



# Annual Report 2009–2010

Creating pathways to build potential

## Vision

Leading the way through knowledge, understanding and acceptance.

## Mission

Our mission is to deliver specialised services and promote community awareness to facilitate an inclusive community that values individuals and families living with an Autism Spectrum Disorder.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### PATRON

His Excellency Rear Admiral Kevin Scarce AC CSC RANR  
Governor of South Australia

### VICE PATRONS

The Honourable Mr Justice T H McGovern, DFC (Retired)

RS Turner, Esquire, CBE

P Satchell

### LIFE MEMBERS

Mrs Roma Aimes	Mrs Mary Angel
Mrs Ross Baker	Mr Richard Bruggemann
Mrs Jean Bryant	Miss Cheryl Casey
Mrs Jean Cox	Mr Lloyd Cox
Miss Betty Davis	Mr Ken Foggo
Mrs Ruth Halpin	Mr John Harley
Mrs Nerida Higgins	Mrs Hilary Johnson
Mrs Joy Johns	Mrs Betty Jordan OAM
Mrs Judith Leeson	Dr Ruth McIntyre
Mr David McLean	Mrs Anne Nottage
Mrs Valerie Retallick	Mr John Rosevear
Mrs Mae Saun	Mr Matt Tiddy
Dr Peter Tillet	Mr Bernhard Vaughan
Mr Dudley Wilson	Mrs Margaret Wilson
Dr Margaret Kyrkou	

## BOARD (AS AT 30 JUNE 2010)

**President** Mr Neil White,  
*Management Expertise, Finance Committee Member*

**Vice President** Mr Troy Mohler,  
*Consumer Representative, Finance Committee Member*

**Treasurer** Ms Jenny Karavolos,  
*Financial Expertise, Finance Committee Member*

**Legal Expertise** Mr Mark Nicholls,  
*Finance Committee Member*

**ASD Expertise** Dr Manya Angley,  
*Professional Practice Committee Member*

**Consumer Representatives**  
Ms Amanda Tulloch-Hoskins,  
Ms Katherine Annear

**Financial Member** (elected by Staff) Ms Amanda Harris,  
*Professional Practice Committee Member; Compliance, Risk and Employee Welfare Committee Member*

**Co-Opted Member** Ms Col Eardley,  
*Finance Committee Member*

**Chief Executive Officer**, Mr Jon Martin

**Auditors** Bentleys (SA) Pty Ltd

# President and Chief Executive Report

## Neil White and Jon Martin

Autism SA has continued to strengthen its key role at both a local and national level. The Autism SA Strategic Plan 2009-2013 was launched at our Annual General Meeting last year and we are making progress towards the goals and objectives set. We have been successful in increasing revenue, expanding services and building relationships to support the Autism Spectrum community. However, there are a range of strategies that still require enormous effort to ensure the ongoing development of Autism SA and the people whom we support. Our ongoing challenge is to ensure that services and supports are developed to meet the continued and growing demand for quality services.

During the 2009-10 financial year, 739 people were diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), representing an increase of nearly 12% compared to the previous year. This trend has been well established for many years (Diagram 1). However, with more than 4700 people eligible for the services of Autism SA, revenue is not matching demand (Diagram 2).

The Board of Autism SA has recently focused on identifying strategic priorities for the coming 2010-11 financial year. One of the key focus areas includes increased income generation to support the growing needs of the Autism Spectrum community. At both a local and national level, there are some important initiatives that may offer some future opportunities. The Social Inclusion Board in South Australia is developing a blueprint for disability services reform and the National Productivity Commission is conducting an inquiry into a National Disability Long Term Care and Support Scheme. Autism SA will need to ensure that we, in collaboration with the community, provide effective and informed advice to these key initiatives to enable positive outcomes for people with an ASD.

The South Australian election held in March 2010 saw some important announcements made in relation to the future development of services for people living with an ASD. The re-elected Labor government has committed to the development of two education units that will have a specialist focus on ASDs, and become centres of best practice in ASD. This is a critical development in South Australia and coincided with the release of a National Position Paper on Education for Students with an ASD by the Australian Advisory Board on ASDs.



