

Year 12 students attaining Year 12 certificate or equivalent VET qualification:

Year 12	Qualification/Certificate	Percentage of Students
2020	HSC Life Skills	100%

Teacher professional learning, accreditation and qualifications

The following professional learning activities were undertaken by teachers throughout 2020:

Description of professional learning activity	No. of teachers participating
Child Protection	10
Management of Actual or Potential Aggression (foundation and refresher courses)	6
CPR training	All
First Aid	6
Aspect Professional Code of Conduct	10
Living the Code of Conduct (2019)	3
ACA: TIER 1 - Differentiation	All

Aspect Comprehensive Approach (ACA): Positive Behaviour Support in Schools - Tier 1	All
ACA: Positive Behaviour Support in Schools - Tier 2	All
ACA: Individual Plans and the IP Process	All
Creating Structured Learning Opportunities based on the methods of the TEACCH Autism Program	10
Workplace Bullying Prevention for staff	3
The SAFE Files - Anti-discrimination and Equal Opportunity 7.0 (AU)	1
Supporting People to Stay Infection Free	2
Supporting people on the autism spectrum using the 5-point star (online program)	2
Organisational Induction Program	2
Acknowledging and recording feedback and complaints	3
Safeguarding the people we support	All
An introduction to Human Rights in NSW	All
Difficult conversations in the workplace	All
MultiLit - InitialLit Training	15

Teacher accreditation

Level of accreditation	Number of Teachers
Conditional	1
Provisional	2
Proficient Teacher	28
Highly Accomplished Teacher (voluntary accreditation)	0
Lead Teacher (voluntary accreditation)	0
Total number of teachers	31

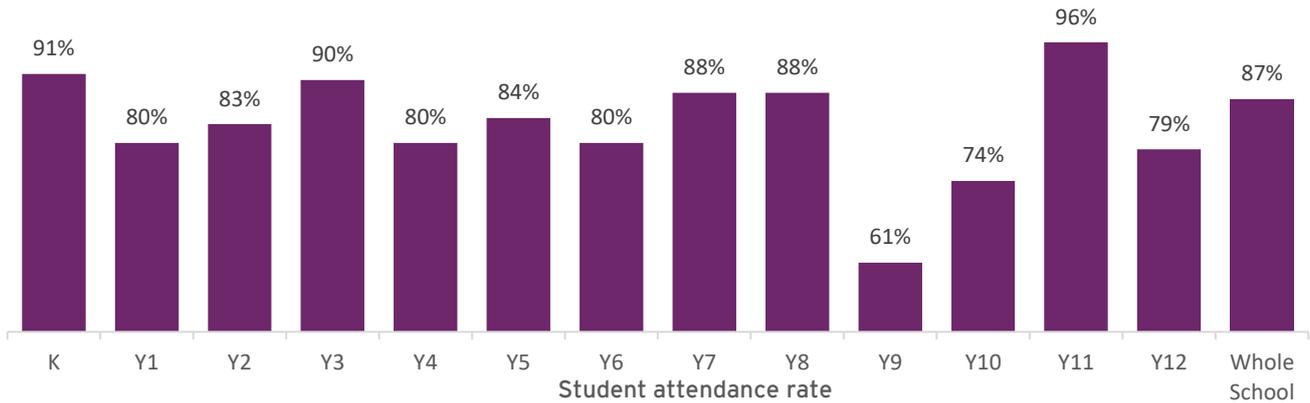
Teacher qualifications

All teachers have teacher education qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised within the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (AEI-NOOSR) guidelines.

Workforce composition

Composition of Aspect Riverina School staff is documented on the My School website www.myschool.edu.au

There were no staff member who is of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Island origin.



Student attendance, retention rates and post-school destinations in secondary schools

Student attendance rates

Kinder	91%	Year 7	88%
Year 1	80%	Year 8	88%
Year 2	83%	Year 9	61%
Year 3	90%	Year 10	74%
Year 4	80%	Year 11	96%
Year 5	84%	Year 12	79%
Year 6	80%	Whole School	87%

Management of non-attendance

Aspect Education has a work instruction to ensure compliance of the Aspect schools with school attendance requirements for compulsory school-aged students as outlined by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) or the South Australia Education Board.

