

40TH ANNUAL REPORT



autism spectrum
AUSTRALIA



Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) is the country's largest not-for-profit autism specific service provider. Aspect builds confidence and capacity with people who have an autism spectrum disorder, their families and communities by providing information, education and other services. Established in 1966 Aspect's specialised evidence based autism educational program is amongst the largest in the world.

Autism spectrum disorders (ASD) are lifelong developmental disabilities affecting each person's ability to communicate and to relate to others, in different ways, and to varying degrees. Individuals typically have marked impairments in social interaction and communication; have restricted and repetitive behaviours, and may have sensory sensitivities.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Report from Chair and CEO	1
Treasurer's Report	5
Review of Services	8
Partnerships – a Case Study	18
Australian Advisory Board	19
Government Funding	23
Relationship Fundraising	24
Corporate Governance	25
Concise Financial Report	31

Report from **BOARD CHAIR AND CEO**

This Annual Report reflects on a significant year of expansion for Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) with increases in services resulting from continued extensive support from the NSW Government and an injection of new funding from the Australian Government's 'Helping Children With Autism' package. The achievements in 2008 included the introduction of new services delivered on a national basis, the expansion of existing services and the opening of new facilities to accommodate these services.

Now in its 44th year, this is the 40th Annual Report since Aspect became a company in 1969. In the last Annual Report we commented on our focus to build foundations for future growth. A year on, we can report on successful new partnerships and growth built upon these solid foundations.

Aspect was in contact with 6067 people with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) during 2008 – 667 more than the target. The number of funded places for people with ASD grew by 239 to 1,412 across all services.

The growth of Aspect in 2008 was reflected through an increased turnover of \$6.266 million to \$32.506 million, generating a surplus of \$397,539 that exceeded our

Aspect was in contact with 6067 people with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) during 2008 – 667 more than the target. The number of funded places for people with ASD grew by 239 to 1,412 across all services.



ADRIAN FORD
CEO

The NSW State Government has also continued its support of autism, announcing an additional \$2 million of funding for early intervention places with Aspect



KEITH PERKIN
BOARD CHAIR

target. This is now the fourth successive surplus for Aspect, which has enabled us to maintain a solid foundation for growth and offered some protection from the impact on investments effected by the global financial crisis.

The Board agreed to the implementation of a new rolling three year strategic plan. A significant change which occurred in the latest strategic plan was to incorporate into the mission statement – 'building capacity and confidence in people with an ASD, their families and communities'. This adjusted wording better reflects the attitude of all Aspect services and better ties in with the long standing vision of the organisation to 'overcome the isolation of autism'.

A Corporate Scorecard was reported to the Board each month which followed 25 key performance indicators (KPIs) that monitored the implementation of the strategic plan. In 2008 we reached or exceeded 72% of our KPIs, some of which have already been mentioned. This continued a strong result over recent years and demonstrated a commitment to the plan, especially considering the level of change Aspect had to manage both in new federal government funding and the dramatically changed world economy.

Thank you to our supporters

BEQUESTS • Estate of Harold George Granger • Estate of Mavis Jean Best • Estate of Rita Thorn CLUBS AND GROUPS • 2CH Massey Park Social Golf Club • Artarmon Masonic Hall Company Pty Ltd • Bellbird Committee • Botany RSL Sub-Branch Club • Canterbury Hurlstone Park RSL Club Ltd • Chester Hill – Carramar RSL Club • Corrimal Leagues Club • Dee Why RSL • EBP Sports Women's Bowling Club • Forestville RSL Club Limited • Hornsby RSL Club Limited • Inner Wheel Club of Wollongong Inc • Liberal Party Warringah FEC • Lions Club of Engadine • Lions Club of Woonona • Macquarie Links Charity Challenge • Macquarie Street Social Club • MasoniCare • Minkara Resort Social Committee • Miss Wagga Wagga Quest Foundation Committee • Nomads Golf Club of Australia • North Sydney Leagues Club Limited • Northbridge – Cammeray Masonic Hall Co. Pty. Limited • NSW Masonic Auxiliary • Our Lady of Lourdes Baulkham Hills • P & F Central Coast School • P & F Hunter School • P & F South Coast School • P & F South East Sydney School • P & F Vern Barnett School • P & F Western Sydney School • Penshurst RSL Club Co-Op Ltd • Quota International of Alstonville Wollongbar • Quota International of the Leisure Coast Inc • Riverwood Legion & Community Club Ltd • Rotary Club of Albury North • Rotary Club of Burwood • Rotary Club of Frenchs Forest Inc • Rotary Club of Sutherland • Rotary Club of Wetherill Park • Rotary Club of Wollongong South • Sarah Redfern Public School • Sutherland United Services Club Ltd • The Carmelite Nuns • Westpac Community Involvement • Wests Illawarra • Wings Away Inc NSW • Wyong Shire CDSE Local Committee



In 2008 the Australian Government rolled out its \$192 million (to be spent over 4 years) 'Helping Children With Autism' package. For Aspect there were three main developments: being awarded the tender as lead agency in the Australian Autism Education & Training Consortium (AAETC) to deliver workshops for parents / carers and professional development for teachers; appointed by the Department of Family Housing Community Services & Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) to operate the Autism Advisor Program in NSW as the gateway for early intervention funding packages; and the expansion of Aspect Building Blocks® early intervention service.

The significant opportunity for Aspect was to be the lead agency of the Australian Autism Education & Training Consortium (AAETC) which won the tender offered by the Department of Education, Employment

NSW. The program began in late October. By the end of March 2009, the Advisors had assessed 950 families who meet the criteria for the new early intervention funding under the Helping Children With Autism package. The Advisor program brought Aspect into contact with many families who had not used our services but had chosen to use other providers. This significantly impacted on the total number of people Aspect was in contact with last year.

During 2008 Aspect did a lot of work preparing for the new early intervention funding that would flow once the Autism Advisors had approved the families for federal funding. Aspect Building Blocks® re-organised its packages and its staffing so that it would be able to maximise the opportunity for expanding early intervention services in 2009. This also involved bringing together early interventions offered by some



Concurrently Aspect significantly invested in developing the support services for the web based AutismPro™ so this program could become part of the suite of services available to families.

and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) to provide the national training program to assist teachers and parents of school aged children. This tender is worth \$11m over 2 years. The program is now known as Positive Partnerships. This is a huge and complex program involving relationships with all state and territory education departments, the Catholic education system in each state and territory and all major autism organisations. Positive Partnerships will offer 100 workshops in 2009 across Australia. During 2009 the program will be reviewed by DEEWR and a decision made about extending the funding for a further two years.

Aspect was offered by FaHCSIA and successfully met the criteria to provide the Autism Advisor program for

schools in Aspect and bringing them under one management team with the one model – Aspect Building Blocks®.

Concurrently Aspect significantly invested in developing the support services for the web based AutismPro™ so this program could become part of the suite of services available to families. Aspect was also able to trial the AutismPro™ package as a result of the NSW Government providing funding for 50 packages for rural and regional families in NSW.

As we commence 2009 the Aspect Building Blocks® staff and the AutismPro™ staff are growing in number to accommodate the increased service provision required of Aspect as a result of families choosing Aspect as its early intervention provider.

Thank you to our supporters

CORPORATE DONORS • Accident & Health • Accru Felters • Allianz Australia • American Express Australia Limited – Corporate Service Delivery JAPA • Amity Group • AMS Management Systems Australia • Andrew Taylor Management • ANZ Northern Region • AON • Asciano Services • Austbrokers Sydney • Australian Chamber Orchestra • Australian National Maritime Museum • Australian Reliance • Baird Real Estate • Barista Basics • Bathers Pavilion • Bellachara • Belvoir St Theatre • BGC Insurance • Blackmores • Bonville Golf Resort • BridgeClimb Sydney • Brunskill's Pharmacy • Carloopenna Investments • Certe Securities • CIFA • Data #3 • De Bortoli Wines • Dermologica • Dior • Dolci Doro • Dolphin Watch Cruise • Dynamiq • Elizabeth Arden • Emirates • Energy Australia • Enrizen • Ensemble Theatre • Farstad Shipping (Indian Pacific) • Finn Foster & Associates • Flowers for Everyone • Forty One Restaurant • Gai Waterhouse Racing Stables • Glen Street Theatre • Gloria Jeans Figtree • Goodwin Financial Services • Grant Thornton • Guy Carpenter • Harvard Financial Management • He Cooks • Heritage Hotel Management • Hunter Pacific • JA Wales Printers • Jamab • Jardine Lloyd Thompson • Jedo's Beach House • Johnson-Johnson Pacific • KPMG • Liquidity Financial Planners • Man Investments Australia Limited • Marsh • Maui Jim • Mayne Investments • McCabe Terrill Lawyers • Minacro • Mudjee Wines • NEC • Nikken Wellness • Nordoff-Robbins Music Therapy Australia • Omega Smeg • Optus • Penguin Books • Penrith Whitewater • Poole's Rock Wines • Quicksilver • Ramm Botanicals • Recall Information Management • ReportSmart • Riverside Theatres • Rockend • Scott and Broad • Sharp • Simon & Schuster Australia • Sinclair Consulting Group • SLEWorldwide • Solar Springs • Specialised Broking Associates



Forming new partnerships was a significant achievement for Aspect in 2008 and one which can not be underestimated in its importance to sustain growth targets. We have included a case study on page 18 on 'Positive Partnerships' which is an example of just how successful Aspect has been in the past year. Our Corporate Scorecard reported 114 partners, up from 91 in 2007. Included amongst these were 14 in other states and territories.

The NSW State Government continued its support of autism, announcing an additional \$2 million of funding for early intervention places with Aspect and a further \$200,000 for the production and distribution of the Building Foundations DVD and manual.

Copies of Building Foundations have now been distributed to early childhood centres and schools around the state. Aspect also won tenders from the NSW Government to: implement a new playgroup program on the Far North Coast, a peer support program for 8 - 18 year olds with ASD and funding to expand Aspect Someone To Turn To to families from Culturally And Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds. Finally, and most significantly, our school's program grew by 76 places to 586 by the end of 2008.

While the Helping Children With Autism package was unfolding nationally, Aspect was also exploring opportunities to establish services in other states and territories. The most important step Aspect took was to explore possibilities in Victoria, being the second largest state in the Commonwealth and significantly under-resourced in autism-specific services provided through the NFP sector.

This began with an open meeting on 2 April 2008 to announce Aspect's intention to explore this possibility. It resulted in an extensive consultative process with the Victorian government, service providers, families and advocates. In March 2009 the Board decided to establish Aspect Building Blocks® and AutismPro™ in Melbourne.

Towards the end of 2008 Aspect was encouraged by FaHCSIA to establish early intervention services in the ACT using Helping Children With Autism funding. This unexpected opportunity has now been realised. Aspect was able to negotiate a partnership with LEAD, a general disability service provider in Canberra that was able to sub-lease an office to Aspect in Cook. This allowed Aspect to establish its first office outside of NSW and work has begun at a great pace in 2009 in offering Aspect Building Blocks® in the ACT.

In Tasmania Aspect was able to successfully negotiate a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and Department of Education (DoE) to provide a consultancy over three years from 2009 to assist with the establishment of a state-wide tertiary diagnosis and assessment service for people with autism spectrum disorder and their families in Tasmania by training its staff and providing ongoing supervision.

In line with Aspect's Strategic Plan to focus on service areas where it has a competitive advantage and to move away from those which can be done better by other service providers, the Board took the decision to re-aspice Aspect's small Employment Service to House With No Steps.

The decision was taken after careful deliberation over many months. With the support of FaHCSIA, Aspect was able to successfully negotiate the re-aspice of its Employment Service with the clients, their families and staff and this was finalised in August 2008.

Concurrently, with the support of the NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care, Aspect also re-aspiced its small Accommodation Service of two group homes. This decision had been taken in 2007. The process took longer than expected, but Sunshine Home won the tender to re-aspice the service at the end of 2008 and the matter was finalised in early February this year.

These two important decisions were extremely difficult to make because it involved clients and their families who had long associations with Aspect. It is worth reiterating that both these processes were done with the full consultation of the families over many months.

The underlying reason for the change was to ensure that the clients would have "the best deal" and the re-aspice of both services allowed those clients and staff to become part of organisations that had much greater capacity in these highly specialised areas which should lead to improved long term outcomes for the clients and their families in the areas of employment and accommodation.

After many years of planning the eight new classrooms for the Aspect Central Coast School were finally built in 2008. They were able to be used as from the beginning of 2009. As well two new playgrounds were designed and built to complement the new classrooms. The final stage of re-modeling the existing structure into an administration block will be completed this



year. Plans were also finalised to re-model the Aspect Vern Barnett School at Forestville and works are due to begin in 2009.

Resulting from Aspect's growth in 2008 the Central Office was moved from the school site at Forestville to offices in Frenchs Forest. The move was required to house the expanded Aspect Building Blocks®, AutismPro™, Aspect Diagnostic Assessment Service, the new Autism Advisor program and Positive Partnerships as well as the additional office support staff for these programs.

At the time of writing, the finishing touches are being put on the program for the Asia Pacific Autism Conference 2009 (APAC 09). As co-host of the event with the Australian Advisory Board on Autism Spectrum Disorders, Aspect has taken the lead role in organising the program. This includes securing some of the top speakers from around the world to be keynotes.

The call for papers received over 360 responses from 24 countries, so we believe we are on track to make this conference a success. One focus of the Organising

community. Aspect honors and thanks each donor for their contribution.

The generous support from state and federal government is acknowledged in detail, but we would personally like to thank them for their continued support in recognising the growing need for increased services to people with an ASD and their families.

We would also like to acknowledge the important contribution made by Aspect's solicitors, Mark Procajlo and his colleagues at Kemp Strang.

It is important to acknowledge the dedication and support of the Board who all give of their time freely, providing governance and a clear direction. This extends to the various Board committees and as such we have endeavored to thank everyone individually in this report. Aspect's Board particularly acknowledges the outstanding service of Weston Ryan who has been Aspect's Honorary Treasurer over the past five years. He is standing down as of this Annual General Meeting. In his place the Board has successfully recruited Rob Brown to be Aspect's new Honorary Treasurer. Rob Brown is a banker who brings with him extensive experience in the industrial investment and financial services sector.



Aspect's donors are vital in the ongoing sustainability of key initiatives. The net contribution made of \$910,000 helps ensure that such programs as the Autism Information Line continue to support the community.

Committee has been to ensure the conference is accessible for both professionals and families. We secured the Department of Ageing, Disability & Home Care (DADHC) as the principal sponsor of the event to help enable more families from NSW to attend. One aim of the Conference is to identify opportunities to develop a regional network to the Asia Pacific amongst the autism community. Full details of the conference can be found on the website www.apac09.org.

We would like to thank Aspect Patron John Doyle for his continued support and persistence in assisting us in raising awareness about autism spectrum disorders. His profile enables Aspect to capitalise on many media opportunities.

