

2021 Annual Report

Aspect South Coast School



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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 school 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 offers one of the best quality autism-specific education programs in Australia. We have over 50 years of experience and provide dynamic autism-specific support in purpose-built classrooms. We utilise the strengths and interests of students as a gateway to learning through quality, tailored programs that focus on the individual learning needs of each child.

Aspect schools provide specialised evidence-informed programs for children aged 4 to 17 on the autism spectrum.

The primary focus of our schools is to equip students with skills to become as independent as possible and 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 includes Individual Planning; Family & Community Engagement; Learning & Participation; Positive Behaviour Support; Structured Supports; Transition & Inclusion; Specialist Collaboration; and Health & Wellbeing.



Aspect's Strategic Plan

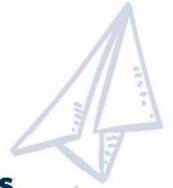


Our purpose

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



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



Extend Aspect's reach and enhance people capabilities

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



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

I would like to acknowledge the Wodi Wodi people who are the traditional custodians of the lands on which our campuses are located.

Aspect South Coast School caters for 118 students between the ages of 4 and 18 with enrolments received from Wollongong, Shellharbour, Kiama and the Shoalhaven local government areas. Our enrolment is comprised of 96 boys and 22 girls. The school operates from a main site at Corrimal which consists of an administration office and five lower primary classes. The school also has satellite classes located within NSW Department of Education schools at Para Meadows Special School, North Wollongong, Barrack Heights Public School, Bellambi Public School, Saint Peter's and Saint Paul's Catholic Primary School, Kiama and Cedars Christian College, Farmborough Heights.

At the end of 2021 Aspect South Coast School commenced renovations to the Corrimal main site and will have 3 additional classrooms, a library, sensory room and multi-purpose hall when completed in 2022. The Bulli campus closed at the end of 2021, successfully transitioning 2 students who gained their HSC. During their time at the unit, students had an opportunity to take on work experience sessions which has assisted them to find a pathway for future study or work placements. Our Bellambi campus also closed at the end of 2021 due to the host school requiring more space for local students. Aspect worked with the Catholic Education Diocese of Wollongong to secure two new sites as a replacement for the Bellambi campus that will operate in 2022.

The Year 6 graduation / farewell was to be held on the grounds at Corrimal Main Campus, however the weather had other ideas. The planned family picnic quickly turned into a lovely celebration evening at our Cedars Campus in the hall. We had eleven graduating students across the school – one from Cedars, two from Para Meadows, two from Barrack Heights, five from Bellambi and one from Kiama. The students all presented a speech and teachers spoke about each child individually. We had a light supper and the evening was a great success.



The staff hosted a retirement dinner for Bruce Rowles after his many years of service as Principal at South Coast School. It was a great opportunity to reflect on all of Bruce's achievements and everything he has had done for our school. Thank you, Bruce, for your commitment and dedication to Autism Spectrum Australia and particularly the Aspect South Coast School.

The first School Improvement Plan was implemented in 2021 after a trial year in 2020. Aspect South Coast School followed the plan and achieved positive outcomes in the areas of Leadership, Teaching and Learning and Health and Wellbeing.

Rowena Perritt

Principal

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 curriculum Key Learning Areas (KLAs). 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

For NAPLAN results, please refer to My School website www.myschool.edu.au

Aspect South Coast School conducted literacy and numeracy assessments in order to tailor programs to meet individual student needs and to monitor their progress.

Our assessment plan included tests of phonic knowledge; spelling; reading accuracy and comprehension. We also conducted literacy assessments for students with significant learning needs and autism; including Blanks level questions and pre-handwriting. Additional literacy assessments were administered to students who required further investigation. These included the SPAT-R, the YARC Early Reading and Passage Reading. This provided information in order to provide targeted additional support in the classroom and/or specialist intervention by the literacy support teacher.