The Rann Government has also committed to \$4.25 million in additional funds to provide more assessments and early intervention services to children with ASDs, including an increase in funding to Autism SA to provide such services. In 2009-10, Autism SA made the difficult decision of increasing the cost of diagnostic assessments to cover funding shortfalls. Additional resourcing of this critical service is certainly welcomed and will ensure increased accessibility and affordability for people seeking a diagnosis.

Autism SA, as a member of the Australian Autism Education and Training Consortium, was successful in securing a continuation of contract until the end of 2011. The consortium members (Autism SA, Autism Spectrum Australia, Department of Education Western Australia and University of Canberra) are responsible for delivering the "Positive Partnerships" program across Australia, providing training for education staff and parents of school-aged children.

Also at a national level, during the period July – October 2009, Jon Martin was seconded to the Australian Advisory Board on Autism Spectrum Disorders to develop a proposal to establish a National ASD Register. Consultations were conducted across Australia with diagnosticians, State and Federal government departments, researchers and the state/territory autism associations. A final proposal was submitted at the end of September 2009 and development work has continued in collaboration with the Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

As service growth and development has been a key focus for Autism SA, there has been a need to review the organisational infrastructure required to support such growth and ensure a vibrant, viable and sustainable future. Throughout 2009-10, development work was undertaken in relation to the management and leadership structure at Autism SA. An external consultant was engaged to review the Autism SA organisational structure and leadership function and engage key staff on critical issues such as the composition, skills, efficacy and structure of the management team. An administration review was also undertaken by Community Business Bureau in 2009.

This review was undertaken to examine the capacity of the administration program to meet the growth requirements of Autism SA. As a result of this review, a new leadership structure is being implemented and Autism SA has targeted information technology and human resources as key areas for development.

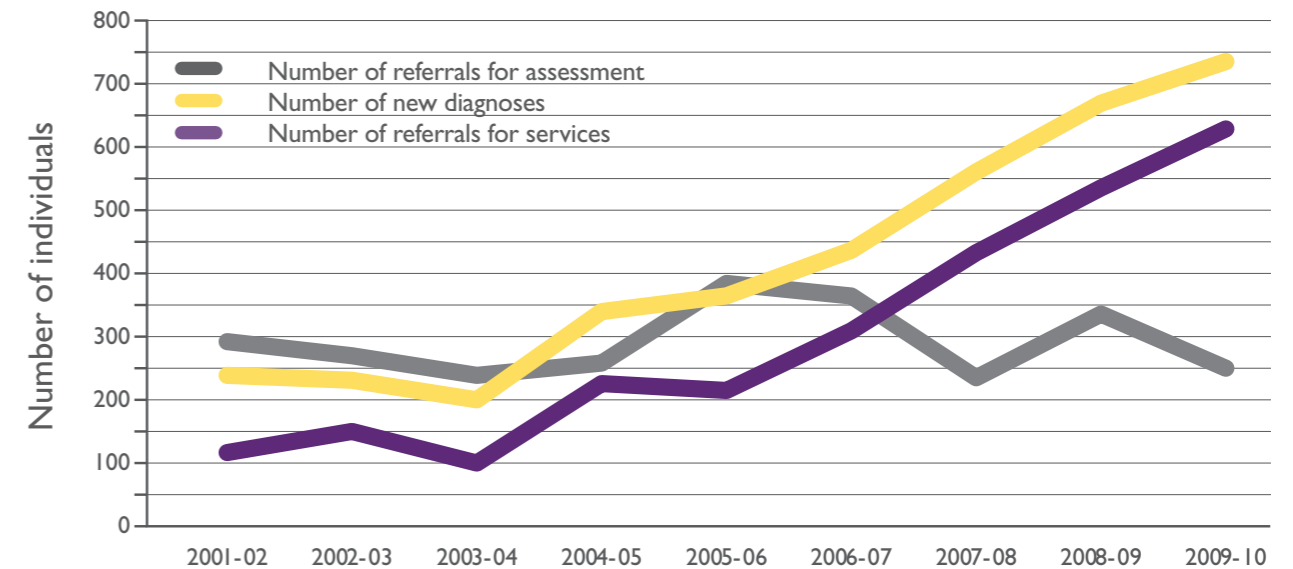
There has also been a continued focus on workforce development within Autism SA. Significant industrial changes have been introduced Australia-wide over the last 12 months as part of the Fair Work Act (2009). New Awards and the National Employment Standards commenced 1 January 2010. On average, Autism SA is currently paying 13% above award rates with a majority of staff covered by the relevant industry Award (Social, Community Services, Home Care and Disability Award). Our staff turnover rate remained relatively consistent with previous years at 14.5%, as did staff absenteeism at 2.7%. Our staff survey undertaken in 2009 indicated an overall staff satisfaction rating of 60.1% with key areas for development highlighted as being the facilitation of career development opportunities and the provision of regular feedback on performance. Strategies are underway to address these issues.