Aspect's donors are vital in the ongoing sustainability of key initiatives. The net contribution made of \$910,000 helps ensure that such programs as the Autism Information Line continue to support the

In conclusion it is the Aspect staff who make the organisation's continued high service levels and growth possible. The commitment shown by staff is without par, and their collective knowledge is a fundamental part of the success of the organisation – thank you most sincerely.

Adrian Ford
Chief Executive Officer

Keith Perkin
Board Chair



TREASURER'S REPORT

Overview

Aspect achieved satisfactory financial outcomes in 2008, especially in light of the significant extension of services provided by the organisation, and the emerging impact of the Global Financial Crisis.

A surplus was generated for the year end 31 December 2008 of \$397,539 (2007:\$1,130,427). This result is pleasing and was ahead of budget.

The organisation's scale of operations increased, and this was reflected in significantly higher turnover. Income for the year increased by 24% to some \$32.5 million compared with the previous year, while expenditure increased by 28% to \$32.1 million.

Aspect was successful in securing new funding during the year, including major initiatives such as Positive Partnerships and the Autism Advisor Program. This demonstrates a high level of confidence in Aspect and belief that the organisation will continue to deliver quality service outcomes.

While government funding remains the most significant source of income, fundraising is also of vital important to the organisation.

Consistent with the Strategic Plan, Aspect extended services significantly in 2008, yet met or exceeded its controllable financial objectives, including the bottom line result. The investment portfolio performed poorly during the year in absolute terms as a result of the Global Financial Crisis, although remains effectively aligned to its long-term investment strategy. Overall, the financial control disciplines within Aspect are well developed, and the organisation is well placed to continue to develop in line with its Strategic Plan.

Consistent with the Strategic Plan, Aspect extended services significantly in 2008, yet met or exceeded its controllable financial objectives, including the bottom line result.



ROBERT BROWN
HONORARY TREASURER

Income

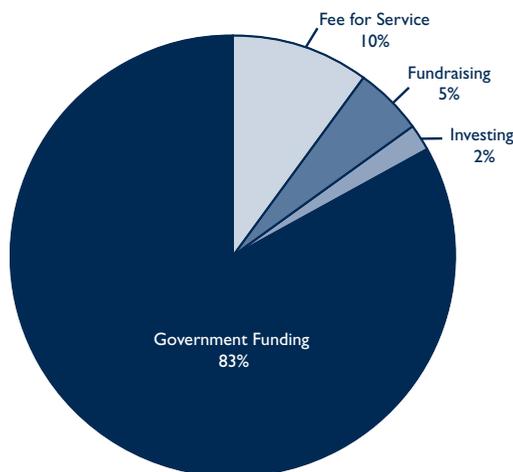
Income for the year increased by 24 percent to some \$32.5 million compared to 2007. Government funding continued to be the major source of income for Aspect representing 83 percent of total income, up slightly from 81 percent in 2007.

The increase in income was mainly due to a 27 percent increase in government funding to over \$26.7 million up from \$21.1 million in the prior year.

Fundraising continued to provide an invaluable contribution, generating over \$1.7 million in the 2008 year. This represented 5 percent of income (the same proportion as in 2007, and over 25 percent higher in nominal terms). Fundraising was critical to the delivery of services that were either not funded or not fully funded by government.

Total fees for services delivered were \$3.2 million which accounted for 10 percent of all income received.

INCOME



Expenses

Expenses increased by 28 percent over the prior year to \$32.1 million in 2008.

Education & Research accounted for most of the expenditure, some 62 percent, compared to 69 percent in 2007. Central Office administrative costs increased to 12 percent of total expenditure compared to 11 percent in 2007. This increase was attributable to the relocation to Frenchs Forest and the incorporation of new positions.

Salary and wage costs increased by 18 percent to \$22 million (compared with a 12 percent increase in 2007). The increases were due to additional headcount following commencement of Positive Partnerships and Autism Advisor Program, along with the ongoing expansion of the organisation's school and satellite class programs.

In regard to other expenses, travel costs, which represented our highest non-salary expense, increased by 34 percent (7 percent increase in 2007) predominantly due to Positive Partnerships and Aspect's strategic focus on building capacity in geographic areas that are currently under-served.

Insurance premiums in respect of general insurance reduced again in 2008 to \$35 thousand (down from \$55 thousand in 2007). The decrease was more than

offset by an increase in workers compensation insurance costs with premiums of \$514 thousand in 2008, up from \$264 thousand in the prior year. Other costs were in line with the 2008 budget.

Investments

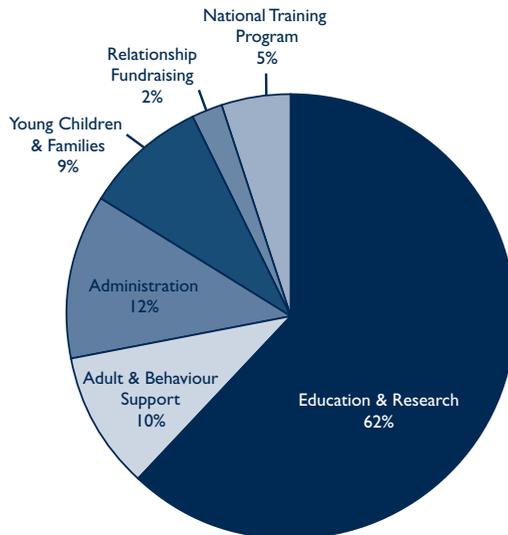
Aspect's investment portfolio was greatly impacted by the Global Financial Crisis throughout the later half of the year with significant falls in all asset classes. The total investment portfolio was valued at \$3.76 million as at 31 December 2008 (a decrease of \$1.94 million compared to 31 December 2007).

Net assets of the organisation decreased by 21 percent to \$5.6 million in 2008, down from \$7.1 million in 2007. A major contributor to this decrease was movement in the value of the investment portfolio.

Despite the decrease in market value, the portfolio yielded approximately 8 percent (or just over \$372,000) in income over the year.

The portfolio was monitored closely throughout the year, and maintained in line with long-term strategic objectives. A number of tactical changes were made during the year, totalling some \$1.08 million in reallocation between underlying investment funds. Management of the portfolio was supported by advice from our investment advisors, Centric Wealth.

EXPENDITURE



Governance

Expenditure and resource allocation remained consistent with the Strategic Plan during the year. Focus continued on further improvements to management reporting and internal controls aimed at ensuring the complete and timely monitoring of costs.

Strong financial disciplines are in place within Aspect, and the Finance Team ensures that budget process is closely linked to the Strategic Plan. This plan is rolled out across the organisation with clear lines of accountability within the Management Team.

Regular reporting and review at Executive, Committee and Board level, together with a structured engagement process with independent audit, all serve to support a robust financial governance culture.

Acknowledgements

My sincere thanks go to my colleagues on the Board, particularly those on the Finance & Audit Committee, for their support and focus on the financial operation of Aspect.

I would also like to acknowledge the contribution of the Finance Team within Aspect, and congratulate management on the continued focus on the professional development of systems and people in this important function.

Special thanks are extended to the outgoing Treasurer, Weston Ryan, who recently resigned after chairing the Finance & Audit committee since 2003. Under his stewardship Aspect enhanced the process of policy development, financial control and our corporate governance framework. Weston has made a significant contribution and left a sound base for future development.



Robert Brown
Honorary Treasurer



REVIEW OF SERVICES

Autism Advisor Program

Aspect was funded by the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) to deliver the Autism Advisor Program in NSW, as part of the Australian Government's Helping Children with Autism package. The Autism Advisor Program commenced on 27 October 2008, employing eight full time staff to provide information and support to parents and carers of children aged zero to six who have been diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder.

The Autism Advisors role is to provide a link between the clinical diagnosis and access to early intervention programs and support services; assist eligible families to access the Australian Government's funding package for early intervention services; and support families from rural and remote areas apply for a rural and remote payment.

During the first 5 months of operations, it was an extremely busy set up period for the NSW Autism Advisor Program, having conducted 950 appointments with families, service providers and health professionals and developed new working relationships with the other Advisor Programs in the other states and territories.

Highlight (27 October 2008 – 27 February 2009):

- At the end of the period it had a waiting list of 23. This was after a successful campaign by a committed and energetic team that completed over 400 appointments in a period of 5 weeks.

Aspect Young Children & Families

Aspect Young Children & Families includes information services, diagnostic assessment, early intervention and

family and community capacity building programs. In 2008 Aspect Young Children & Families operated with forty-two staff (33.65 full-time equivalent positions) from 15 service locations including six regional locations, delivering services to 3,768 clients.

Aspect Diagnostic Assessment Service

During 2008, 214 diagnostic assessments were completed with three-quarters of those assessed receiving a diagnosis of an autism spectrum disorder. The majority of assessments were for preschool and school-aged children, however, a number of assessments for adolescents and adults were also carried out during 2008. 133 of the assessments conducted were for children living in regional areas of NSW and were carried out in their local area including Wagga Wagga, Mudgee, Dubbo, Bega, Cooma, Macksville, Taree and Ballina.

These regional clinics were funded under a special grant from the Department of Ageing, Disability & Home Care (DADHC) to ensure that children in country NSW have access to specialist diagnostic services for ASD.

Highlight:

- The service conducted four two-day workshops covering assessment and intervention approaches, including one for the Australian Psychological Society (APS) in Darwin. In addition, two members of the team presented a half-day workshop at the APS Annual Conference in Hobart.
- In 2009 the Aspect Diagnostic Assessment Service will commence a consultancy role with the Tasmanian Department of Health and Department of Education aimed at establishing training and supervising a tertiary referral state-wide autism-specific assessment team based in Hobart.

Thank you to our supporters

Stardex Insurance Group • Stephens Tilley • Strathearn • Sydney Attractions • Sydney Seafood School • Sydney Water Corporation – Water and Hydraulic Systems Services Team • Taronga & Western Plains Zoos • The Berlei Group • The Good Guys – Ballina • The Rocks Walking Tours • The Sebel Reef House and Spa • Toll Contract Logistics • Treony Rural Holdings • Tuscany Wine Estate Resort • Ulladulla Guest House • Valad Funds Management • Vatera • Vinta Group • Watson Wyatt Australia • WB Financial, Wollongong • West Engadine Pharmacy • Yamaha Motor Australia INDIVIDUALS • Mr Steve Abbott (aka the Sandman) • The Hon Tony Abbott MHR • Mr R Anderson • Mr George Andrews • Mr Jacques Barrett • Mr Robin Bell • Ms Tina Bernard • Mr Peter Berner • Mr Aaron Bird • Mr & Mrs Christian & Donna Boughton • Ms Georgina Bunt • Mr Arthur Byrne • Mr John Cambridge • Mrs Doreen Carter • Mrs Kerrie Cedia • Mr Peter Chalkiotis • Dr Trevor Clark • Mr T Cohen • Mr & Mrs Chris & Jeanagh Condon • Mr Keith Connor • Ms Loretta Cosgrove • Mrs Barbara Cummins • Mr Gary (Smokey) Dawson • Mr Mark De Montfort • Mr Tommy Dean • Mr & Mrs P & M Devlin • Mrs Lisa Doherty • Mr David Down • Mr Phil Emery • Mr Adrian Ford • Mr & Mrs John & Catherine Forster • Mr Trent Franklin



Aspect Building Blocks®

Aspect Building Blocks® delivers a trans disciplinary early intervention service including centre based, home-based, consultancy, education and support programs.

159 families received either a home-based or centre-based early intervention program funded for the full year. A further 259 families received initial consultation and support during 2008.

Highlight:

- In April 2008 DADHC announced \$2 million of funding for Aspect to deliver 60 early intervention places for four years. In the first year, DADHC agreed that 30 of these places could be allocated to fund an AutismPro™ support service targeting rural, regional and remote families in NSW. A further 30 places were allocated to the Inner West of Sydney and the Lower Blue Mountains area.
- Aspect's schools' early intervention services were integrated into the Aspect Building Blocks® program.
- The Aspect Building Blocks® South Coast early intervention consultancy service (funded by DADHC) supported 18 families during 2008. They provided initial training and support for two regional service providers (House with No Steps Little Learners in Forbes and Woodstock Support in Albury) who delivered centre-based Aspect Building Blocks® programs.
- Aspect Building Links is a NSW Health funded program which provides education and support workshops to parents and carers of children recently diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder. During 2008 the program's focus has been parent and family capacity building, through skills based workshops; 117 parents and carers attended workshops delivered in six locations; Hunter (34), Dubbo (16), Nowra (16), Moruya (10), Sydney (day and evening 41).

- Aspect Building Blocks® was approved to be part of the Early Intervention Service Provider Panel by FaHCSIA, which enables eligible families to access funding for the service through the Helping Children With Autism program from 2009.

Aspect Family Initiatives

Aspect Family Initiatives delivers an information line and a series of programs that focus on families.

Aspect Autism Information Line

The Autism Information Line is often the first point of contact for many parents and carers and service providers seeking information about autism, Aspect and local services, as well as practical information regarding interventions. The service is staffed by two part-time positions and reports to the Manager, Aspect Family Initiatives.

There was a significant increase once again in family members contacting the service, in particular an increase in the number of families with both newly diagnosed very young children and families with an adult person with autism.

Highlight:

- The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) provided funding for a six month Project Officer to update information the Autism Information Line holds regarding support groups in NSW. This project enabled Aspect to build links with more support groups by sharing information about Aspect programs and services. The project particularly assisted families with very young children to access early intervention support including in their local communities.

Aspect Building Foundations

Building Foundations is a DVD and accompanying manual that is designed to assist families and other

Thank you to our supporters

• Mr Chris Fydler • Mr & Mrs John & Patricia Gibbs • Mr Dave Gilbert • Mr Bob Giltinan • Miss L Glynn • Dr Maurine Goldston-Morris • Mr Scott Gourley • Ms Tara Grech • Mr Peter Hadfield • Ms Emma Harvie • Mr Michael Hawker • Mr Mark Haydock • Mr John Heathers • Mrs M Henderson • Mr Dudley Hewitt • Mr Michael Hill • Mr Hockey • Mr Greg Hohnen • Mr John Hollyman • Mr Ferry Ie • Mr David Jackett • Ms Kara Jeffree • Mrs Karen Johnson • Ms Judith Johnson • Mrs Shirley Jones • Mr & Mrs Peter & Margaret Kail • Lady Catherine Kater • Mr & Mrs George & Carla Kazzi • Mrs Olive Keane • Ms Catherine Kennedy • Mrs Marie Kerridge • Mr & Mrs LG & HL King • Mr Nathan King • Mrs Ingrid Kingsbury-West • Mrs Marion Kingston • Mr Jeff Kingston • Mrs Lynnette Kok • Mrs Coral Kolmann • Mrs Nathalie Kulakowski • Mr & Mrs John & Alison Kupsch • Mrs Joan Langley • Mr Andrew Langley • Mr Christopher Lee • Mrs Brenda Leece • Mr Guy Leech • Mr Michael Lucas • Mr & Mrs Nicholas & Rose Lucas • Mrs M Macarthur • Mrs B Mackay • Dr Neil Maclean • Mr Grant Maguire • Mr & Mrs David & Claudia Maher • Mr James Marburg • Miss M Martin • Ms Ruth Martin • Ms Andrea Martinez • Miss Patricia Masterson • Mrs Kathryn Matthew • Ms Victoria Maudson • Mr Kevin McCann • Mr Lloyd McKeand • Mr Don McKinnon • Mr Errol McMahon • Mrs Lyndall McNally • Ms Chantal Meek • Mrs Anita Millard • Mr Klaus Mogensen • Mrs Pam Morris



service providers caring for a child recently diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD). This resource was launched in 2007 through funding provided by DADHC.