Our school used the SENA and the LIEN Mathematics assessments for the majority of students. In addition, we used the Mary Brooksbank assessment for students who required substantial adjustment and support at the early stage one level.

Senior secondary outcomes

Record of School Achievement

The formal Record of School Achievement credential was awarded by NESA to three students in Year 11.

Higher School Certificate

In 2021 two students graduated from Year 12 (100%). The school offered six Stage 6 Life Skills NESA-Developed courses. Both students accessed Work Experience several times throughout the year. The accessibility of work placement and exposure to transition programs was impacted by COVID restrictions and home learning. Both students were successful in gaining School Leavers' Employment Support funding via the NDIS. No students undertook VET courses in 2021.

Teacher professional learning, accreditation and qualifications

The following professional learning activities were undertaken by staff throughout 2021:

Description of professional learning activity	No. of staff participating
Child Protection - responsibilities related to child protection based on legislation and Aspect policy and procedures	All
Resuscitation	1
Asthma First Aid for School Staff	3
3 things to do if you're new to working from home	3
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Course	2
ACA Family Engagement (literature review)	1
ACA Health and Wellbeing (literature review)	1
Acknowledging and recording feedback and complaints	9
AIE 2018 - Session 36: Keynote	1
An introduction to the Aspect Comprehensive Approach	1
Become an Effective Leader part One and Two	1
Core inclusion Course	1
Hand Hygiene 4.0	5
LGBTIQ+ Course	1
Living the Code of Conduct 2021	39
Management of Actual or Potential Aggression (MAPA) Refresher Course	28
Manual Handling 6.0 AU	8
Organisational Induction Program	1
Preparing to be Medication Administration Assessor	2
Safeguarding the People We Support	2
Safely and Effectively Administer Medication	3
South Coast Staff Development Day (Term 1 2021)	31
South Coast Staff Development Day (Term 2 2021)	20

Teacher accreditation

Level of accreditation	Number of Teachers
Conditional	3
Provisional	0
Proficient Teacher	39
Highly Accomplished Teacher (voluntary accreditation)	0
Lead Teacher (voluntary accreditation)	0
Total number of teachers	42

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

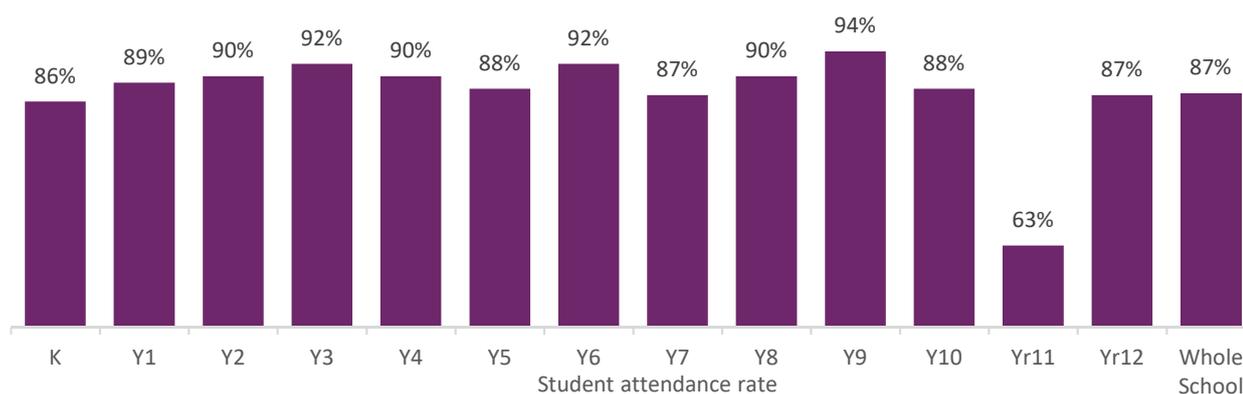
Composition of Aspect South Coast School staff is documented on the My School website www.myschool.edu.au

One staff member is of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background.