Unexplained absence will be followed up by the class teacher with the parent/guardian. Repeated unexplained absence or absence of concern may need to be reported to Family and Community Services.

Where unsatisfactory attendance is identified, a student attendance improvement plan is formulated in collaboration with the student and their parent/guardian. The plan is monitored and reviewed on a regular basis.

Retention of Year 10 to Year 12

Seventy five percent of the 2018 Year 10 cohort completed Year 12 in 2020. The retention rates over the past two years have been steady. Based on the information provided to the school when students leave it appears that many of the students who leave the school at the end of Year 10 or during Year 11 do so because of family circumstances or to pursue employment or vocational training. Fifty percent of students who left school at the end of Year 12 in 2020 enrolled in TAFE, with the other fifty percent working full or part time.

Enrolment policy

Aspect provides autism-specific educational services for eligible school-aged children on the autism spectrum, to prepare them for transition to environments that are not autism specific.

Aspect recognises that children on the autism spectrum have the right to access and equity of services regardless of their gender, race or ethnicity, religion or language.

An application is made for an Aspect school rather than a specific class. Our school's professional staff decide in consultation with the family which class is best suited to the educational needs of the student. Each school is responsible for managing its own application, intake and waiting lists process, which is managed by the school principal.

When vacancies arise in the school, the decision about how to fill them is made based on whether the type of vacancy available would be appropriate for the child. Factors taken into consideration include the type of vacancy available, the child's age, the length of time a child has been on the waiting list, the availability of alternative placements and the family situation.

Entry criteria

Aspect schools are funded in part by the Commonwealth and state governments, which have specific criteria for placement. To be eligible for placement in one of Aspect's schools, prospective students must satisfy the following criteria:

Citizenship and visa status - a child must:

- be an Australian citizen or permanent resident of Australia or holds an eligible visa (refer to guide to checking citizenship and visa status for enrolment).
- be aged between 4 and 17 years.

Diagnosis - a child must:

- in both NSW and South Australia, have a current diagnosis which is not more than twelve (12) months old as being on the autism spectrum from a specialist medical practitioner, child psychiatrist or clinical psychologist with the necessary training and experience to be able to undertake a diagnostic assessment;
- in South Australia, a second report from a psychologist or speech pathologist that confirms the diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder that is not more than two (2) years old; and
- in both NSW and South Australia, have a current standardised cognitive or developmental assessment (e.g. IQ testing, Griffiths, WISC-IV, WPPSI-III, Stanford Binet V) which is not more than two (2) years old.

Registration to school waitlist

Expression of interest in Aspect schools may be made in the following ways:

- direct enquiry to the Aspect school by telephone or email;
- telephone or email to Aspect Customer Service, who will direct the enquiry to the school;
- general enquiry via the Contact Us page on the Aspect website, which will be directed to the school.

The registration form can be obtained from the following processes:

- families who are interested in enrolling their child to an Aspect school are asked to attend a School Information Session. Aspect principals or their delegate are responsible for organising a school information session once per school term, in line with the School Information Session work instruction, for prospective parents or guardians who would like to enrol their child. This information session outlines the Aspect education program and the registration and enrolment process. The school registration form is obtained after attending this session.
- families who are unable to attend a School Information Session can obtain a registration form directly from an Aspect school. A School Enrolment Committee representative will provide them with information about the Aspect education program and the registration and enrolment process, before sending them the registration form.

A non-refundable processing fee is required for each application submitted.

Application to more than one Aspect School

When a family wants to place their child on the waitlist of more than one Aspect school, they first apply to their preferred Aspect school and indicate which other Aspect schools they will consider enrolment. The preferred Aspect school is responsible for processing the application, inform the other Aspect school/s to place the student on their school's active waitlist and share the application documents.

Aspect School Enrolment Committee

School principals are responsible for convening the Aspect School Enrolment Committee (comprised of school principal, psychologist and selected school coordinators) which meets once per school term, following the information session, to review registrations received. This committee determines if a child is eligible for placement in an Aspect school.