Highlight:

- In 2008 the NSW Government announced a further \$200,000 investment in the Building Foundations project resulting 25,000 copies being produced with copies sent to early childhood services, schools, families and service providers across the country.

Aspect Someone To Turn To – parent support network

Aspect Someone To Turn To is a parent support network that trains parents and carers who have a child with an ASD and who wish to volunteer to support other parents and carers, In 2008, 73 families were supported by parents who have children ranging in age from 4 to 25.

A total of 63 fathers or grandfathers attended four Father/Grandfather Evenings during the year; this carer support service aims to reach out to male carers and to link fathers and grandfathers to the program.

Highlight:

- Aspect was successful in its application to DADHC to fund the extension of the program to CALD and Indigenous communities for three years. This has enabled the program to train volunteers from Vietnamese and other communities to build knowledge regarding autism and to develop parent support networks.

AutismPro™

AutismPro™ is a web based (www.autismpro.com.au) tool for parents and professionals to help them in their management of their child with an autism spectrum disorder. It was developed in Canada and Aspect is the

Australian re-seller. The AutismPro™ Support team helps families to learn about and to implement the tool in their home, where possible with ongoing support from both the AutismPro™ team and from their local service professionals.

By the end of 2008 Aspect had sold 74 AutismPro™ licenses. At the time of writing this report, the total licenses sold had reached 135.

Highlight:

- DADHC provided funding to assist Aspect to establish the AutismPro™ service and this provided 50 places, with a particular focus on regional families.
- A new opportunity to reach more families has been provided by the FaHCSIA Helping Children with Autism package with 2009 seeing many families interested in AutismPro™ as a service option.

Aspect Far North Coast Centre

The Aspect Far North Coast Centre provides the Aspect Building Blocks® centre-based early intervention program for 30 children and their families each year in partnership with five local service providers in Lismore, Casino, Ballina, Byron Bay and Tweed.

During 2008 the Centre had 214 people as members of its Resource Library while 162 people attended training provided by the service and 1000 people were in contact for more information.

Highlight:

- As a result of a FaHCSIA evaluation completed in 2007 a Promising Practice Profile was developed which has been published on the Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) website.
- Aspect won a tender from DADHC under the category of 'Developing Innovative Service Models and Practices', to deliver an integrated early screening, diagnostic assessment and home or

Thank you to our supporters

- Mr Andrew Murphy • Mr Lee Murray • Mrs Mary Nelmes • Mr Glenn Newell • Mr Cliff Newman • Mrs Jenny O'Brien • Mr & Ms James & Roz O'Rourke & Scotney • Mr John O'Sullivan • Mr & Mrs Peter & Tammy Papas • Mr Alex Peade • Mr Wayne Pearce • Mrs Olive Pearse • Mr Dan Phillips • Ms Jacqui Phillips • Mr Greig Pickhaver • Mrs Kathleen Pigram • Mr Richard Plummer • Ms Susana Porley • Mr Timothy Powell • Mr Kevin Reid • Mr Matthew Reilly • Mr Cesare Remollino • Mr Lachlan Renshaw • Mr D Robbins • Mr Michael Roberts • Miss Marie Robertson • Mr Mikey Robins • Ms Ana Robinson • Mr Jeremy Rolleston • Mr Matthew Rose • Mr & Mrs Jake & Elizabeth Rowe • Ms Wendy Russell • Mr Matt Ryan • Dr Maurice Saxby • Mr Anthony Segreto • Mr Saxon Shirley • Mr George Siderides • Mr Craig Simmons • Mr Alan Smith • Mr & Mrs Keith & Julie Smith • Mrs Jennifer Smith • Mr Vince Sorrenti • Ms Judie Stephens OAM • Mr Anthony Summers • Mr & Mrs David & Leona Taylor • Mr Andrew Taylor • Mr Peter Thompson • Mrs Anne Tidex • Ms Catherine Van Gelderen • Mr Andrew Van Kool • Mr R Vandervaere • Ms Annabelle Vant • Mrs Margaret Vernon • Mrs Bianca Vern Barnett • Mr Paul Wade • Ms Fiona Waldren • Mr Richard Wall • Ms Kerri-Anne Ward • Mr David Warner • Mr Kenneth Washburn • Ms Nicki Washburn • Mrs Irene Watkins • Mrs Kate Watt • Mrs Golda Watt • Mr Peter Werner • Mrs Andrea Werner • Mr Simon Westaway • Mr Luke Whitcher • Ms Pamela Whitehead • Mr Peter Williams • Ms Dee Wright • Dr Norman Yenson • Mrs Karla Zolshan



playgroup based early intervention program for children from 12 months of age with a possible autism spectrum disorder. For the first time this provides an opportunity to identify children from as early as is possible and to deliver education and support to their early childhood support services including our tender partner Playgroup NSW, local early childhood services and families. The project also includes early screening and referral for ongoing assessment and an autism-specific early intervention component – a consultative capacity building model based on the North American PLAY Project Home Consultation Program. This will be used as a framework for building the capacity of the family to support the development of their young child who may be at risk of a diagnosis of autism.

Aspect Education & Research

The expansion and further development of Aspect Education and Research in 2008 consolidated the Aspect schools program as one of the world's largest autism-specific educational programs. In 2008 the network of 6 schools and 67 satellite classes catered for 586 students across the autism spectrum.

The growth of the school places and satellite classes is driven by the increasing demand for services and is related to the high levels of collaboration with key government and non-government stakeholders. During 2008, 94 students transitioned to a more inclusive educational setting.

The inaugural inter-school Sports Carnival was held at Homebush with 3 metropolitan schools participating during Autism Month. Parents, family and friends all attended dressed in the school colours for a wonderful day of activities, races and a march past. It was a hugely successful day for all involved.

Aspect's Comprehensive Educational Approach

Aspect's Comprehensive Educational Approach which provides high quality leadership in the field of autism specific education, underpins the approach to intervention for all Aspect's school and early intervention services has been further reviewed in 2008 resulting in modifications. Learning and development programs for staff were also developed in relation to the implementation of the Comprehensive Educational Approach in students Individual Education programs.

The establishment of the Aspect *model classes* is a key strategy to further develop the Aspect Comprehensive Educational Approach. The establishment of model classes in Aspect schools will introduce a number of other evidence-based educational options. New Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication handicapped CHildren (TEACCH) classes were established at the Aspect Vern Barnett and Aspect Central Coast schools to explore further the "structured" approach to teaching children with autism spectrum disorders. Planning also took place for the establishment of intensive educational / behavioural model classes (Pivotal Response Training – PRT) which is based upon an applied behaviour analysis (ABA). Classes are currently being established at the Aspect Western Sydney and Aspect South Coast Schools.

Satellite Class Program

11 new satellite classes were established over the past 12 months. The new classes have been the result of further converting single satellites to double classes.

In addition to the establishment of new satellite classes, there is a need to also expand classes at base school sites. A lack of available space at most school base sites was identified as part of the *Schools Futures Planning Committees* and planning has commenced to explore opportunities to expand school base sites.

Thank you to our supporters

TRUSTS AND FOUNDATIONS • Allens Arthur Robinson • ASX Reuters Charity Foundation • Baxter Charitable Foundation • Commonwealth Bank Staff Community Fund • Elisabeth Murdoch Trust • Equity Trustees • Ernst & Young Foundation • Estate of Eric Norman Sweet • Estate of George Pitt Wood • Fairbridge Foundation • Golden Stave Foundation • Goldman Sachs JBWere Foundation • Gordon Brothers Charitable Foundation • Henning Family Foundation • ING Foundation • Ivy H Thomas & Arthur A Thomas Trust • Kenneth & Peter Gibbs Foundation • Kids for Life Foundation • Knights Allan St Ruth Annuity Fund • Liangrove Foundation • Macquarie Bank Foundation • Michael and Mary Whelan Trust • Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation • Perpetual Trustee • Reserve Bank Benevolent Fund • St George Foundation • Telstra Foundation (Telstra Kid's Fund) • The Bluesand Foundation • The Caledonia Foundation • The Mabel and Franklin Barrett Trust • The Primary Club of Australia • The RA Gale Foundation • Tudor Foundation Inc • Trust Company • Walter Campbell Memorial Trust • Woodend Foundation.



School Highlights:

Aspect Central Coast School

- As of the commencement of the 2009 school year, there are 88 students enrolled across 11 sites in addition to the base school.
- Two new TEACCH model classes were established to trial the *structured approach* to teaching. The classes were evaluated in conjunction with research study involving Canberra University.
- The new classrooms and playground were completed. The final stage in the rebuilding of the school is due for completion in 2009.
- A Mini Olympics was held for all students in the school with the older high school students mentoring younger students program.

Aspect Hunter School

- As of the commencement of the 2009 school year, there are 75 students enrolled across 10 sites in addition to the base school.
- The first NSW Department of Education & Training (DET) satellite class in Hunter region opened at Tighes Hill Public School
- A new satellite Catholic Schools Office (CSO) satellite class at St. Francis Xavier, Belmont opened in Term 3
- The first primary satellite class opened at Our Lady of Lords, Tarro with the class now catering to students from K to 6
- Funding from the NSW Department of Disability, Ageing and Home Care *Strengthening Families* program and auspiced by Newcastle University, the CSO and NSW DET, enabled the school to run joint parent and staff training workshops for the Lake Macquarie region

Aspect South Coast School

- As of the commencement of the 2009 school year, there are 100 students enrolled across 11 sites in addition to the base school
- The inaugural Art Show as part of Autism Month was held and proved to be a great success.
- The Parent & Friends group along with the School received over \$100,000 in donations.
- An inaugural Ball took place in Albury to support the Albury satellite class.
- Three Smartboards were installed along with a range of assistive communication technology for students.

- The Albury and Wagga Wagga satellite classes were renovated.

Aspect South East Sydney School

- With 121 students enrolled across 10 sites in addition to the three base sites the Aspect South East Sydney School is now the largest school in the organisation as of the commencement of the 2009 school year.
- Opened a new double satellite Catholic Education Office class at St. Mary's St Joseph's, Maroubra Beach for students in the Eastern suburbs.
- The second high school satellite class opened at Aquinas College, Menai.

Aspect Vern Barnett School

- As of the commencement of the 2009 school year, there are 107 students enrolled across 11 sites in addition to the base school.
- Another satellite class was opened at St. Joseph's Catholic school at Alstonville on the Far North Coast, bringing the total to 3 classes.
- The School had its first student complete the School Certificate.
- Two TEACCH classes commenced and were evaluated in conjunction with Canberra University.

Aspect Western Sydney School

- As of the commencement of the 2009 school year, there are 112 students enrolled across 16 sites in addition to the base school.
- 1 student completed the Higher School Certificate
- 6 students completed the School Certificate
- Planning commenced and staff trained in preparation for the establishment of new Pivotal Response Training (ABA) classes for 2009
- School facilities upgrade (fences, gates, floors, offices) undertaken with Federal funding (*Investing In our Schools Program*)

Aspect Educational Outreach

After Aspect Educational Outreach's transfer to Aspect Education & Research in January 2008, the small team have continued to provide a diverse range of consultancy, group social skills, peer education and diagnosis disclosure programs as well as school in-services and customised training for parents and professionals. 291 clients were supported in 2008.



Regional services have grown in Central Western NSW to complement the existing services in the South Coast and Far North Coast regions. A total of 75 students were supported in these areas.

Highlights:

- The provision of Aspect Educational Outreach's first translated and interpreted CALD workshop for Vietnamese parents of children with ASD.
- Successfully won funding from DADHC, through a competitive tendering process, to establish and run Social Clubs for 8-18 year olds. The inaugural Social Club for 8-12 year olds was established at the Kirrawee Unit of the South East Sydney School. Publicising the Social Clubs Program across metropolitan Sydney, generated substantial interest from parents and children.
- Developed and delivered an innovative 'Movie Club' social skills program that employs video technology, scripting and dramatic performance to engage and motivate secondary school participants."

Aspect Research

Four research projects were undertaken in 2008. Two of these projects continued from 2007 and are both nearing completion. They include: the satellite class research project, 'Where are they now?' – a preliminary study to evaluate the long-term outcomes for students with an ASD graduating from the Satellite Class program funded by Gresham Partners; and the project comparing the Aspect Building Blocks® early intervention centre-based and home-based Early Play Program entitled, 'Comparative analysis of early intervention programs for children with an ASD' funded by the Australian Research Council.

Two new projects commenced in 2008. The first involved the an evaluation of the new TEACCH (Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication handicapped CHildren) classes established in two Aspect schools in term 1, 2008. The study is being undertaken with support from the University of Canberra and is entitled, 'A controlled outcome study of a TEACCH intervention for children with autism'. The second new study entitled,

'Supporting students with ASDs enrolled in senior high school' has been undertaken by Aspect in conjunction with the Catholic Schools Office, Broken Bay. The purpose of the investigation was to examine the scholastic achievement and social participation of senior high school students with an ASD who also present with co-morbid conditions (i.e. mental health issues such as anxiety and depression) and to identify factors affecting progress and to discuss effective intervention strategies. The overall goal was to develop an information guide for staff in high schools. This project is also nearing completion.

A new partnership has been established with the Brain & Mind Research Institute (BMRI), Sydney University. This new partnership will not only lead to the development of further ideas for collaborative projects but will create further opportunities to disseminate Aspect's research and evaluation projects.

Aspect Adults & Behaviour Support

During 2009, Aspect completed the restructuring of Adults & Behaviour Support, effecting the transfer of Aspect small employment program to House with No Steps and completing arrangements for the transfer of the Aspect Accommodation Service to The Lorna Hodgkins Sunshine Home.

These important changes were undertaken sensitively and after extensive consultations with clients and their families and with staff. They followed a strategic decision in 2007 to recognise that Aspect's adult clients in these two areas of service delivery become part of larger services specialising in employment and accommodation so that clients will have the best opportunities.