The staff and volunteers of Autism SA always display great passion and commitment. The level of expertise of our staff is highly valued and recognised as being critical to the success of Autism SA and the services that we provide.

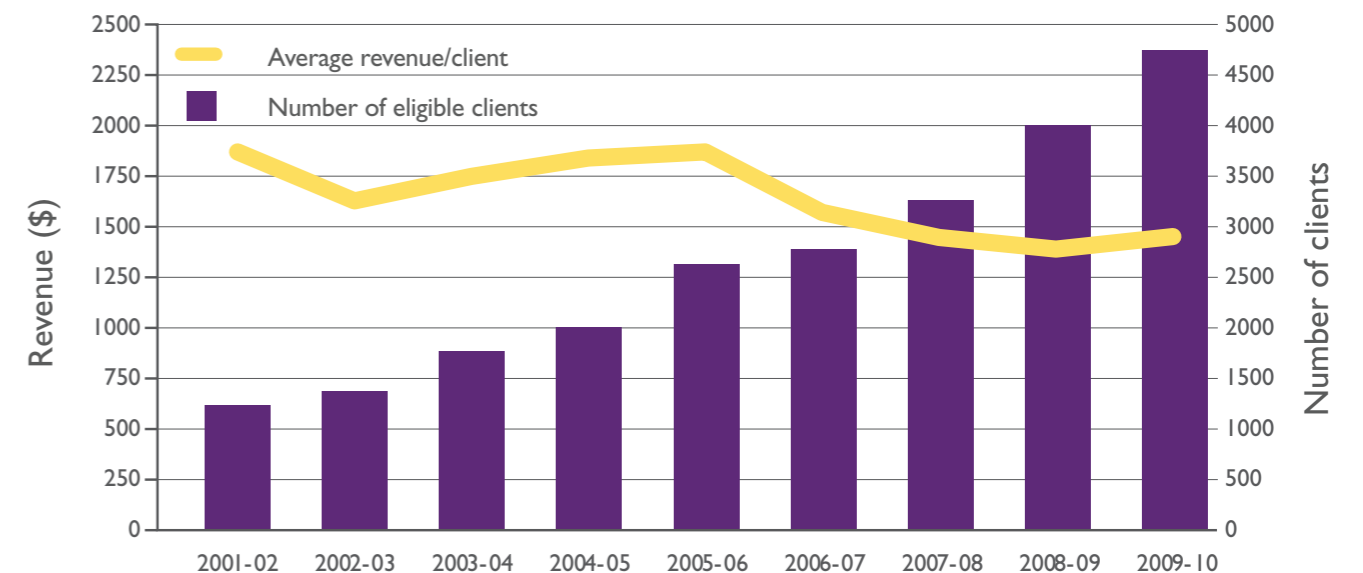
The Board of Autism SA bring a range of skills to their governance roles and responsibilities. They have operated in a dynamic manner, ensuring that systems are in place to evaluate their performance as a Board and that there is a clear focus on the strategic objectives for Autism SA.

Finally, we extend a warm thanks to our Patron, His Excellency Rear Admiral Kevin Scarce, Governor of South Australia. In particular, we thank His Excellency for hosting the Autism SA recognition Awards at Government House in April 2010.