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

Student attendance rates

Kinder	86%	Year 7	87%
Year 1	89%	Year 8	90%
Year 2	90%	Year 9	94%
Year 3	92%	Year 10	88%
Year 4	90%	Year 11	63%
Year 5	88%	Year 12	87%
Year 6	92%	Whole School	87%



Management of non-attendance

Aspect Education has policies and procedures in place to ensure compliance of Aspect schools with school attendance requirements for compulsory school-aged students as outlined by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA).

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.

If a student is absent from school an SMS message is sent to the family to confirm the absence.

Retention of Year 10 to Year 12

Aspect South Coast School had 66% of the 2019 Year 10 cohort complete Year 12 in 2021. Two students received their HSC (Life Skills) and one student received their ROSA for cumulative work up to Year 11.

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 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-111, 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 2021	Access to full text
<p>Student welfare 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>	Nil	<p>The following policies can be accessed from Aspect’s website <a href="https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/about-
aspect/policies">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 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>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.</p>	Nil	<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 <a href="https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/about-
aspect/policies">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 • Safeguarding the People We Support • Stakeholder Engagement and Feedback
<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	Nil	<p>The full text of the Discipline in Schools work instruction can be accessed by request from the school principal.</p> <p>The Aspect Positive Behaviour Support policy can be accessed from Aspect’s website <a href="https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/about-
aspect/policies">https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/about- aspect/policies</p>
<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	Nil	<p>The full text of the Complaints Management Process can be accessed by request from Aspect’s website <a href="https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/feedback-
and-complaints">https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/feedback- and-complaints</p> <p>The Feedback and Complaints brochure can be downloaded from our website <a href="https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/uploads/doc
uments/Governance/Aspect-Feedback-and-
Complaints-Brochure.pdf">https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/uploads/doc uments/Governance/Aspect-Feedback-and- Complaints-Brochure.pdf</p>

School determined improvement areas

Area	Priorities	Achievements
Teaching and learning	Used formal and informal assessment strategies to inform quality teaching and learning in English and Maths	Embedded sustainable whole school processes for collecting and analysing student assessment data
	Provide targeted PL opportunities for staff to improve teaching and learning practices	Created a PL calendar for 2021 – teacher and TA identified training. Teachers completed AITSL Teacher Self-Assessment Tool and complete PL cycle. Used staff questionnaires, surveys, AITSL PL cycle, S&S and program feedback to inform PL
Family Engagement	Limited opportunities to get together in 2021, classes worked on Zoom groups and held family support workshops to support online learning	Zoom groups run by Learning Support Team (LST) and Coordinators assisted families with online learning tasks. LST provided remote support for families.
	Staff delivered work packages to families and students who could not access online learning	Weekly/fortnightly work packages delivered to families
Staff development	Identified and supported the development needs of new and future leaders within South Coast School staff	Staff involvement and willingness to participate in interest groups / working parties. Senior Teacher (EP teacher) roles and responsibilities documented
Facilities and Resources	Aspect South Coast School developed a master plan to renovate the Corrimal campus to enable more students access to a school placement	Master plan developed and approved for renovations to commence in December 2021
	Aspect South Coast School invested in new laptops and classroom computers for teachers and students	All classrooms have an increased number of laptops to support student learning
Student achievement	Review and implement a variety of wellbeing programs to support student wellbeing	All students accessed explicit social and emotional programs. Additional staff trained in social and emotional programs to deliver to students and support regulation
	Increase student involvement in developing / monitoring IP goals	85% of students were involved in IP meetings and goal setting in some form

Initiatives promoting respect and responsibility

Aspect South Coast School engaged in activities to acknowledge the diversity in our school community and promote understanding and respect towards our First Nation's people. All classes had opportunities for students to participate in cultural activities during ANZAC Day, Sorry Day, Harmony week, National Reconciliation week and NAIDOC week. The school is very proud of the establishment of a tailored Acknowledgment of Country. The school's Inclusion Representative, consulted with one of our Aboriginal families to help inform the words used in our Acknowledgement of Country, which has become part of the school's daily Acknowledgement of the Traditional Custodians of the Country our schools reside on, The Wodi Wodi People on Dharawal Country. The Acknowledgement is accessible to all of our students, whether it is through actions, visual supports, words or their Speech Generating Device.