Aspect Behaviour Support

Aspect Behaviour Support consists of three specialist programs:

Aspect Behaviour Intervention Service

Aspect's Behaviour Intervention Service (BIS) is a DADHC funded program for families in the Western Sydney region who support children and adolescents 0-18 with a diagnosed disability and have an emerging or current challenging behaviour.



Currently Aspect Adolescent Support provides on-going services to 23 clients, many of whom are from a CALD background.



In 2008, two BIS clinicians worked with 45 clients and their families and were involved with over 450 consultations. BIS continues to innovate to support families, including developing a practical Asperger specific workshops attended by over 60 parents and a training and follow up model for wait-list families who need a less intensive service.

BIS is committed to continuous improvement and initiated a family centred practice project for 2008. This involved the introduction of two new measures, the Goal Attainment Scale (GAS) a goal setting measure that allows families to set their own goals for the service and the Enabling Practices Scale (EPS) which evaluate whether a service has been family-centred. BIS has received very positive feedback on all measures.

Aspect Adolescent Support

Aspect's Adolescent Support (previously know as Co-ordinated Access To Services and Support (CASS)) is a 4 year DADHC funded pilot project specialist long term case management service for families of adolescents diagnosed with autism and an intellectual disability in the Metro North region of Sydney.

The service prioritises adolescents who are at high risk of exiting school prematurely due to behaviour management issues or who are at risk of institutional care due to family breakdown. Aspect Adolescent Support aims to assist families to access to a range of available services and supports, including community based programs, different types of respite, after school care, counselling, sibling supports, social groups, training, funding for equipment etc. The service co-ordinates input from all those who support the client facilitating communication and the development of a comprehensive positive behaviour support plan.

Aspect Adolescent Support is being evaluated independently by a researcher using a broad range of standardised and other measures.

Currently Aspect Adolescent Support provides on-going services to 23 clients, many of whom are from a CALD background.

Aspect Recipe For Success

Aspect's Recipe For Success is a positive behaviour support workshop for families funded by NSW Health for the whole of New South Wales and operates from Aspect's Far North Coast Centre in Alstonville. In 2008 the success of the program included a staff member relocating to the region to co-ordinate the program.

In 2008 the service provided 7 three-day workshops, training 197 parents and carers and additional

professional sessions training over 100 participants. The workshop continued to receive very positive pre and post course evaluations as well as frequent follow up success stories from parents and carers.

Aspect Recipe For Success has developed its presentations for CALD communities including the Vietnamese and Korean communities in 2008.

Aspect Behaviour Support continued to provide capacity building support to House With No Steps & Sunnyfield and offered a range of training opportunities to schools, services and parents through DADHC convened training sessions.

A restricted Practice panel has been established in 2008 aiming to review the use of all restricted practices within Aspect services.

Aspect Community Participation

Forty clients participated in the Aspect Community Participation Program during 2008, 17 in the Southside program and 23 at the Croydon. The first important steps were taken during the year to upgrade the accommodation for Aspect Community Participation with Southside's Carlton-based activities relocated to newly refurbished premises at Bexley. This positive and exciting change was well received by clients and staff. The physical capacity of the Croydon site has been reached and it is intended that this program be relocated in the near future.

The foundations for a new approach to person centred planning and client choice in Aspect Community Participation were established in 2008 with training to support new ways of working with clients and the families and carers. Client/user friendly documentation to support these changes have been developed. These recognise the communication styles of many clients.

Highlights

- Community participation staff participated in a series of learning and development activities which included Nonviolent Crisis Intervention, Disability Standards, Social Stories, Communication and Visual Software, Goal Setting and Skill Development and a variety of Educational and Art software.
- Croydon program staff presented a program on sensory integration with assistive technologies at Aspect's Annual Staff Conference.
- The programs continued to strengthen their connections with local businesses and clubs, councils to create new opportunities for adult clients to participate in community activities.



- Consistent with this, the Southside program continued to actively participate in local community based activities such as the Hurstville Community Garden.
- Significant environmental changes were undertaken at Croydon designed to support clients with sensory and behavioural issues.
- An art show of works painted by Aspect Community Participation clients was opened during Aspect's Annual Recognition Awards Night held in Autism Month. The art was highly regarded and many works sold during the night.
- Also during Autism Month, Aspect Community Participation held an Autism Expo at Woodstock Community Center, Burwood. This allowed the programs to demonstrate their activities to the community and other service providers throughout Sydney. It also provided opportunities for networking and sharing information.
- Croydon's Cultural Program expanded to include two festival days with music, dance, drama and cooking building up to the celebration of Chinese New Year and a Mediterranean celebration.

Adults with Asperger's Disorder

- As a result of a partnership with TAFE an interactive on-line training program to assist TAFE staff accommodate the needs of students with an autism spectrum disorder is now up and running. TAFE is also piloting a 'satellite' type class to support students with Asperger's disorder adjust and succeed in a mainstream, adult learning environment.
- The Aspect Asperger's Social Club had another successful year with over 50 young adults attending meetings and a variety of social functions. This is the only group of its kind operating in metropolitan Sydney and serves as a vehicle for facilitating the development of networks for young people with ASD.

Aspect Employment services (Working Aspect)

Capacity for supported employee numbers was maintained in 2008. Two vehicles, laptops, enclave and administrative resources were purchased from the FaHCSIA Business Assistance Package to improve the conditions of the enclaves, and provide additional support in communication resources.

The service was re-auspiced to House with No Steps (HWNS) in August. The re-auspice included all 19 supported employees, 6 support staff and Administration



Assistant. 16 of the supported positions were transferred into HWNS Growing Care Division, 2 into HWNS packaging service and 1 was found more suitable supported employment with another organisation.

Aspect Accommodation

Residents received additional medical and psychological services in partnership with the Centre of Developmental Disability studies and on going behavioural support from Aspect's BIS team.

Long standing renovation work at Hornsby was completed by the landlord, North Shore Community Housing. Both houses received substantial capital works improvements. Wahroonga's interior was painted, a new driveway laid, new entry door installed and a ramp was built in early 2009. Hornsby's garden was landscaped, a new driveway laid and ducted air conditioning installed.

Both accommodation services were re-auspiced to the Sunshine Home in January 2009. Sunshine Home was chosen through a DADHC tender and have a long history in providing accommodation for people with disabilities. All residents and staff transferred to Sunshine Home in February 2009.

Positive Partnerships

Following a highly competitive tender process, a consortium comprising Aspect, University of Canberra, Autism South Australia and the Department of Education & Training, Western Australia was successful in winning a \$11.3 million contract to deliver services as part of the Australian Government's Helping children with autism package. Aspect was the lead agency.

The initial 2 year contract will deliver 'Positive Partnerships', professional development workshops to over 900 teachers and other school staff and workshops and information sessions for approximately 3000 parents and carers across Australia.

Highlight:

- The Positive Partnerships website (www.autismtraining.com.au) and online learning platform was established and hosts its first on line learning module – *An Introduction to Autism...* This platform will have additional online learning modules, learning reassures and information for parents/ carers and school staff.
- A National Education and Training team of 26 people has been established to develop the workshop content and materials and support the national delivery. This team has representation from a range of state/ territory education sectors, autism organisation and from the university sector.
- Positive Partnerships State and Territory Implementation Planning teams have been established in every state and territory with representation from each of the education sectors, autism organisations and other key parent organisations.

Aspect People & Communications

Aspect People & Communications' provides services to support all Aspect services to strengthen their capacity to respond to the needs of the children and adults with an autism spectrum disorder, their families and carers. Aspect People & Communication services include human resource management, learning and development, communications, policy development, continuous improvement and corporate risk management.

Highlight:

- A significant and continuing challenge during the year was effectively managing the recruitment of skilled staff to keep pace with Aspect's growth. This growth is reflected in the increase in the average number of equivalent full-time staff employed by Aspect

between 2007 and 2008. This grew by just over 14%. Aspect successfully met this challenge in a tightening human services labour market.

- Despite this competitive market, Aspect was able to retain staff, keeping staff turnover at under 14% in the year ending 31 December 2008. This was consistent with the previous year and a strong result in an industry which experiences significantly higher annual turnover.
- During the year, Aspect focused attention more closely on occupational health and safety (OHS). New OHS performance monitoring systems were introduced to monitor both preventative activities and OHS outcomes; OHS policies were reviewed against contemporary best practice; an OHS specialist conducted an external audit of Aspect sites. Overall, these measures resulted in improvements in OHS performance and greater control over workers compensation costs.
- Once again, Aspect held its annual staff conference. The 2008 conference attracted 440 staff, almost 100 more than attended in 2007. This increase followed a decision to invite long term casual staff for the first time, recognising the important role these staff play with clients and with Aspect. Staff rated their conference experience very highly, reflecting the strength of speakers and presentations and the choice of venue for the conference.
- Building on its new logo, Aspect commenced a series of communications initiatives in the year. Two new newsletters were launched; 'In The Picture', which has both an in house version for staff and an external email version to inform about developments in Aspect; and 'aspects', a magazine designed to keep the wider community informed about activities throughout the Aspect. Work commenced on developing a new website for the organisation and Aspect took the exciting step of commissioning a series of television commercials which will be shown nationally during 2009. Aspect continued to work with the local and national media to strengthen the wider community's understanding of autism spectrum disorders and Aspect's services and programs.
- Aspect's Staff Policy Committee continued to meet each month during the year. The Committee is responsible for reviewing and updating policies and identifying policy gaps. Amendments and new policies are then submitted to the Board's Finance & Audit Committee for approval. The Finance & Audit Committee approved 31 amended and new policies during the year.



- Aspect's Corporate Risk Management Committee met on each quarter through the year. This committee is responsible for managing Aspect's corporate risk management strategy which includes identifying corporate risks, establishing and reviewing risk control measures to address identified risks. The Committee reports on its activities to the Board each quarter and provides the Board with a summary of extreme and high corporate risks and risk control measures.

Aspect Corporate Services

Aspect Corporate Services is responsible for overseeing the organisation's finance, IT and facilities management.

Highlight:

- Under enormous pressure from organisational change and the Global Financial Crisis, a strong budgetary framework provided a small surplus as planned.
- Aspect's auditors concluded an unqualified audit report for the end of year financials.
- A review of the finance function led to increase staffing and identified opportunities to streamline transactional processing (e.g. Corporate Card online). In addition, it identified the importance of accountability and training to staff involved in the financial processes.
- Aspect's accounting package, Great Plains, was upgraded to the latest version.
- Over 90 days debtors showed significant improvement during the year from \$51,675 to \$31,397 – the lowest on record.
- Completed the IT roll out of Terminal Services, which means all Aspect site now have access to the network. The potential efficiencies of having access to the core Microsoft suite of applications and Boardmaker (visual) are enormous.
- As a result of the 2007 audit report, Aspect made major advances in internal documentation within the IT function.
- Expanded our data storage capability and implemented a web content filtering solution.



- Completed the new playgrounds and classrooms at the Aspect Central Coast School. It is anticipated the final stage of renovating the cottage will be completed in 2009.
- Moved Central Office from Forestville to Frenchs Forest. This allowed staff to be facilitated in purpose-built accommodation and for programs to grow. As a result, the Masterplan for the Forestville site was revised to allow expansion of the Aspect Vern Barnett School.
- Relocation of the Aspect Community Participation program from Carlton to Bexley to provide suitable accommodation.

PARTNERSHIPS – A CASE STUDY

Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) has partnerships with 114 organisations. Numbers of these partnerships have been developed during 2008. Aspect's mission is to build capacity and confidence in communities, a notion which extends to other service providers by means of Aspect providing resources for learning and development, or because these partners are able to assist in providing greater access to Aspect services.

A new found collaborative atmosphere within the autism community developed during the tender process for the Australian Government's Helping Children With Autism package. Of particular significance was the tender for delivering a national training project. In order to be able to deliver this project, the tender required the efforts of multiple organisations. This is presented as a case study for how Aspect is building partnerships.

Positive Partnerships

Following the announcement of a highly competitive tender process at the beginning of 2008, a consortium comprising Aspect, the University of Canberra, Autism South Australia and the Department of Education & Training, Western Australia won an \$11.3 million contract to deliver services as part of the Australian Government's Helping Children With Autism package.

This consortium, known as the Australian Autism Education & Training Consortium (AAETC), commenced work on this project in May 2008 to deliver a program known as Positive Partnerships. A key platform of the AAETC approach was to focus on developing, strengthening and sustaining partnerships at many levels – with government, consortium partners, state and territory autism organisations, education sectors and other non government organisations.

Critical to the success of the project was Aspect developing and sustaining a partnership with the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR).

The composition of AAETC – including two of Australia's major autism organisations (Aspect and Autism SA), the University of Canberra and a



government department (the Department of Education and Training, Western Australia) has been acknowledged as a unique partnership bringing together a national collective of expertise in the autism and education areas.

Aspect, as lead agency of this consortium plays a major role in sustaining and strengthening these consortium relationships.

The successful implementation of the Positive Partnerships initiatives has required bringing together a national education and training team along with workshop delivery teams in every state and territory.

Outcomes

Aspect, as lead agency of the consortium, has entered into a total of 26 formal agreements with a range of government and non government organisations nationally to enable and facilitate the breadth of involvement required to deliver this national program.

These partnerships focus on the delivery of both parent/carer workshops and the professional development workshops for teachers and other school staff.

By the end of 2009 in excess of 3000 parents/carers will have completed the two-day workshops and information sessions, while over 1000 teachers and other school staff will have completed the 5 day equivalent professional development program.

Australian Advisory Board on Autism Spectrum Disorders

ACN 085 018 408

Aspect is a corporate member of the Australian Advisory Board on Autism Spectrum Disorders www.autismaus.com.au. It is a company limited by guarantee with eight corporate members representing the all major autism organisations across Australia. Its operations are entirely funded by the eight corporate members. The Advisory Board's mission is:

The Australian Advisory Board on Autism Spectrum Disorders is the national peak body providing strategic advice to the Australian government on the issues affecting people with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and their families.

The Board meets face to face 3 times per year, with its core activities being to:

- identify current strategic issues and develop position papers
- meet with relevant ministers, ministerial advisors and senior bureaucrats in government and in opposition
- identify key issues that will provide direction for a 5 year agenda for autism
- promote the Board's National Call to Action
- promote Autism Month
- co-host the biennial conference
- publish communiqués

2008 was dominated by the decision of the federal government to create the \$190m Helping Children With Autism package which focused primarily on early intervention with children with an autism spectrum disorder and their families.

Since the election of the Rudd Labor Government in November 2007 it has progressively implemented the package. The Autism Spectrum Disorders Advisory Group (ASDAG) was formed by the federal Dept of Families, Housing, Community Services & Indigenous Affairs to advise the federal government on the package. It comprised representatives of relevant federal government departments and a number of community representatives. The Australian Advisory Board on Autism Spectrum Disorders had three representatives on the group: Adrian Ford, Penny Beeston and Jon Martin.