**DIAGRAM 1: TREND IN NEW REFERRALS 2001-02 TO 2009-10**



**DIAGRAM 2: TOTAL REVENUE & TOTAL CLIENT NUMBERS 2001-02 TO 2009-10**



# Treasurer's Report

## Jenny Karavolos

TABLE I

	2009-10	2008-09	% Change favourable / (unfavourable)
Operating Revenue	6,588,901	5,234,489	26%
Operating Expenses	(6,588,525)	(5,544,187)	(19%)
Net operating surplus / (deficit)	376	(309,698)	100%
Profit on sale of property	-	103,890	
Insurance recovery – Onkaparinga Hills property	36,837	173,539	
Impairment loss – Onkaparinga Hills property	-	(173,539)	
Net surplus / (deficit)	\$37,213	(\$205,808)	>100%

### OVERVIEW

This has been an exciting financial year for the organisation. The strategic direction has focused on implementing and supporting a number of initiatives to improve service delivery and position the organisation for longer term sustainability. With rising client numbers and increasing business expenses, it is necessary to ensure that Autism SA continues to be in a position to expand and continuously improve services.

To this end, in 2009/2010, the consolidated entity has managed to increase operating income by 26% reflecting more service delivery initiatives and a stronger performance of the investment portfolio. The organisation has also continued to retain a sound capital base, with sufficient assets and equity to sustain Autism SA's financial stability into the future.

Whilst Autism SA will continue to face financial pressures given the increasing prevalence of Autism Spectrum Disorders and associated need for services, key achievements have been made to support the strategic direction of Autism SA.

### PROFIT AND LOSS POSITION

The net financial result for 2009/10 of the combined activities of the Autism Association of SA Inc. and the Autism Trust Fund of SA (the 'Consolidated Entity') is a surplus of \$37,213 as compared to the deficit position in 2008/09. The results are summarised in Table I (above). The financial position, as presented, have been audited by our auditors Bentleys (SA) Partnership.



The following provides an overview of the key points of significance:

## REVENUE

A 26% increase in total operating revenue on the prior financial year has been achieved. Significant features of this result include:

### 1. A 23% increase in revenue from Government funding.

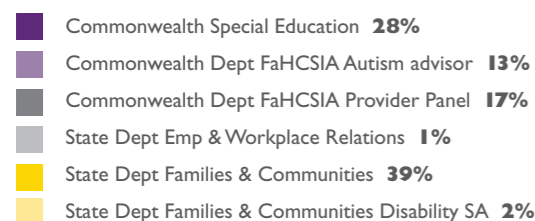
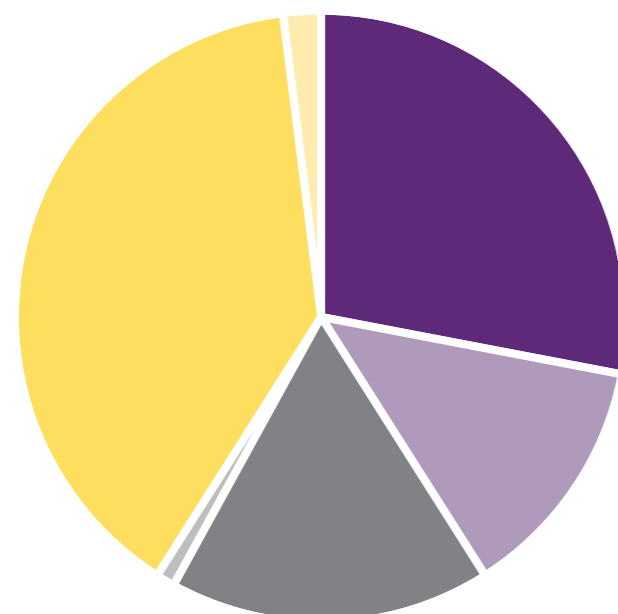
The 2009/10 financial year is the first full year of providing services as part of the 'Helping Children with Autism' initiative as funded by the Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

This involves:

- The Autism Advisor services in South Australia and the Northern Territory (13%) and
- Delivering Early Intervention Service Provider Panel services, in conjunction with Headstart Intervention Services (17%).