Eligible/Not Eligible for service

Citizenship and age criteria

If the citizenship or age criteria is not met, a school representative will inform the parents or guardians that their child is not eligible for enrolment due to citizenship or age criteria not being met. If the parents or guardians are not satisfied with the result, they can make a complaint to Aspect (refer to Aspect's Complaints Management procedure).

Diagnosis criteria

If the child has been deemed eligible by the Aspect School Enrolment Committee, the principal will inform the parents or guardians that, based on the diagnostic information provided, their child has been deemed eligible for the program (Letter - Confirmation of diagnosis) and their child's name has been placed on the school waitlist.

The principal is responsible for referring the application to the Aspect Eligibility Committee if the diagnosis needs clarification. Parents/Carers will be informed, in writing (Letter - Application sent to full eligibility committee), that their case has been sent to the Committee for review.

If further information is required by the Committee, the principal is responsible for writing to the parents requesting updated information (Letter - Request for updated Psychological reports).

Aspect Eligibility Committee

The National Director, Aspect Education is responsible for:

- convening the Aspect Eligibility Committee once per school term to review any registrations that require clarification, and
- reporting to Aspect principals the results of the Aspect Eligibility Committee, so that they can inform the parents of the outcomes.

The principal will inform the parents or guardians (Letter - Confirmation of diagnosis) that based on the diagnostic information provided their child has been deemed eligible for the program or not and, if confirmed, the child's name is placed on the school's waitlist.

Vacancy Management

If a vacancy arises, students on the waitlist who can potentially fill the vacancy will be considered. The principal or delegate interviews families whose child might fill the vacancy regarding accommodations/ adjustments for their child following the interview pro forma.

If a student being considered for enrolment is not an Australian citizen, the principal or their delegate must check that the visa is still valid and eligible for enrolment.

Following completion of the interview, the principal, or their delegate will complete the Risk Management Plan pro forma, to assist with decision making.

Following the interview process, the school will inform the family if a child has been offered a placement (Letter - Enrolment Contract/Acceptance of Offer) or (Letter - Placement to Satellite Class) or will be retained on the school's waitlist.

Principals are responsible for forwarding parents the relevant enrolment package and liaising with them throughout the process.

Enrolment Package

When a family is offered a placement, in addition to the enrolment contract, they will be sent documents based on the enrolment acceptance checklist.

A family can decline an enrolment offer and inform Aspect school if they want to be placed in the school's active waitlist.

To secure enrolment, the family must pay a non-refundable enrolment fee as published in the Aspect School fees schedule (NSW or SA).

When a family informs the Aspect school of their decision to withdraw their child from enrolment before commencing, they must also inform the Aspect school if they wish to be placed in the school's active waitlist.

Other school policies

Summary of policy	Changes in 2020	Access to full text
<p>Student welfare</p> <p>The school seeks to provide a safe and supportive environment to support the mental, physical and emotional wellbeing of students through the following policies:</p> <p>Person Centred Approach and Recognition of Values - define and work towards achieving individual's goals and personal lifestyle choices with support and input from those who care about them</p> <p>Risk Management Framework - identifies risks and defines criteria for the assessment of consequence of those risks</p> <p>Duty of Care and Dignity of Risk - ensures that staff understand and implement the principles of Duty of Care and Dignity of Risk, recognising the rights of the people we support to make informed choices and take calculated risks. It is essential that each individual's dignity of risk is respected and supported in their decision-making processes. Aspect facilitates each student's meaningful choice and control to maximise their independence; and minimises the risk to the individual or others wherever possible.</p> <p>Safeguarding the People We Support - Aspect is committed to appropriately responding to and preventing incidents of abuse, injury, neglect and exploitation of the people we support, in both participation with Aspect, and as a partner of the broader community</p>	<p>Nil</p>	<p>The following policies can be accessed from Aspect's website https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/about-aspect/policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Person-Centred Approach and Recognition of Valued Status• Risk Management Framework• Duty of Care and Dignity of Risk• Safeguarding the People we support
<p>Pastoral Care and Bullying Prevention in Aspect Schools</p> <p>The Aspect Comprehensive Approach (ACA), including the use of the Five Point Star, drives aspect's guiding principles for pastoral care.</p> <p>Aspect is required and seeks to exercise due diligence in all of its duty of care responsibilities towards students, staff and the school community. Leaders of the school endorse activities and plan for the safety and maintenance of good mental and physical health and well-being of the students, staff and parents involved. Schools seek to accommodate and make provision for particular needs of individuals who require special arrangements to secure safety and avoid discomfort or threat to their health and wellbeing.</p>	<p>New</p>	<p>The full text of the Pastoral Care and Bullying Prevention in Aspect Schools procedure can be accessed by request from the school principal.</p> <p>The following related policies can be accessed from Aspect's website https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/about-aspect/policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aspect Comprehensive Approach (ACA)• Duty of Care and Dignity of Risk• Embracing Diversity• Person-Centred Approach and Recognition of Valued Status