Along with putting the views of the Australian Advisory Board on Autism Spectrum Disorders to the ASDAG, the Advisory Board also provided written

advice to the government and the community at large through its position paper on early intervention and its revised Call to Action.

Along with its work on the ASDAG, the Advisory Board also met with the new Parliamentary Secretary for Disability Services, the Hon. Bill Shorten MP to outline its concerns for the community of people affected by autism.

On 27 May 2008, the first ever parliamentary breakfast for autism was held at Parliament House to mark the culmination of Australia's first Autism Month – a joint initiative of the Australian Advisory Board and Autism Aspergers Advocacy Australia (A4).

The guest speakers at the breakfast were the Hon Bill Shorten MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Children's Services, Ms Katharine Annear, an adult with an ASD from South Australia and Mr John Doyle, [the Patron of Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) and better known as Roy Slaven from Roy and HG] who has a sister with an ASD. Their stories highlighted the everyday challenges faced by people with ASDs, their families and carers. 95 people attended the breakfast including over 50 parliamentarians.

During the year the Autism Association of Western Australia re-joined the Advisory Board as a corporate member. The Advisory Board thoroughly reviewed its policy on co-hosting the Biennial Australian Conference on Autism Spectrum Disorders by ensuring its active support on the Organising Committee of every conference from now on, a fixed fee to be paid by the local corporate member to the Advisory Board to co-host the conference as well as an agreed distribution of any surplus generated by the conference to both the Advisory Board and the local host.

The Board agreed on a completely revised fee structure to ensure its on-going viability after the loss of the previous year. The Advisory Board also developed a Board Charter to further clarify its role as well identifying those areas that were outside of its parameters.

The Advisory Board comprises:

Adrian Ford – Aspect (Chairperson),
Penny Beeston – Autism Queensland (Deputy Chairperson and Secretary),
Jon Martin – Autism SA (Honorary Treasurer),
Alison Bird – Autism NT
Bob Buckley – Autism Asperger ACT
Mick Clark – Autism Tasmania,
Murray Dawson-Smith – Autism Victoria; and
Joan McKenna Kerr – Autism Association of WA.



Conference presentations

During 2008 the following staff made presentations at the external conferences and events listed below:

23rd Annual Autism Conference

Vicki Gibbs (“Diagnosis and Assessment of Autism Spectrum Disorders”)

43rd APS Annual Conference

Anthony Warren (“Assessment of autism spectrum disorders: A national approach?”)

Australian Association of Special Education Hunter Autism Conference

Mark Durie & Lara Cheney

Australian Foundation For Disability Vietnamese and Khmer Family Day presentation

Angela Stewart (“Aspect Someone To Turn To program”)

Chief Magistrates Conference

Vicki Gibbs (“Sentencing Offenders with an Autism Spectrum Disorder”)

Department of Ageing Disability and Home Care Service Information Day

Angela Stewart (“Aspect Someone To Turn To program”)

International Autism Research Conference: 7th International Meeting For Autism Research (London)

Dr. Trevor Clark

Mater Dei Conference

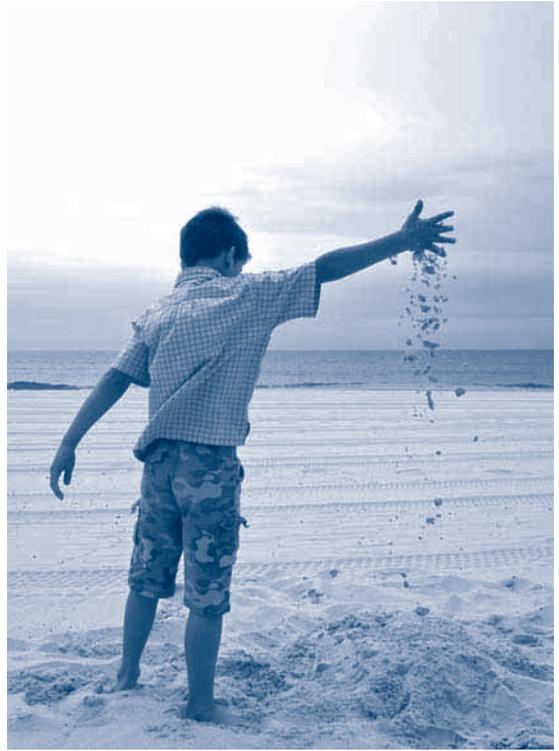
Dr. Trevor Clark

National Disability Services National Conference (Melbourne)

Dr. Tom Tutton & Jodi Woodward (“Aspect Recipe For Success”)

National Sentencing Conference

Vicki Gibbs (“Sentencing offenders with an autism spectrum disorder”)



Non Violent Crisis Intervention Training (ongoing)

Adults & Behaviour Support staff

Psychologists working in Developmental Disability Conference

Dr. Tom Tutton (“Rigid Repetitive Ritualistic Behaviours”)

Social Workers In Disability presentation

Angela Stewart (“Aspect Someone To Turn To”)

Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communications handicapped CHildren (TEACCH) Masterclass Research Forum (Brisbane)

Dr. Trevor Clark and Elaine Keane

Vietnamese Parents with Disabled Children Support Group presentation

Angela Stewart (“Aspect Someone To Turn To program”)

Formal agreements with Aspect as lead agency of the AAETC.

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS • ACT Department of Education • Northern Territory Department of Education and Training • NSW, Department of Ageing, Disability & Home Care • NSW Department of Education and Training • Queensland Department of Education, Training and the Arts • Tasmanian Department of Education • Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development • Western Australia Department of Education and Training • Western Australia, Disability Services Commission

NON-GOVERNMENT AND OTHER ORGANISATIONS • Autism Association of Western Australia • Autism Queensland • Autism NT • Autism Tasmania • Catholic Education Office, Brisbane Diocese • Catholic Education Office, Melbourne Diocese • Catholic Education Office, Sandhurst Diocese • Firstchance Inc, Newcastle • Gateways Children’s Services, Victoria • Mansfield Autistic School, Victoria • NSW Association of Independent Schools • NSW Catholic Education Commission • Therapy ACT • Therapy Focus, WA • University of Canberra • Western Australia, Catholic Education Commission



Board Committees

Aspect's Board has four Standing Committees which overview the organisation. Each Board Committee is chaired by a Board Director and the Committee membership is approved by the Board.

The Board thanks the members of the committees for their contribution and commitment to this important task.

The Membership of Aspect's Committees as at 30 April 2009 were:

Finance & Audit Committee

Rob Brown (Chair)
David Foster
Malcolm McEwen
Keith Perkin
Weston Ryan

Client Services Committee

Robert Pesavento (Chair)
Lisa Beavan (independent)
Associate Professor David Evans (independent)
Gerry Gray (independent)
Ana Robinson (independent)

Research Committee

Dr David Starte (Chair)
Dr Mark Carter (independent)
Professor Stewart Einfeld (independent)
Associate Professor David Evans (independent)
Dr Chris Kilham (independent)
Malcolm McEwen
Professor Trevor Parmenter (independent)
Associate Professor Jacqui Roberts (independent)
Dr Natalie Silove (independent)
Dr Katrina Williams (independent)

Remuneration Committee

Peter Werner (Chair)
Keith Perkin
Malcolm McEwen

Long Service Awards

The following employees reached long service milestones during 2008.

20 Years

Janet Millhouse	Aspect Central Coast School
Elizabeth McLachlan	Aspect Vern Barnett School
Myra Scott	Aspect Western Sydney School

15 Years

Debra O'Brien	Aspect South Coast School
Elizabeth Murray	Aspect Hunter School

10 Years

Bronwyn Jones	Aspect South Coast School
---------------	---------------------------

External Committees

The following staff are involved in external committees as at 31 December 2008.

Adrian Ford, CEO – Australian Advisory Board on Autism Spectrum Disorders (Chairperson)

Department of Ageing Disability and Home Care (DADHC), Expert Committee on Children and Young People with a disability and their families (Chairperson)

Dr. Trevor Clark, Director, Aspect Education & Research – National Independent Special Schools Association (NISSA)

Dr. Mark Clayton, Director, Aspect Adults & Behaviour Support – Department of Ageing Disability and Home Care Restrictive Practise Panel, Metropolitan North Region

Anthony Warren, Director, Aspect Young Children & Families – National Disability Services NSW Committee on Children and Families, National Disability Services National Committee on Children

Allison Yee-Brogan, Director Service Planning and Development – NSW Strategic Carer Action Network

Louise Berryman, Aspect Adults & Behaviour Support Manager – Department of Ageing Disability and Home Care Restrictive Practise Panel, Metropolitan North Region; Met North Day Services and Post School Programs; Western Sydney Vocational Support Network

Dr. Debra Costley, General Manager, Education, Planning & Development – Australasian Evaluation Society & International Reviewer for ARC Discovery Grants

Elizabeth Gadek, General Manager, Schools – NISSA

Pam Lea, Principal, Aspect Vern Barnett School – Deputy Chair of NISSA

Giovanni Gulli, Principal, Aspect Western Sydney School – NISSA;

Janet Millhouse, Principal, Aspect Central Coast School – NISSA

Liz Murray, Principal, Aspect Hunter School – NISSA

Rowena Perritt, Principal, Aspect South East Sydney School – NISSA

Jodi Rodgers, Aspect Far North Coast Centre Manager – Far North Coast Early Childhood Intervention Program committee and interagency meetings in all five shires on the Far North Coast



Bruce Rowles, Principal, Aspect South Coast School

– NISSA

Dr. Tom Tutton, Aspect Adults & Behaviour Support Manager – Department of Ageing Disability and Home Care Restrictive Practise Panel, Metropolitan North Region

Angela Stewart, Aspect Someone To Turn To Co-ordinator – Multicultural Interagency Meeting

Katrina Kemp, Aspect Hunter School – Early Childhood Intervention Coordination Program (Hunter)

Lara Cheney, Aspect Hunter School – Early Intervention Service Coordination Agency (Hunter)

2008 Annual Report – Info on Volunteers:

Aspect recognises that volunteers are an integral part of the organisation and values the contributions of volunteers working with Aspect. These volunteers are individuals who contribute time, service and skills to assist Aspect for personal or charitable reasons without expectation of financial gain. Aspect uses volunteers to extend and enrich the delivery of services.

Aspect provides volunteers with work that is safe, significant, fulfilling, and appreciated. Volunteers work as members of a team and are treated with dignity and respect. They are recruited, screened, placed and developed according to organisational needs. The duties and responsibilities of volunteers who work regularly with Aspect are set out in Position Descriptions. Those of volunteers working occasionally with Aspect are set out in a list of duties. Aspect does not use volunteers in lieu of paid staff

The following is an estimate of the time given annually by volunteers to various Aspect services.



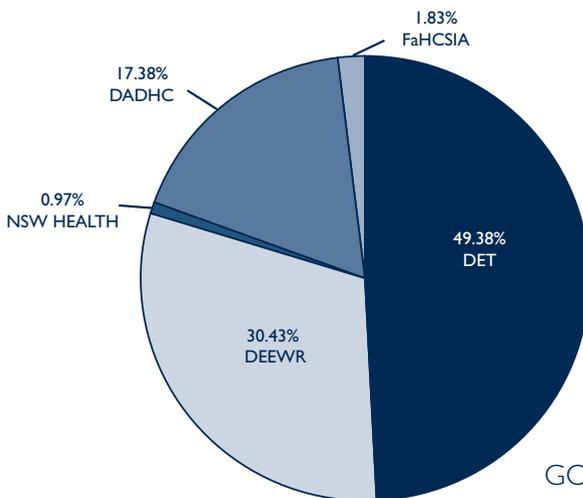
SERVICE	HOURS / ANNUM
Aspect Building Blocks®	250
Aspect Central Coast School	420
Aspect Educational Outreach	6
Aspect Far North Coast	30
Aspect Hunter School	336
Aspect Relationship Fundraising	300
Aspect Someone To Turn To	2000
Aspect South Coast School	1955
Aspect South East Sydney School	148
Aspect Vern Barnett School	440
TOTAL	5885

Government Funding

Aspect received extensive government funding to provide services to people with an ASD and their families. Aspect thanks these departments and their governments for the confidence they show in Aspect by providing this funding. Without their support Aspect could not provide its extensive range of services. Below is the list of government departments and the funding received in 2008.



	\$M
Australian Government Department of Employment, Education and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)	8.14
Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services & Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA)	0.49
NSW Department of Ageing, Disability & Home Care (DADHC)	4.65
NSW Department of Education & Training (DET)	13.21
NSW Department of Health (NSW HEALTH)	0.26
Total	26.75M



GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Relationship Fundraising

In 2008 Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) received over \$1.5 million in donations and other income from over 1600 individuals, trusts and foundations, registered clubs, community groups and people who chose to leave us a bequest. This money helped to supplement the income received from governments and fees and as a result enabled Aspect to expand the range and level of services provided for people with autism and their families.

On behalf of all of us who work at Aspect, but more importantly on behalf of over 6000 people who were in contact with us last year, to all our supporters thank you for your generosity.

The costs of raising these funds amounted to 34% of revenue. This included the salaries of staff, the costs of events and the payment for all administrative services. While this figure compared favourably with industry benchmarks Aspect is constantly striving to be more efficient.

In 2008 Aspect was privileged to receive \$150,000 from several people who supported us with major gifts.

This will continue to be a major focus in the future.

Aspect has embarked on a major gifts campaign which has a goal to raise \$15 million over the next six years to support plans to expand services and improve the infrastructure in Aspect schools. Four key projects have been identified:

1. Support for young adults: "Connections" will be set up for young adults with autism leaving school and moving into further education, employment and engaging in the wider community.
2. Support for families and communities: "LifePlan" will be set up to help families build supportive networks to sustain their family member with autism in the community and through life.
3. Investing in research: "The Australian Autism Research Future Fund" will be developed to undertake vital research to improve services for people with autism.
4. Investing in Education by building new schools and upgrade existing school facilities.

Last year Aspect undertook two direct mail appeals and one newsletter appeal to our database of current, lapsed and prospective donors and, for the first time, we asked parents of children in our schools if they would like to support our work. Our thanks go to the donors who supported these campaigns by giving \$104,000.

As at the end of 2008, ninety six donors had let us know that they had left a bequest in their will or that they had the intention of doing so. For many of these people it provides them with the only opportunity they will have to make a significant gift and for Aspect, it provides us with a highly valued source of funds that will allow in the future us to continue our work.

In the past 12 years Aspect has received an annual income from bequests of around \$100,000. In 2008 we received \$62,000 from 3 people who left money to us in their wills. Our thanks go to these thoughtful people and their loved ones for their generosity.

During 2008 we continued to receive generous support from trusts and foundations with over \$500,000 being received from 17 organisations. Our thanks go to these organisations for their continued support.