Staff participated in 'R U OK?' Day to show our support for our school community and hosted morning teas to celebrate World Support Staff day.

During COVID our Learning Support Team (LST) hosted Zoom Parent and Teacher Lounge sessions on a weekly basis throughout term 3. Two to three sessions were offered per week and it was an opportunity for families to connect with other parents and discuss daily challenges and successes during lockdown. There were also a number of sessions hosted by the LST on specific topics such as family well-being, preparing for home learning, fussy eating, executive functioning and puberty. The teacher lounges were an opportunity for staff to speak confidentially with the school psychologist about any concerns and their experiences during lockdown.



We were fortunate to be able to hold our Family Fun Day in May before lockdown. This has been a successful event that the school have been running since 2014.

This was a private function for Aspect family and friends at the Illawarra Live Steamers in Wollongong. The families enjoyed unlimited train rides, a jumping castle and face painting. There were 135 attendees.

Parent, student and teacher satisfaction

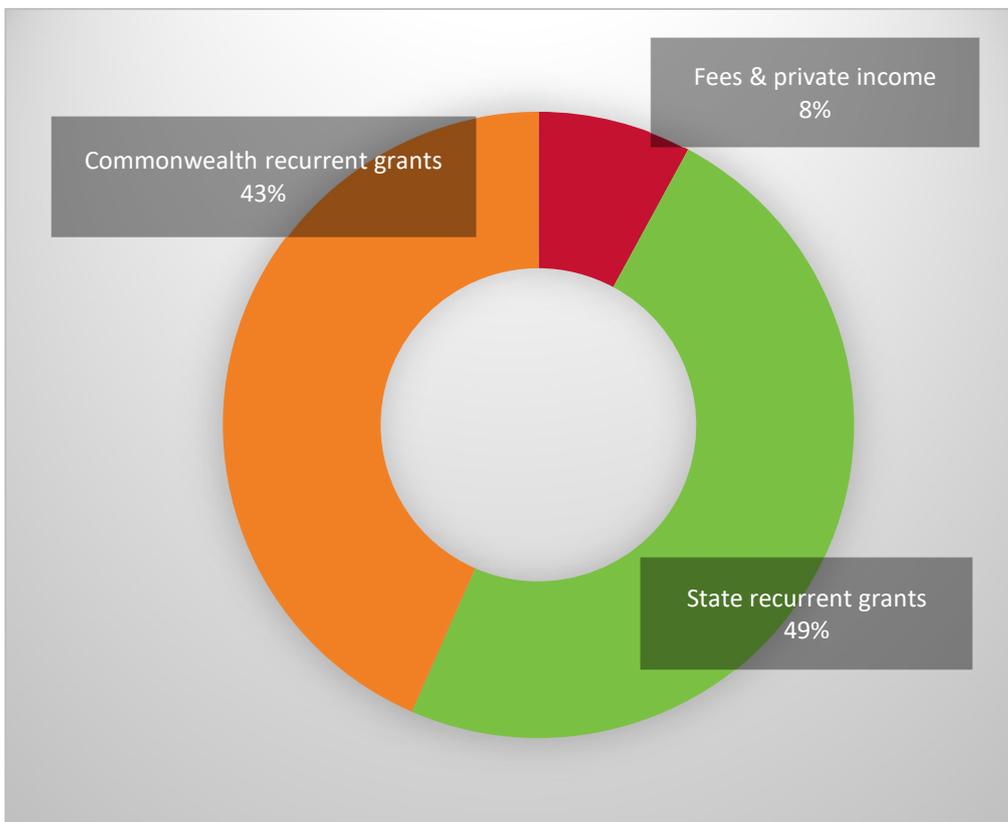
The Aspect South Coast School welcome staff, student and parent opinions, which highlight the positive aspects of the school and identifies any areas for improvement. Feedback is collected in a variety of forums including student enrolment and exit surveys, Net Promoter Scores, parent testimonials along with family engagement in school events.