This funding now represents 30% of revenue from Government sources (Figure 1) as compared to 16% in 2008/09.

**FIGURE 1: BREAKDOWN OF 2009/10 REVENUE FROM GOVERNMENT SOURCES**



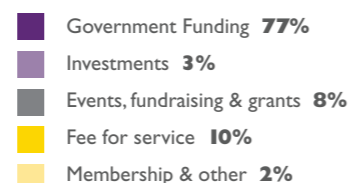
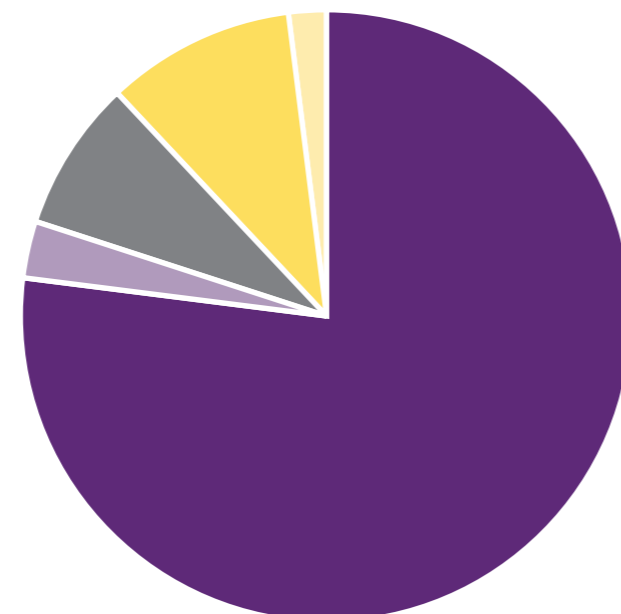
### 2. An 83% increase in revenue from fee for service activities.

Revenue from fee for service activities represents 10% of total income in 2009/10 (Figure 2). Autism SA has participated in a number of national initiatives and projects throughout the year:

- Positive Partnerships (national education and workshop program)
- Development of a proposal for the establishment of a National ASD Register
- Delivery of Early Days workshops to eligible families in South Australia and the Northern Territory.

An expanded professional development series was also offered in 2009/10 and there has been a strong demand for other consultancy services throughout the year such as centre based training for education and community sector professionals across metropolitan and regional areas.

**FIGURE 2: BREAKDOWN OF 2009/10 INCOME SOURCES**



**TABLE 2**

	2009-10	2008-09	% Change
Current Assets	881,669	988,673	(11%)
<b>Non Current Assets</b>			
Property & equipment	1,551,811	1,340,228	16%
Investment Portfolio	1,631,131	1,570,883	4%
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>4,064,611</b>	<b>3,899,784</b>	<b>4%</b>
Current Liabilities	992,964	968,860	2%
Non-Current Liabilities	94,761	139,047	(32%)
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>1,087,725</b>	<b>1,107,907</b>	<b>(2%)</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>\$2,976,886</b>	<b>\$2,791,877</b>	<b>7%</b>

## EXPENSES

Total operating expenses have increased by 19% from the previous financial year. Significant features of this result include:

### 1. A 21% increase in employee benefits expenses.

The increase in employee costs is directly related to the increased provision of services in 2009/10. Autism SA's workforce expanded in 2008/09 with the commencement of the various 'Helping Children with Autism' initiatives and has risen by a further 7 FTE in 2009/10. A salary increment was applied from 1 July 2009, a reflection of the organisation's ongoing commitment to the attraction and retention of skilled staff necessary for the continuity of high quality services.

### 2. A 153% increase in consortium member expenses.

These expenses relate to the first full year of services delivered by Headstart Intervention Services as part of the Early Intervention Service Provider Panel.

### 3. A 20% increase in business related expenses reflecting the expanded and enhanced service base. Areas include:

- office leasing and associated overhead costs
- information technology and communication costs
- travel costs, predominantly related to the full year operation of Autism Advisor programs in SA and NT and
- staff recruitment and development in line with the strategic plan.