Our thanks go to the Parents and Friends committees for each of our six schools. These tireless volunteers give of their time and expertise to raise much needed funds to purchase resources and equipment for all our students. We now have over forty different community groups who support the work of Aspect. During 2008, these groups raised over \$500,000 through a range of fundraising activities including, adventure holidays, sponsored slimming, sponsored running, trivia nights, bike rides, golf days, gala dinners and raffles. Thank you to all these supporters for their hard work, dedication and tenacity.

In particular it is important that once again we take the time to acknowledge the outstanding work of Peter and Andrea Werner and David Epper for their efforts in our two major annual events, Comedy Night and Celebrity Golf Day. Net income from both events amounted to over \$80,000.

Funding received from registered clubs was lower than anticipated at \$52,000. We expect to submit more funding applications and work to strengthen relationships between the clubs and Aspect sites in 2009.

The current economic crisis is already having an impact on fundraising income received by a number of not-for-profit organisations including Aspect. It is very difficult to predict how big that impact will be and how long the impact will last.

We believe that Aspect is relatively well placed to ride out the short to medium term fluctuations in the financial world because our donors are very loyal. That loyalty has been built up over time and results from the fact that many of our donors have a personal connection with autism. We are also privileged to be able to obtain funds from a variety of sources and therefore any risks are spread. Our thanks go to all our donors. Your support no matter how big or small makes a difference to our work. All supporters who gave more than \$500 in the year are listed in this report.

This will be a tough year for many families who are struggling with not only the stresses and strains of living with autism but also with the challenges presented by the current financial climate. Thank you for your support in 2008. We hope that you will continue to support our work in 2009 and that you will help us build our network of supporters.



Corporate Governance

INTRODUCTION

The Board of Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) applies a sound governance framework to the conduct of the Board. This framework is applied throughout Aspect, reflecting the belief that any shortcomings in governance could jeopardise Aspect's reputation and its ability to fulfil its obligations to people with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and their families, carers or guardians.

Aspect is accountable to a wide range of stakeholders with whom it interacts. These are people with an ASD and their families, carers or guardians, the staff (including employees and volunteers), governments, donors, service partners and the Board itself.

This statement sets out the principles, policies and procedures the Board adopts to ensure the long-term health and prosperity of Aspect. It provides an overall governance framework and identifies the respective roles and responsibilities of the Board and management in setting the strategy and direction of Aspect and in managing and controlling the organisation.

Vision, Mission & Values

Aspect is committed to conducting its work with the highest standards of personal and corporate integrity. Aspect's vision (or aspiration) is **overcoming the isolation of autism**. Aspect's mission (or what it does) is **Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) builds confidence and capacity with people who have an autism spectrum disorder, their families and communities by providing information, education and other services**.

Aspect's values are:

Aim high

Understand & communicate clearly

Take personal responsibility

Inspire & innovate

Show empathy

Make a difference

THE BOARD

Role of the Board

The Board of Directors exercises the powers vested in it by the Corporations Act 2001, and Aspect's Constitution and Regulations.

The Board is directly responsible to Aspect's members for the long-term health and prosperity of Aspect. The

policies and practices outlined in Aspect's Corporate Governance Statement provide the framework which enables the Board's principal role to be achieved whilst ensuring that Aspect's activities are conducted ethically and in accordance with the law.

The Board charts the direction of Aspect and monitors management's performance on behalf of Aspect's members and other stakeholders mentioned in the introduction. It accomplishes this by:

- ensuring a skilled, effective and diverse Board with appropriate operating standards and procedures;
- appointing, supporting, delegating to, evaluating and remunerating the Chief Executive Officer and providing for a management succession plan;
- setting the vision, and agreeing the strategic direction and objectives of Aspect with management;
- ensuring resources are available to achieve its goals by developing with management and approving Aspect's Strategic Plan, from which is developed its annual Action Plan and budget, and by regular monitoring of performance using the Corporate Score Card against these plans and the operating and capital budgets;
- advising, approving and monitoring management's activities and performance to ensure the Strategic Plan is being met;
- ensuring a risk management framework is in place to identify and manage those risks that threaten the reputation, earnings, assets and the basic capacity of Aspect;
- approving appropriate policies, guidelines and procedures and ensuring there is a compliance process in place to monitor adherence;
- ensuring the integrity of internal controls for financial and management information systems;
- maintaining adequate personal liability insurance for current and past Directors; and
- ensuring Aspect's activities are conducted ethically and transparently.

The authorities retained by the Board are:

- the appointment, evaluation and remuneration of the Chief Executive Officer;
- material transactions not in the ordinary course of business;
- the approval of the Strategic Plan and the operating and capital budgets;
- the approval of changes to the vision, mission and values;



- Aspect's regulations;
- approval of the statutory accounts including the Directors' report;
- insurance policy renewals for Directors and Officers insurance; and
- ensuring appropriate performance of, and undertaking ongoing due diligence with, the external auditors.

Aspect's activities are regulated by the Corporations Act 2001 and other State and Commonwealth laws as applicable, including the NSW Charitable Fundraising Act 1991.

Role of Management

The Board delegates responsibility for day-to-day management of Aspect's activities to the Chief Executive Officer. Primarily the Chief Executive Officer is responsible for implementing the Strategic Plan approved by the Board.

The Chief Executive Officer is appointed by the Board. Contractual, remuneration and other matters related to the Chief Executive Officer's appointment are reviewed by the Remuneration Committee. The Board Chair is the Board's principal formal contact with the Chief Executive Officer, however the Chief Executive Officer has unrestricted access to all Board Members and vice versa. The Chief Executive Officer leads the Executive.

The Executive comprises:

- Chief Executive Officer
- Executive Director, Community Services & People
- Executive Director, Education & Research
- Director, Children, Young People & Families
- Director, Community Service Development
- Director, Education Development & Research
- Director, Finance, Property & IT
- Director, Positive Partnerships
- Director, Relationship Fundraising & Communications
- Director, Schools

Role of the Board Chair

The Board elects annually the Board Chair and the other office bearers of Aspect as set out in the Constitution.

The key internal roles of the Board Chair are to:

- lead and facilitate the Board;
- ensure the Board is focused on achieving the vision, mission and strategic goals of Aspect;
- ensure that no one has excessive influence;

- maintain a professional working relationship and be the Board's formal point of contact with the Chief Executive Officer;
- set the agenda for each Board meeting, in conjunction with the Chief Executive Officer;
- ensure the Board carries out appropriate assessments of Board performance; and
- ensure meetings are conducted effectively and that the minutes are signed as a true and correct record.

The main external roles of the Board Chair are to:

- represent the Board and Aspect, as appropriate, to its various stakeholders;
- act as a spokesperson, where appropriate, in conjunction with the Chief Executive Officer; and
- chair its legally required annual and other general meetings.

Role of Individual Directors

The role of individual Directors under general law and Corporations Law include to:

- act in good faith;
- exercise powers for proper purpose;
- retain their discretion in voting at meetings;
- avoid conflicts of interest;
- act honestly;
- act with the degree of care and diligence that a reasonable person in a like position in a corporation would exercise in the corporation's circumstances;
- not misuse information or their position; and
- not trade while insolvent.

Other roles include to:

- make reasonable inquiries to ensure that Aspect is operating efficiently, effectively and legally towards achieving its goals; and
- undertake diligent analysis of all proposals placed before the Board.

Confidentiality

A Director shall keep confidential all confidential information; and not disclose it to any person, except as required by law; with the prior written consent of Aspect; or to Aspect's agents, employees or advisers in the performance of the Director's responsibilities and duties.

No Director shall use any confidential information for the benefit of any person except Aspect. If any confidential information is lawfully within the public domain then to the extent that the confidential



information is public, a Director's obligations shall cease in respect of that confidential information.

If there is uncertainty as to whether any information is confidential information; or any confidential information is lawfully within the public domain, then that information is deemed to be confidential information and is not within the public domain, unless the Director is advised by the Board in writing to the contrary.

A Director shall maintain proper and secure custody of all confidential information; and use his or her best endeavours to prevent the use or disclosure of the confidential information by third parties.

A Director shall immediately deliver to Aspect all confidential information that is physically capable of delivery when the person's term as a Director ceases; and at any time at the request of a person authorised by the Board. Instead of delivering confidential information, the Board may direct the Director to destroy confidential information and certify in writing to Aspect that the confidential information has been destroyed. The Board may direct that confidential information contained in computer software or data be destroyed by erasing it from the magnetic media on which it is stored so that the information cannot be recovered or reconstructed.

A former Director is able to have access to viewing a Board record if circumstance arose where he/she was required to comment on a past Board event, for example, in a legal matter:

A Director must not make any copy or summary of any confidential information, except if required to do so in the course of his or her duties as a Director. If a Director is required to make a copy or summary of confidential information in the course of the Director's duties and functions as a Director; the copy or summary belongs to Aspect.

A Director shall comply with these obligations regarding confidentiality at all times during and after that person's term as a Director.

Conflicts of Interests

The common law fiduciary duty of Directors is to act honestly and in the best interests of Aspect. This also overlaps with the Corporations Law that includes requirements that Directors not misuse position or information to gain an unfair advantage, act honestly and disclose conflicts of interest.

Potential conflicts of interest may include:

- a contract with Aspect;
- using confidential information for personal gain; and

- profiting from an opportunity that rightfully belongs to Aspect.

To manage conflicts of interests for Directors, the following guidelines are to be adhered to:

- Declare existing or potential conflicts to the Company Secretary.
- When a conflict of interest arises immediately advise the Board Chair in the boardroom.
- Directors who have a direct or indirect pecuniary interest in the matter for discussion may, with the consent of the Chair, be present while the vote is taken.
- No financial or other benefit can be given to a related party of the Director unless approved by the Board.
- The Company Secretary shall ensure that a register of Interests is maintained.

Further to ensure their independence and absence of conflicts of interest, Directors may not be current employees of Aspect, or employed by Aspect within the last two years.

Board Composition and Size

Under Aspect's Constitution there can be up to ten Member-elected Directors for a term of three years. Also the Board can appoint up to two Board-appointed Directors.

At least one third of Member-elected Directors must retire from office at the Annual General Meeting each year; such retiring Directors are eligible for re-election.

The term of Board-appointed Directors is for twelve months but the Board may re-appoint a Board-appointed Director for further twelve month terms.

Directors appointed to fill casual vacancies must submit to election at the next general meeting.

The attributes that Directors should bring to the Board include sound business judgement and a performance focus, empathy for people with an ASD and their families, broad strategic thinking, a collegiate and team playing approach, a philosophical commitment to the objectives of Aspect, a willingness and capability to devote the required time to the Board's affairs, and undoubted reputation and integrity.

Nominations and Appointment of New Directors

No person except a Member-elected Director whose tenure has expired or a person recommended by the Board for election, is eligible for election to the office of Member-elected Director at any meeting unless:



- the prospective eligible candidate for the position of Member-elected Director; or
- any member intending to nominate a prospective eligible candidate for the position of Member-elected Director;

has at least 28 clear days before the General Meeting sent to the Secretary a notice in writing duly signed by two other members signifying the nominee's candidature for the office or the intention of such eligible candidate to nominate for the office of Member-elected Director. Notice of each and every candidature must be forwarded to all Members not less than 21 days prior to the meeting at which an election is to take place.

The Company Secretary advises members annually on the process they need to follow if they wish to nominate for the position of Member-elected Director.

Members wishing to nominate for the Board are encouraged to contact the Board Chair first so that a meeting can be arranged between the nominee, the Board Chair and at least one other Director to discuss the role and consider its rights and responsibilities. Not only is the Board looking for new Directors from time to time it is also wanting to ensure that new Directors will be prepared to become part of an effective team governing the organisation.

The Board aims to achieve a mix of qualifications, skills and experience, by taking into account the existing diversity of experience in the current Board and the strategic direction and progress of Aspect.

New Directors are required to undertake an induction of the Board and Aspect, its issues, current concerns, staff and financial position. This induction process may include meetings with Aspect's Executive, and may include Australian Institute of Company Directors training on board responsibilities and obligations, or other such training considered appropriate.

The current composition of the Board and Board Committees, together with background details on each Director, is set out in Aspect's annual report and on Aspect's website.

Directors' Indemnity and Insurance Cover

Aspect's Constitution provides an indemnity to present and past Directors. As with other insurable risks, Aspect has insured Directors and officers against liabilities incurred by such a person in connection with the performance by that person of his or her position with Aspect except for a liability arising out of conduct involving wilful breach of duty or contravention of the Corporations Law.

Meetings of the Board and their Conduct

The Board meets eight times each year. The Board decides on an annual schedule of major items that are considered over the eight meetings along with regular items to monitor the organisation.

Meeting agendas are determined by the Board Chair in consultation with the CEO to ensure adequate coverage of strategic, financial and operating matters throughout the year. Details of meetings and attendances are set out in Aspect's annual report.

Meeting Procedures

To ensure Board meetings are constructive, the Board has adopted the following procedures:

- Proper and timely notice of meetings is provided to all Directors with an outline of the proposed business.
- Board papers, that include clear resolutions on all papers for decision, are provided at least five days in advance.
- The majority of the Board's time is spent on strategic issues rather than the day-to-day responsibilities of management.
- An action schedule is maintained to ensure that all outstanding items or progress on implementation of approvals are dealt with.
- A quorum is maintained throughout the meeting.
- Complete focus is maintained on the issue during debate.
- Debate occurs because it is essential to ensure the right decisions.
- Open questions are posed to encourage debate.
- Board meetings are chaired and facilitated by the Board Chair.
- Within 5 working days, the minutes are produced and circulated to Directors.
- Minutes are recorded in such a way that resolutions can be actioned and monitored; and
- The Board Chair and CEO should not circumvent the process of the Board meeting.
- The minutes of each Board meeting are approved by the Board as true and correct record of the meeting at the next Board meeting.

Board Decision Making

The Board when making a decision may need to take into account a number of factors including:

- their duties and responsibilities as Directors;
- strategic fit;



- ethical fit;
- financial considerations;
- strategic and operational risks;
- resource availability (internal/external and alternative use of resources);
- political impacts;
- key drivers and sensitivities;
- the inclusion of third party information on key assumptions;
- synergy effect for the business as a whole;
- community and stakeholder's perception of the decision;
- contingency plans in place to deal with unexpected developments, and
- monitoring and accountability mechanisms (if approved) incorporating key milestones and anticipated benefits.

The objective of the evaluation process is to ensure an appropriate balance of risk and return is achieved in the context of the operation of Aspect and what it stands for.

Although formal meeting practices can assist the efficient conduct of a meeting, such practices on the Aspect Board are not used to stifle discussion or push for a particular outcome which is obviously not accepted generally. In general voting or calling for motions is not a practice encouraged in the Aspect Board as such practices can risk factionalising the Board.