Therefore, bullying or harassment is not tolerated in any form. All members of our community are committed to ensuring a safe and supportive environment which promotes personal growth and fosters positive self-esteem for all. Aspect Schools aim to maintain a setting in which everyone feels valued and respected and where individual differences are appreciated, understood and accepted and encourages the reporting of complaints and feedback.

- Safeguarding the People We Support
- Stakeholder Engagement and Feedback

Discipline

Aspect adopts a positive behaviour support (PBS) approach when working with children on the autism spectrum ranging from strategies for all students through to more intensive strategies for students who may exhibit more challenging behaviours as outlined in the Positive Behaviour Support policy.

Aspect follows a PBS approach but when behaviours occur that put the safety of any stakeholder at risk, the school will be required to implement appropriate procedures to safeguard all stakeholders' safety. All staff have responsibilities in relation to implementing discipline in Aspect Schools.

New

The full text of the Discipline in Schools work instruction can be accessed by request from the school principal.

The Aspect Positive Behaviour Support policy can be accessed from Aspect's website <https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/about-aspect/policies>

Complaints and grievances resolution

Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) values complaints about the quality of its service and communications to support the continuous improvement of services and management.

Aspect's complaints management process provides a transparent framework for promptly and sensitively addressing and resolving complaints and disputes that may arise from complaints having regard to procedural fairness, confidentiality and privacy.

Nil

The full text of the Complaints Management Process can be accessed by request from Aspect's website

<https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/feedback-and-complaints>

The Feedback and Complaints brochure can be downloaded from our website

<https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/uploads/documents/Governance/Aspect-Feedback-and-Complaints-Brochure.pdf>

School determined priority areas for improvement

Area	Priorities	Achievements
Teaching and learning	By November 2020 Aspect Riverina will work with the Aspect Comprehensive Approach (ACA) Coordinator to implement new content to all elements of the ACA and implement professional practice programs.	All staff at Aspect Riverina improved their capability in understanding and practicing the Aspect Comprehensive Approach.
Family Engagement	By November 2020 Aspect Riverina will provide family activities which focus on multicultural inclusion within our school community.	With the majority of family interaction being held via videoconferencing in 2020 this goal was not achievable.

Area	Priorities	Achievements
Staff development	By November 2020 Aspect Riverina will have six staff complete the Secret Agent Society (SAS) training.	Eight staff have now been trained in the SAS program which aims to support young people to navigate through social and emotional challenges.
	By November 2020 Aspect Riverina will train their junior school staff in specific literacy intervention.	Fifteen staff were trained in MultiLit in 2020, an explicit literacy program. They are now delivering this program across all junior classes of the school.
Facilities and Resources	By November 2020 Aspect Riverina will continue to liaise with all stakeholders regarding the procurement of a new school site.	Six existing classrooms were fully refurbished in December of 2020 while we continue to liaise with stakeholders regarding a new school site.
Student achievement	Student engagement and achievement will be measured via Perspectives survey in 2020.	The results of this survey have formed the basis for the 2021 School Improvement Plan.
	An ongoing data base of students' literacy and numeracy standards provides accurate baseline data.	A 2021 goal of improving literacy standards by 25% has been set using this data.