## INSURANCE

The restoration of the southern respite facility was completed in May 2010, a year after the devastating fire. With the support of the community, overnight respite services resumed in June 2010. The total insurance claim for building works and contents replacement was \$210,376.

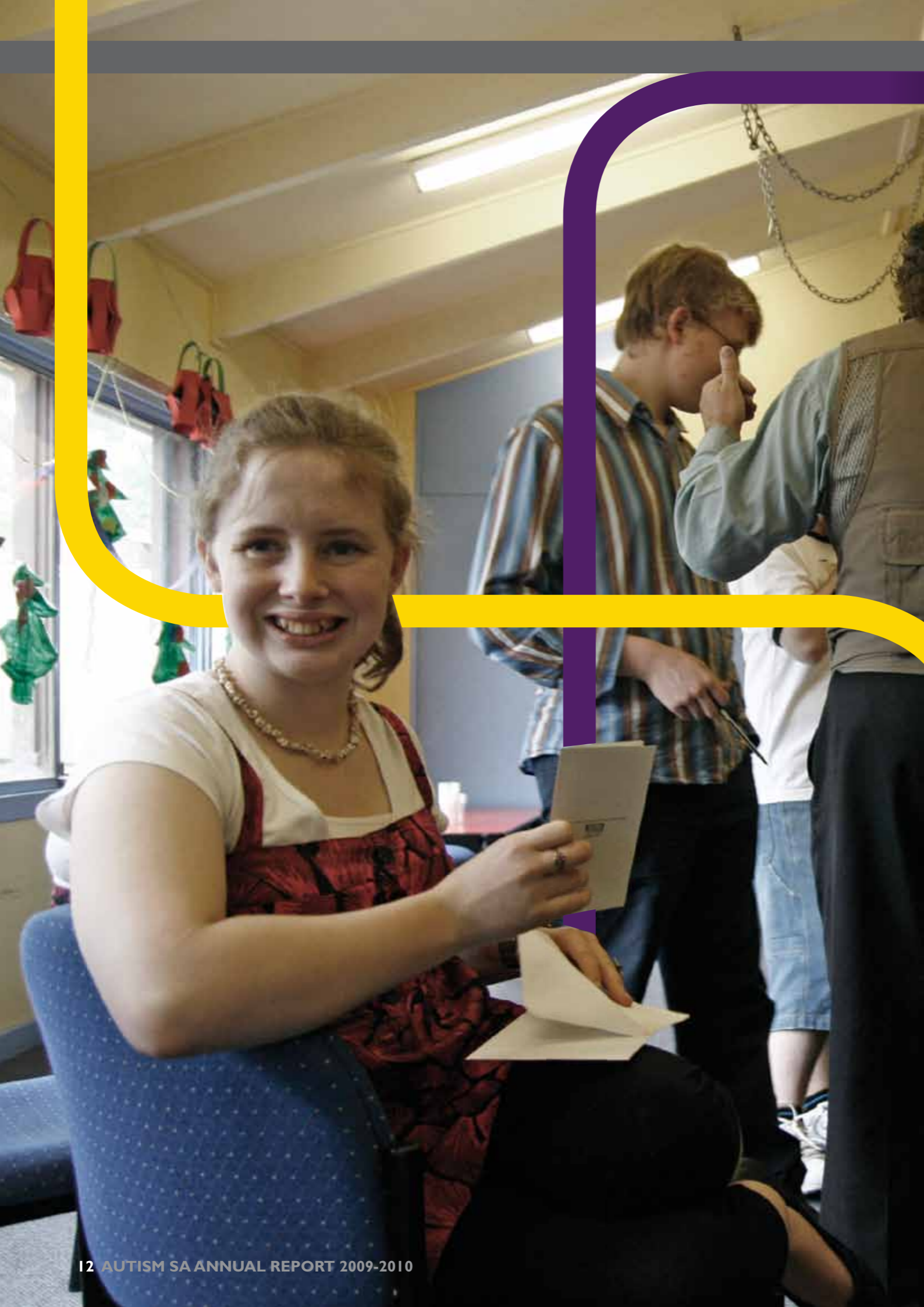
## BALANCE SHEET

The Consolidated Entity net asset position at 30 June 2010 has remained strong with an improved 7% value on the prior year (Table 2).