In 2021, Aspect South Coast School used information from the 2020 Perspectives: Your School in Focus survey to inform our School Improvement Plan (SIP) for 2021. The data collected from this survey was used to inform future priorities, goals and targets so we could better meet the needs of the whole school community. Feedback from this survey was used to develop a SIP plan for the school that incorporated Teaching and Learning, Leadership and Health and Wellbeing targets for staff, students and families.

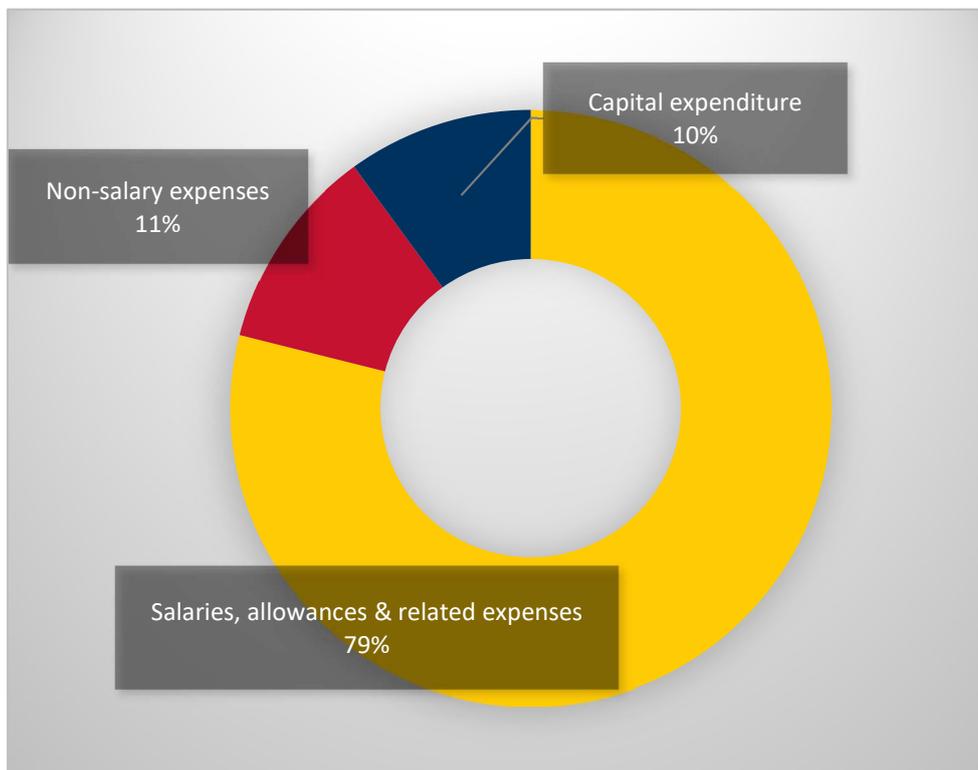
Some South Coast School students and families participated in an ARCAP research Program utilising a new individual plan (IP) for students called COMPASS. The research project provided a collaborative approach where parents, staff and students were able to have direct input into the plan. This consultation resulted in the identification of three goals for the student (a social skill goal, communication goal and a learning skill goal) and a personalised teaching plan to achieve each goal. Parents commented that the Compass project was a very inclusive process and were very happy with learning goal being included in the IP.

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 South Coast School
4 Wilford Street (PO Box 54) Corimal NSW 2518
T +61 2 4285 2393

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