In the circumstance where there is not a consensus commitment to an outcome or where there is the situation where voting is required and/or directors want to record an abstention, the Board Chair clarifies what information is required to help the undecided directors and allow time for further discussion and consultation in order to reach a consensus decision. Once a consensus decision is reached Directors are expected to honour the decision both in and outside the Board.

Representation of Aspect

The Board expects the Chief Executive Officer to speak for Aspect and to manage communications with members, other stakeholders and the community generally. Directors other than the Board Chair and the Chief Executive Officer do not comment publicly on Aspect issues, unless specifically delegated.

The Board Chair and the Chief Executive Officer would normally confer with each other before making a significant public comment. Copies of all significant press releases are forwarded to Directors on the day of release.

Directors are expected to keep the Board Chair and the Chief Executive Officer informed of any significant feedback about Aspect they receive from their networks.

Media

Aspect's media policy aims to maximise opportunities for coverage of activities and achievements and to minimise adverse publicity and any misleading information.

On significant media issues for Aspect, the Chief Executive Officer is the primary spokesperson. The Chief Executive Officer may from time to time authorise other members of the Executive and subject specialists to act as spokespersons on particular issues.

The Board Chair or Board delegate in consultation with the CEO will issue statements to the media when appropriate.

The Review of Board Performance

The Board undertakes a review of its performance from time to time to ensure that the expectations of all Directors are aligned, to confirm areas of successful performance and to identify those areas requiring further improvement as part of Aspect's commitment to continuous improvement throughout the organisation.

The review of Board performance includes:

- Directors' understanding of Aspect's goals and policies, the governance statement and conflicts of interest;
- performance in relation to ethics, integrity and probity;
- compliance with legislation;
- Board communication and communication between the Board and Senior Management; and
- Board composition, committee structure, workload and procedures to ensure effective decision making.

A range of methods are available to the Board for such performance review. They can include:

- asking Directors to anonymously write comments on agreed parameters and send to a third party for correlation and presentation to the Board Chair and then to the whole Board for discussion;
- asking Directors to personally review their performance against agreed parameters and then having a Board discussion or an individual meeting with the Board Chair;
- the Board Chair having an individual discussion with each Director on agreed areas; and
- retaining an external facilitator to undertake a review process.



BOARD COMMITTEES

The Board has established a number of Standing Committees to assist in the execution of the Board's responsibilities. These Committees are a recognition that some areas of Aspect's activities require more concentrated effort and specialist skills and are an efficient use of Board resources. They do not abrogate any Director from his/her responsibilities and Committees are obliged to properly inform the full Board of their activities.

Each Board Committee is chaired by a Board Director. There is at least one other Board Director on each Committee. Committee membership must be approved by the Board. Board Directors and external individuals invited by the Board on to the Committee are members of the Committee and have the right to vote on the Committee, while members of staff are only in attendance, provide advice to the Committee and do not have the right to vote on any matter. Committee meetings follow the same meeting procedures set out for the Board in the Constitution, for example a quorum is 50% of membership.

At present the Board has four Standing Committees. They are Finance & Audit, Client Services, Research and Remuneration. From time to time the Board may also establish ad hoc committees to assist with specific issues or projects. Individual Committee charters are regularly reviewed by the Board. The terms of reference for each Standing Committee are set out in Aspect's Regulations which are available on Aspect's website. Standing Committee meetings and attendances by Directors are set out in Aspect's annual report.

REMUNERATION

No Directors receive remuneration from Aspect. Out of pocket expenses relating to their director activities may be reimbursed by Aspect. The Chief Executive Officer's remuneration is governed by a contract of employment.

Aspect's Corporate Governance Statement was approved by the Board on 30 August 2006.

It was most recently updated on 30 April 2009 to include any administrative or Board-approved changes. It was previously updated on 30 April 2007 and 10 September 2008.





**Autism Spectrum Australia
(Aspect)**

(A company limited by guarantee)

ABN 12 000 637 267

Concise Financial Report
for the year ended
31 December 2008

Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) (A company limited by guarantee) Directors' Report

The Directors present their report together with the financial report of Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) for the year ended 31 December 2008 and the auditors' report thereon.

Directors

The Directors of Aspect in office at any time during, or since, the year ended 31 December 2008 are:

Keith PERKIN, [*Board Chair from May 2008*] B.Bus, C.P.A, is the Head of Business Operations at the Starlight Children's Foundation. Keith has an extensive commercial background primarily in the fields of management and marketing, having held senior positions in Compaq, Dymocks, BP and Retravision. Keith joined the Board in 2004. He is a member of the Finance & Audit Committee and the Remuneration Committee. Keith is a Member-elected Director.

Peter WERNER, [*former Board Chair*] B.Comm. is an executive search consultant and a Director of Richfield Consulting. He has worked in the banking industry. He is the father of three children, one of whom has an autism spectrum disorder. Peter joined the Board in 2001. He chairs the Remuneration Committee and was a member of the Finance & Audit Committee until August 2008. Peter is a Member-elected Director.

Robert PESAVENTO [*Deputy Chair*] is the General Manager, Customer Engineering with SingTel Optus Pty Limited. Robert is the father of a son with an autism spectrum disorder. Robert joined the Board in 1999 and chairs the Client Services Committee. Robert is a Member-elected Director.

Weston RYAN, [*Treasurer*] B.Bus, F.C.A. is a partner in the accounting firm, Einfeld Symonds Vince where he advises on Australian and international tax issues. Weston's interests include professional education. He teaches in Australia, Singapore and Malaysia. His interest in Aspect developed from friends with children who have an autism spectrum disorder. Weston joined the Board in 2003, became the Treasurer and chairs the Finance & Audit Committee. Weston is a Member-elected Director.

Robert J. BROWN, B.Sc., M.A., Grad. Dip. Applied Finance is Chief Executive Officer of specialist investment administration company Ausmaq, a wholly owned subsidiary of National Australia Bank. Rob is also an active participant within the institutional investment and services sector with director and working group roles in peak industry bodies. Rob has a close affinity with the needs of children with learning difficulties, and Rob's wife Diane has a long-standing professional interest in special education. Rob joined the Board in June 2008, and is a member of the Finance & Audit Committee. Rob is a Board-appointed Director.

David DOWN, B.E. (Chem) Hons is in a senior management role with the rail company, Queensland Rail and is a chemical engineer by profession. He is the father of two children, one of whom has an autism spectrum disorder. David joined the Board in July 2007 and is a Member-elected Director.

David EPPER, A.N.Z.I.I.P. (Senior Assoc.) is the Managing Director of Accident and Health International Underwriting Pty Limited. He joined the Board in 2001. He has a son with an autism spectrum disorder. David is a Member-elected Director.

David FOSTER, B.E., F.I.E. (Aust), is a retired engineer with management experience with Pacific Power. As the parent of an adult son with an autism spectrum disorder, he is interested in progressive development of plans for growing numbers of adults who have autism spectrum disorders. David joined the Board in 1975 and is a member of the Finance & Audit Committee. He also represents the Board on the Corporate Risk Management Committee. David is a Life Governor of Aspect and is a Member-elected Director.



Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect)

(A company limited by guarantee)

Directors' Report

Directors (continued)

Geraldine GRAY, M.Ed., B.A. is the State Coordinator, Special Learning Needs for the NSW Catholic Education Commission. She joined the Board in 2004. Gerry has been supporting students with special educational needs since 1980, having begun her teaching career in the mid 70's. Gerry resigned from the Board in May 2008.

Jonathan HARRIS, LLB; Specialist in Business Law is a Lawyer and Managing Partner of Harris Freidman Hyde Page. As the parent of a son with an autism spectrum disorder, he is interested in estate planning issues for family members with a disability and post school options for people with an ASD. Jonathan joined the Board in 1996 and is a Member-elected Director.

Malcolm McEWEN, B.Bus., M.Bus., is an executive search and selection consultant with Carmichael Fisher. He joined the Board in 2004. Malcolm is married with two children, one of whom has an autism spectrum disorder. He is a member of the Finance & Audit Committee, the Remuneration Committee and the Research Committee. Malcolm is a Member-elected Director.

Dr David STARTE, M.B.B.S., M.R.C.P. (UK), F.R.A.C.P. is the Service Director at the Chatswood Assessment Centre and a Clinical Associate Lecturer in the Department of Paediatrics and Child Health, School of Medicine, University of Sydney. He joined the Board in 2004 and his interests include developmental paediatrics, including autism spectrum disorders, ADHD, and audiology including universal newborn screening and auditory processing. David chairs the Research Committee and is 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.

Directors' meetings

	Directors' Meetings		Finance & Audit Committee		Client Services Committee		Research Committee		Remuneration 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
Mr K Perkin	6	8	4	4	–	–	–	–	1	1
Mr P Werner	5	8	6	7	–	–	–	–	1	1
Mr R Pesavento	5	8	–	–	2	3	–	–	–	–
Mr W Ryan	6	8	9	10	–	–	–	–	–	–
Mr R Brown	3	4	3	4	–	–	–	–	–	–
Mr D Down	7	8	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Mr D Epper	4	8	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Mr D Foster	8	8	10	10	–	–	–	–	–	–
Ms G Gray	2	3	–	–	1	1	–	–	–	–
Mr J Harris	5	8	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Mr M McEwen	7	8	7	10	–	–	2	2	1	1
Dr D Starte	7	8	–	–	–	–	2	2	–	–

The number of directors' and committee meetings held during the time the director held office during the year.

Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) (A company limited by guarantee) Directors' Report (continued)

Company secretary

The following person held the position of entity secretary at the end of the financial year:

Name & Qualifications	Appointment date:
Mr Adrian Ford (Fellow Aust. Inst. Co. Directors)	2000

Principal activities

The principal activities of Aspect are to provide a range of services to children, young people and adults with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD). These include information services, diagnostic and assessment services, early intervention for young children, schools and educational outreach services for children and young people. Aspect provides community participation programs for adults with an ASD while it provides behaviour support programs for people with an ASD of all ages. A range of support services are provided to families of people with an ASD. The provision of training and consultation to other professionals and parents in ways of working with people with an ASD also continues as does Aspect's research program. Other than for the re-auspice of its employment services in 2008 and the re-auspice of its accommodation services in early 2009, there were no significant changes in the nature of its activities during the year.

Financial result

The operating result for 2008 was a surplus of \$397,539 (2007: surplus \$1,130,427).

Dividends

Aspect has no share capital, as it is a company limited by guarantee. This means it is precluded from paying a dividend to its members.

Review of operations

The community's awareness of people with an autism spectrum disorder continues to rise. In response Aspect continues to extend its services to try and meet this ever growing need.

Government grants continued to provide the major operational income for Aspect supported by fundraising and a contribution by clients' families for some of the services through a fee for service charge. Income from these three sources increased in 2008 to \$30,198,384 compared with \$24,001,599 in 2007.

A negative equity movement of \$1,874,613 was incurred due to the impact of the global financial crisis on Aspect's investment portfolio. A review of the portfolio in February 2009 indicated no apparent impairment and the prospect of recovering its value over the next five years appeared sound.

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.

Environmental regulation

Aspect is not subject to any significant environmental regulation under a law of the Commonwealth or of a state or territory. However, the Board believes that Aspect has adequate systems in place for the management of its environmental requirements and is not aware of any breach of those environmental requirements as they apply to Aspect.

Events subsequent to balance 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.



Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect)
(A company limited by guarantee)
Directors' Report (continued)

Likely developments

Likely developments to the operations of Aspect and the expected results of those operations in future financial years have not been included in this report, as the inclusion of such information is likely to result in unreasonable prejudice to Aspect.

Indemnification and insurance of officers

During the year Aspect took out an insurance policy to indemnify the directors and officers against all liabilities that may arise from their position as directors and officers of Aspect.

The insurance premiums relate to the costs and expenses incurred by the relevant officers in defending proceedings, whether civil or criminal and whatever their outcome and other liabilities that may arise from their position, with the exception of conduct involving a wilful breach of duty or improper use of information or position to gain a personal advantage.

Since the end of the previous year, Aspect has paid insurance premiums of \$2,250 (2007: \$3,973) in respect of all Directors' and Officers' Liability and Legal Expenses insurance contracts. The insurance contracts do not identify premiums paid in respect of the individual directors.

No insurance premiums have been paid or indemnification given in relation to the auditors of Aspect.

Court proceedings

No person has applied for leave of court to bring proceedings on behalf of the company or intervened in any proceedings to which the company is a party for the purpose of taking responsibility on behalf of the company for all or any part of those proceedings.

The company was not a party to any such proceedings during the year.

Auditor's Independence Declaration

A copy of the auditor's independence declaration as required under section 307C of the Corporation Act 2001 is set out on page 36, and forms part of this report.

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



Keith Perkin

Board Chair

Dated this 15th day of April 2009 at Sydney.



Grant Thornton

Grant Thornton NSW
ABN 25 034 787 757

Level 17, 383 Kent Street
Sydney NSW 2000
PO Locked Bag Q800
QVB Post Office
Sydney NSW 1230

T +61 2 8297 2400
F +61 2 9299 4445
E info.nsw@grantthornton.com.au
W www.grantthornton.com.au

**AUDITOR'S INDEPENDENCE DECLARATION
TO THE DIRECTORS OF AUTISM SPECTRUM AUSTRALIA (ASPECT)**

In accordance with the requirements of section 307C of the Corporations Act 2001, as lead auditor for the audit of Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) for the year ended 31 December 2008, I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, there have been:

- a no contraventions of the auditor independence requirements of the Corporations Act 2001 in relation to the audit; and
- b no contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.

Grant Thornton NSW

GRANT THORNTON NSW
Chartered Accountants

CF

CF Farley
Partner

Sydney, 15 April 2009

Grant Thornton Australia Limited is a member firm within Grant Thornton International Ltd. Grant Thornton International Ltd and the member firms are not a worldwide partnership. Grant Thornton Australia Limited, together with its subsidiaries and related entities, delivers its services independently in Australia.

Liability limited by a scheme approved under Professional Standards legislation.



Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect)
(A company limited by guarantee)
Income Statement
For the year ended 31 December 2008

	Note	2008 \$	2007 \$
Revenue from rendering of services		3,275,075	2,654,147
Federal/State grants and salary subsidies		26,753,327	21,129,066
Other revenue		2,478,504	2,457,397
Total revenue	3	<u>32,506,906</u>	<u>26,240,610</u>
Employee expenses		(25,016,593)	(20,929,508)
Transportation costs		(1,267,985)	(947,768)
Insurance expense		(550,007)	(320,198)
Depreciation and amortisation expenses		(398,184)	(291,983)
Finance costs		(18,951)	(20,112)
Services		(1,514,405)	(735,092)
Other expenses from ordinary activities		<u>(3,343,242)</u>	<u>(1,865,522)</u>
Operating surplus from ordinary activities		<u>397,539</u>	<u>1,130,427</u>
Net result of operations		<u>397,539</u>	<u>1,130,427</u>

The accompanying notes form part of the concise report.



Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect)
(A company limited by guarantee)
Balance Sheet
As at 31 December 2008

	2008	2007
	\$	\$
Current assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	900,223	663,552
Trade and other receivables	3,753,020	208,122
Other financial assets	3,237,160	3,503,250
Other assets	357,576	387,750
Total current assets	<u>8,247,979</u>	<u>4,762,674</u>
Non-current assets		
Other financial assets	3,756,393	5,695,765
Property, plant and equipment	6,334,098	3,654,184
Total non-current assets	<u>10,090,491</u>	<u>9,349,949</u>
Total assets	<u>18,418,840</u>	<u>14,112,623</u>
Current liabilities		
Trade and other payables	10,054,258	3,900,633
Short term borrowings	36,497	34,392
Short term provisions	881,928	1,613,549
Total current liabilities	<u>10,972,683</u>	<u>5,548,574</u>
Non-current liabilities		
Long term borrowings	166,391	197,746
Long term provisions	1,576,922	1,266,755
Total non-current liabilities	<u>1,743,313</u>	<u>1,464,501</u>
Total liabilities	<u>12,715,996</u>	<u>7,013,075</u>
Net assets	<u>5,622,474</u>	<u>7,099,548</u>
Equity		
Reserves	(1,425,775)	448,838
Accumulated surplus	7,048,249	6,650,710
Total equity	<u>5,622,474</u>	<u>7,099,548</u>

The accompanying notes form part of the concise report.



Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect)
(A company limited by guarantee)
Statement of Changes in Equity
For the year ended 31 December 2008

	Asset revaluation reserve	Accumulated Surplus	Total
Balance at 1 January 2007	717,744	5,520,283	6,238,027
Available for sale securities (losses) recognised in equity	(215,174)	–	(215,174)
Transfer from asset revaluation reserve on available for sale securities realised during the year	(53,732)	–	(53,732)
Net income recognised directly in equity	(268,906)	–	(268,906)
Surplus for the year	–	1,130,427	1,130,427
Total recognised income and expense for the year	(268,906)	1,130,427	861,521
Balance at 31 December 2007	448,838	6,650,710	7,099,548
Balance at 1 January 2008	448,838	6,650,710	7,099,548
Available for sale securities (losses) recognised in equity	(1,874,613)	–	(1,874,613)
Transfer from asset revaluation reserve on available for sale securities realised during the year	–	–	–
Net (deficit) recognised directly in equity	(1,874,613)	–	(1,874,613)
Surplus for the year	–	397,539	397,539
Total recognised income and expense for the year	(1,874,613)	397,539	(1,477,074)
Balance at 31 December 2008	(1,425,775)	7,048,249	5,622,474

The accompanying notes form part of the concise report.

Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect)
(A company limited by guarantee)
Cash Flow Statement
For the year ended 31 December 2008

	2008	2007
	\$	\$
Cash flows from operating activities		
Receipts from customers and grants	33,792,170	27,590,283
Payments to suppliers and employees	(31,319,095)	(23,852,720)
Interest received	390,004	284,906
Dividend received	372,388	545,089
Interest paid	(18,951)	(48,868)
Net cash provided by operating activities	<u>3,216,516</u>	<u>4,518,690</u>
Cash flows from investing activities		
Proceeds on disposal of investments	999,914	478,732
Payments for investments	(1,085,153)	(2,079,456)
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	(3,131,447)	(822,430)
Net cash used in investing activities	<u>(3,216,685)</u>	<u>(2,423,154)</u>
Cash flows from financing activities		
Repayment of borrowings	(29,250)	(31,711)
Net cash used in financing activities	<u>(29,250)</u>	<u>(31,711)</u>
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents held	(29,419)	2,063,825
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year	<u>4,166,802</u>	<u>2,102,977</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year	<u>4,137,383</u>	<u>4,166,802</u>

The accompany notes from part of the concise report.



Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect)

(A company limited by guarantee)

Discussion and Analysis

For the year ended 31 December 2008

Discussion and Analysis of the Income Statement

Aspect's income for 2008 increased by 24% to \$32,506,906 (2007: \$26,240,610). This movement was due to a 26% increase in government grants and subsidies during 2008 of \$5,624,261. This was the result of the continued growth of Aspect's schools program for children and young people with an autism spectrum disorder and the commencement of new funding initiatives. The National Training Program generated \$2,535,713 in 2008. Fundraising, including bequests, generated a net result of \$1,126,109 (2007: \$870,660).

Total expenses increased 28% during the year mainly as a result of a general increase in salaries (increase of \$3,761,709 to \$23,154,241), superannuation expenses (increase of \$325,376 to \$1,862,352) and consultants (increase of \$439,157 to \$808,215). The rise in costs was offset by the new funding received for the National Training Program.

The net effects of the increases in income and expenditure combined to produce an operating surplus of \$397,539 compared with a surplus of \$1,130,427 in 2007.

Discussion and Analysis of the Balance Sheet

Aspect's net assets decreased by 21% to \$5,622,474 during the year.

Aspect's total assets increased by 31% by \$4,306,217 to \$18,418,840 (2007: \$14,112,623). Capital project spending throughout the year (\$2,669,914) resulted in cash flow results being static throughout the year. Debtors increased due to the National Training Program funding of \$3.6 million not being paid until January 2009.

Total liabilities of Aspect increased by \$5,783,291 to \$12,796,366 (2007: \$7,013,075). This is due to the increase in payables of \$6,153,625 to \$10,054,258, which relates to Government Subsidies paid in advance. In addition, employment provisions decreased by \$731,621 to \$881,928 due to the change in accounting treatment for Teachers & Teachers Aides resulting in Annual Leave provisions no longer being required.

Discussion and Analysis of the Cash Flow Statement

Cash balances remained static for the year with little change (decrease \$29,419). While cash from operations generated \$3,216,516 this was offset by Capital project spending of \$3,131,447.

The net result from financing activities was not significant.

Discussion and Analysis of Statement of Changes in Equity

A negative equity movement of \$1,874,613 was incurred due to the impact of the global financial crisis on Aspect's investment portfolio. A review of the portfolio in February 2009 indicated no apparent impairment and the prospect of recovering its value over the next five years appears sound.



Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect)
(A company limited by guarantee)
Notes to and forming part of the concise financial report
For the year ended 31 December 2008

Note 1 Basis of preparation of Concise Financial Report

The concise financial report has been prepared in accordance with the Accounting Standard AASB 1039 "Concise Financial Reports" and the Corporations Act 2001.

All amounts are presented in Australian dollars.

The financial statements and specific disclosures required by AASB 1039 have been derived from the Company's full financial report for the financial year. Other information included in the concise financial report is consistent with Aspect's full financial report. The concise financial report does not, and cannot be expected to, provide as full an understanding of the financial performance, financial position and financing and investing activities of Aspect as the full financial report.

It has been prepared on the basis of historical costs and except where stated, does not take into account changing money values or current valuations of non-current assets.

These accounting policies have been consistently applied by the Company and, except where there is a change in accounting policy, are consistent with those of the previous year.

A full description of the accounting policies adopted by the entity is provided in the 2008 financial statements which form part of the full financial report.

Where necessary, comparative information has been reclassified to achieve consistency in disclosure with the current financial year amounts and other disclosures.

(a) Impairment of Assets

At each reporting date, the company reviews the carrying values of its tangible and intangible assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have suffered an impairment loss. If any such indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset, being the higher of the asset's fair value less costs to sell and 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 Income Statement.

Note 2 Full Financial Report

Further financial information can be obtained from the full financial report which is available, free of charge, on request from the Company's premises at Building 1, Level 2, 14 Aquatic Drive, Frenchs Forrest or calling (02) 8977 8300 or email drenneberg@austismspectrum.org.au.



Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect)
(A company limited by guarantee)
Notes to and forming part of the concise financial report
For the year ended 31 December 2008 (continued)

Note 3 Revenue from ordinary activities

	2008	2007
	\$	\$
Federal/State grants and subsidies	26,753,327	21,129,066
Donations and bequests	561,705	384,752
Fundraising projects	1,152,704	926,409
Interest	762,392	829,995
School and residence fees	1,660,795	1,561,372
Other revenue	1,615,983	1,409,016
Total revenue from ordinary activities	<u>32,506,906</u>	<u>26,240,610</u>

Note 4 Dividends

Aspect has no share capital, as it is a company limited by guarantee. This means it is precluded from paying a dividend to its members.

Note 5 Remuneration of Directors

The directors of the Company receive no remuneration.

Note 6 Results of fundraising appeals

Gross proceeds from fundraising appeals	1,714,409	1,311,162
Less: Total costs of fundraising appeals	<u>(588,300)</u>	<u>(440,502)</u>
Net surplus obtained from fundraising appeals	<u>1,126,109</u>	<u>870,660</u>

Note 7 Events after Balance Sheet date

Since the balance date, the investment portfolio has decreased in value from \$4,314,030 to \$4,121,038 (4%) as at 31 March 2009. The fall is reflective of the market since balance date. The directors are currently of the opinion that no change is required to the investment strategy as a result of the fall.

The financial report was authorised for issue on 15th April 2009 by the Board of Directors.



Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect)
(A company limited by guarantee)
Directors' Declaration

The Directors of Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) declare that the concise financial report of the Company for the financial year ended 31 December 2008, as set out on pages 37 to 43:

- (a) complies with Accounting Standard AASB 1039: Concise Financial Reports; and
- (b) is an extract from the full financial report for the year ended 31 December 2008 and has been derived from and is consistent with the full financial report of Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect).

This declaration is made in accordance with a resolution of the Board of Directors:



K Perkin

Board Chair

Dated this 15th day of April 2009 at Sydney.



Grant Thornton NSW
ABN 25 034 787 757

Level 17, 383 Kent Street
Sydney NSW 2000
PO Locked Bag Q800
QVB Post Office
Sydney NSW 1230

T +61 2 8297 2400
F +61 2 9299 4445
E info.nsw@grantthornton.com.au
W www.granthornton.com.au

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF AUTISM SPECTRUM AUSTRALIA (ASPECT)

Report on the concise financial report

The accompanying concise financial report of Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) comprises the balance sheet as at 31 December 2008, the income statement, statement of changes in equity and cash flow statement for the year then ended and related notes, derived from the audited financial report of Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) for the year ended 31 December 2008. The concise financial report does not contain all the disclosures required by the Australian Accounting Standards.

Directors Responsibility for the Concise Financial Report

The Directors are responsible for the preparation and presentation of the concise financial report in accordance with Accounting Standard AASB 1039 Concise Financial Reports, and the Corporations Act 2001. This responsibility includes establishing and maintaining internal control relevant to the preparation of the concise financial report; selecting and applying appropriate accounting policies; and making accounting estimates that are reasonable in the circumstances.

Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the concise financial report based on our audit procedures. We have conducted an independent audit, in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards, of the financial report of Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) for the year ended 31 December 2008. Our audit report on the financial report for the year was signed on 15 April 2009 and was not subject to any modification. The Australian Auditing Standards require that we comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial report for the year is free from material misstatement.



**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT
TO THE MEMBERS OF AUTISM SPECTRUM AUSTRALIA (ASPECT) (cont)**

Auditor's Responsibility (cont)

Our procedures in respect of the concise financial report included testing that the information in the concise financial report is derived from, and is consistent with, the financial report for the year, and examination on a test basis, of evidence supporting the amounts, discussion and analysis and other disclosures which were not directly derived from the financial report for the year. These procedures have been undertaken to form an opinion whether, in all material respects, the concise financial report complies with Accounting Standard AASB 1039: Concise Financial Reports and whether the discussion and analysis complies with the requirements laid down in AASB 1039: Concise Financial Reports.

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

Independence

In conducting our audit, we complied with applicable independence requirements of the Corporations Act 2001.

Auditor's Opinion

In our opinion, the concise financial report, including the discussion and analysis of Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) for the year ended 31 December 2008 complies with Accounting Standard AASB 1039: Concise Financial Reports.

Grant Thornton NSW

GRANT THORNTON NSW
Chartered Accountants

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C F Farley", written over a horizontal line.

C F Farley
Partner

Sydney, 15 April 2009

Aspect increased the number of places on offer in schools to a total of

586

6067

people with an autism spectrum disorder were in contact with Aspect

Aspect's turnover was

\$32.5 [^]24% **million**

Government funding increased by

\$5.2 **million**

Over

520,000 user sessions

on the website were recorded

[^]
17%







LIFE GOVERNORS

- Mr Ian Barnett
- Mr Jim Bryant
- Mr Rick Damelian
- Mr David Foster
- Mr Gerry Harvey
- Mrs Betty Hatch
- Mr L Rawstorne
- Mr Ray Seager
- Dr Andrew Vern Barnett AM MBE
- Mr Peter Werner
- Mr A Whelan

LIFE MEMBERS

- Mr Roger Allen OAM
- Mr George Andrews
- Ms Julie Anthony AM OBE
- Mr Mark Bowen
- Mrs Val Browne OAM
- Mrs Geraldine Bryant
- Mr Arthur Byrne
- Mr J C Crow
- Professor Peter Dodd
- Mrs H Emanuel
- Mr David Epper
- Mr Mark Fogarty
- Mr John Gerahty
- Mr John Gibbs
- Mrs Patricia Gibbs
- Mrs Marie Goodare
- Mrs Nancy Graham-Taylor
- Mrs J Hall
- Lady Sybil Joel
- Ms Judith Johnson
- Mrs Olivia Keighley
- Mrs Joyce Kennedy
- Mrs Marion Kingston
- Mr Errol Larbalestier
- Dr P Mayne
- Mr Michael McColm
- Mrs Marjorie McDonald OAM
- Mrs Jill McGrath
- Mr Tony McGrath AM
- Mrs Shirley McIntosh
- Mrs C Mount
- Mr Ron Mulock
- Mrs Claire O'Keefe
- Mrs Kathleen Pigram
- Mr Ostilio Pisanu
- Dr Gretchen Poiner
- Dr A Polyblank
- Mr D Robbins
- Dr Jacqueline Roberts
- Mr Basil Sellers AM
- Mr John Shand
- Mrs Jean Slaughter
- Mr Paul C J Smith
- Mr David Stead
- Mrs Margaret Stead
- Mrs Margaret Vernon
- Mrs Eileen Ward
- Mrs Andrea Werner

We are saddened by the death of Life Governor Mrs Eleanor Spence AM and of Life Member Dr Noel Hodge in 2008. They were generous supporters of our work and will be missed.





autism spectrum
AUSTRALIA

Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) ABN: 12000 637 267

Central Office: Building 1, Level 2, 14 Aquatic Drive, Frenchs Forest NSW 2086
(PO Box 361 Forestville NSW 2087)

P: 02 8977 8300

F: 02 8977 8399

W: www.autismspectrum.org.au