Initiatives promoting respect and responsibility

Aspect Riverina School wants all students to recognise that they are valued and an integral part of the school community, with parents and staff providing care and support that promotes self-esteem, mutual respect and responsibility.

The structure of the school's satellite program provides opportunities for students to participate in classes and cultural activities with host school students, particularly during Harmony week, National Reconciliation week and NAIDOC week.

Aspect's Purpose of "understanding, engaging & celebrating the strengths, interests & aspirations of people on the autism spectrum" and Aspect's Value of "we are passionate about people, about being positive and about what's possible" mirror the nine recommended values of the National Framework for Values in Education.

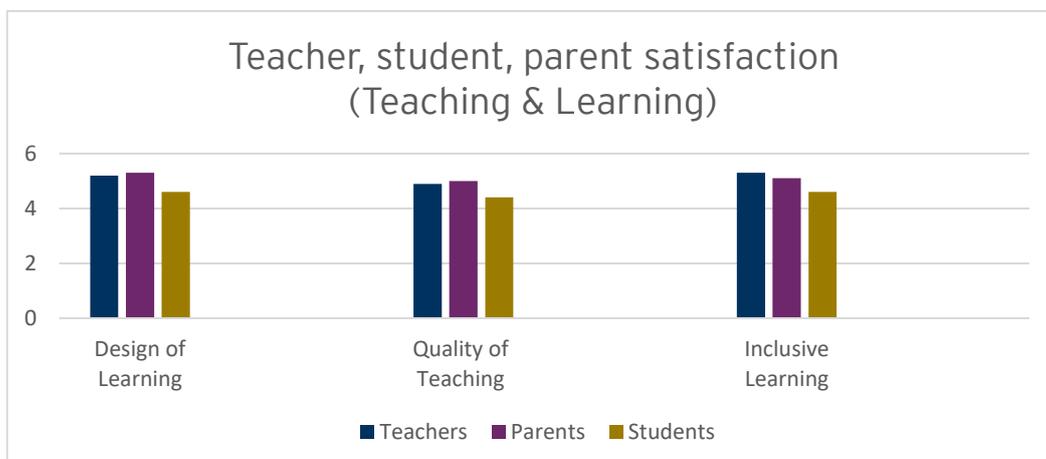
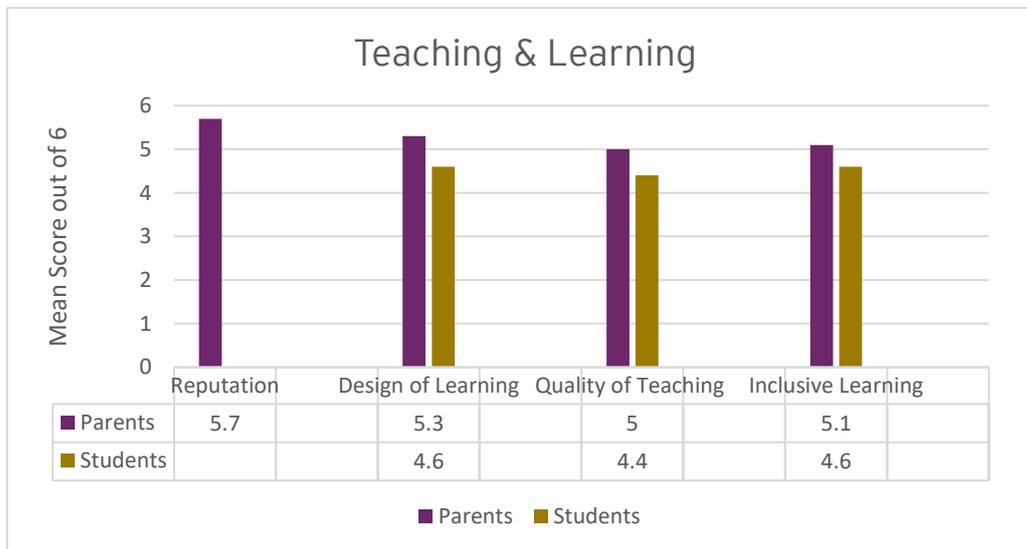
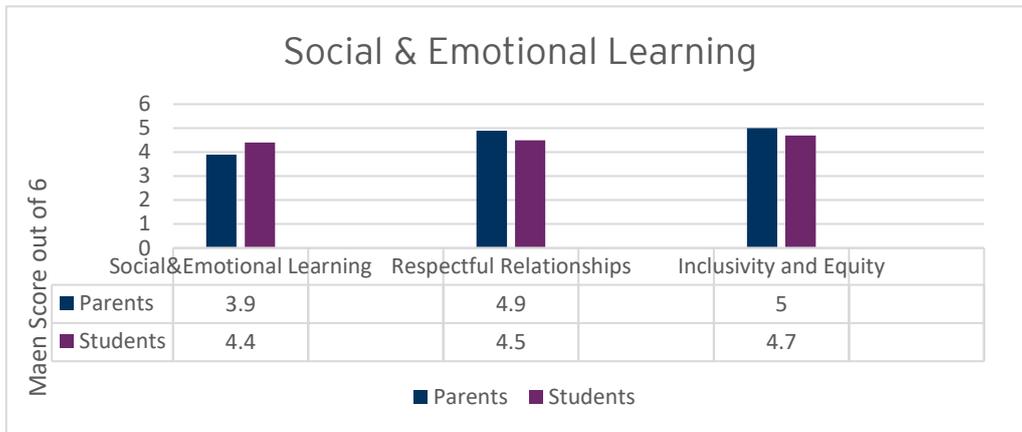
Aspect has a commitment to ensuring all team members know and embrace our core values to ensure they are reflected in interactions and relationships with stakeholders. Aspect recognises that in order to achieve this it is important to share information with staff and the community so that Aspect is known not only for the work that we do but also for the values we uphold.

At Aspect Riverina we value the relationships we are building with our friends, families, colleagues and neighbours and community groups. Our students are an integral part of the community, participating in work experience, RFS cadetships, TAFE courses and community projects such as the community gardens.

Aspect Riverina is a community that believes that all things are possible given the right support, understanding and focus.

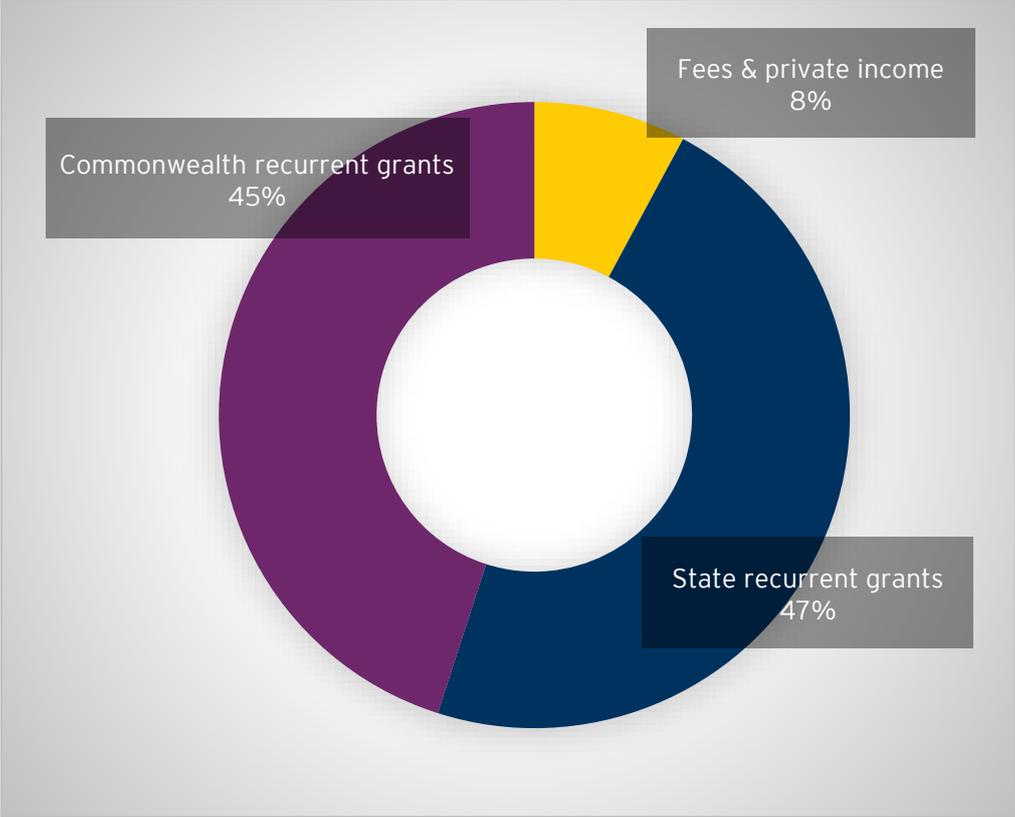
Parent, student and teacher satisfaction

In our most recent survey, Perspectives Survey 2020 our parent, teacher and community satisfaction was high and is indicated below. All stakeholders were asked a series of questions pertaining to their satisfaction with teaching & learning.

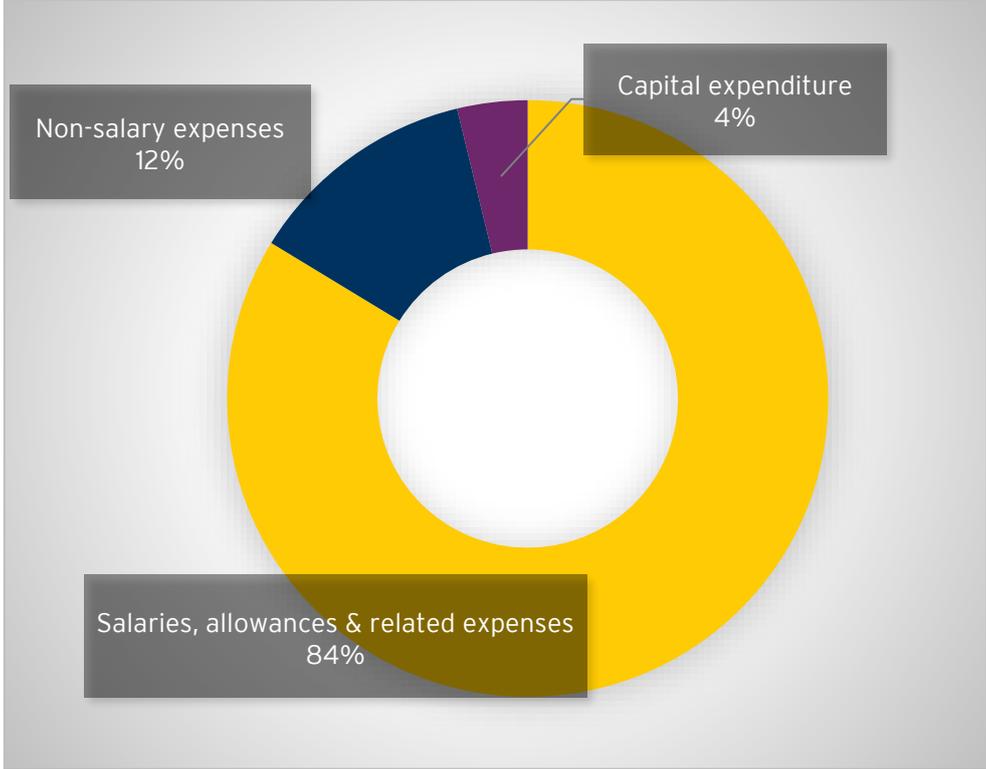


Financial information

Recurrent/capital income



Recurrent/capital expenditure





a different brilliant®

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

Aspect Riverina School

437 Olive St (PO Box 3176) Albury NSW 2640

T +61 2 6057 3777

E riverina@autismspectrum.org.au

Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect)

ABN 12 000 637 267

Building 1, Level 2,

14 Aquatic Drive, Frenchs Forest NSW 2086

PO Box 361 Forestville NSW 2087

T 1800 ASPECT (1800 277 328)

E customerservice@aspect.org.au

W www.autismspectrum.org.au