Major movements during 2009/10 were:

- A reduction in current assets due to the finalisation of the Onkaparinga Hills property insurance claim in 2009/10 (as against the prior year's insurance receivable of \$173,539).
- Increased property and equipment value due to the:
  - i. reclassification of a portion of an insurance receivable on completion of restoration works and
  - ii. the adoption of an independent valuation of the Onkaparinga Hills facility resulting in a revaluation increment of \$89,231.
- The stronger performance of the investment portfolio throughout 2009/10 as reflected by a net return of \$186,730 (approximately a 10% return on investment) for 2009/10. The market value of investments has remained below purchase cost throughout the year but has shown ongoing improvement as the financial market continues to recover. That is 13% below cost at 30 June 2010 as compared to 17% at 30 June 2009.

In summary, Autism SA has made some significant advances in line with its strategic direction. The organisation continues to position itself with the significant support of client and business partners and contribution by staff, management and the Board, for long term capacity and viability to facilitate pathways for individuals and their families living with an Autism Spectrum Disorder.



## Achievements

“Great things are not done by impulse, but by a series of small things brought together.” – Vincent Van Gogh

Autism SA is renowned for being a progressive and constructive organisation, well respected for its ability to search for solutions, develop opportunities and preserve innovation and creativity to meet the unique needs of individuals with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

The 2009 / 2010 reporting period produced numerous achievements for Autism SA, with each individual success working together to help create greater pathways and build potential for the development and improvement of the services we provide.

Autism SA and Parents Assisting Kids with Autism (PAKA) were proud to receive a Commonwealth Bank Community Grant in 2009 of \$9,780 to run a 'PAKA SOKA' program, a soccer skills clinic held over two school terms for children aged 8-12 with ASD. With the assistance of PAKA and the Rotary Club of West Lakes, the program was jointly run by SASRAPID and Autism SA to provide soccer coaching, social development and improved health and wellbeing in a fun and friendly environment.

Community Services also worked closely with UnitingCare Wesley, Bowden to deliver two AFL Footy Clinics at AAMI Stadium during the April school holidays. The sessions were attended by 30 children with ASD, who were delighted to meet Taylor Walker and Brad Symes of the Adelaide Crows, as well as a couple of Carlton Football Club players. Participants received merchandise donated from both the Adelaide Crows and Port Power Football Clubs.

Kaleidoscope, a volunteer fundraising and community awareness team based in Port Lincoln, were successful in gaining a \$3,990 grant from Variety, the Children's Charity. The grant produced a booklet titled 'Real People, Real Stories, Real Solutions,' which provides simple, real life information for parents regarding children with ASD.

June 2010 saw the reopening of the Southern Respite House, which had been badly damaged by a devastating fire the previous year. A Family Open Day was held in May with many staff members, families and supporters helping mark the occasion, including Sylvia Anderson, CEO of Variety, the Children's Charity and Amanda Rishworth, local Federal MP.

The Active Support Framework was introduced by the Kandu Day Options Program in January 2010. This framework is used to maximise individual potential by ensuring engagement in meaningful everyday activities and relationships. Being engaged in activities is the basis for personal growth and development, which increases independence, confidence and social inclusion.

Some aspects of the diagnostic service have widened, including training and diagnostician forums. These programs are in line with developing partnerships to enhance service innovation and assessments. Over 1,000 families and individuals made referrals or sent reports into the diagnostic service centre over the last financial year. 250 specific referrals for an assessment were received, 169 diagnostic assessments were conducted and 634 referrals for services were processed. Governed by internationally established and recognised standards of evidence based best practice, the diagnostic team continues to provide a quality service that is thorough, client focused and effective.

## Achievements continued

In the area of early intervention, we have seen a substantial decrease in therapy waiting lists for both the North East (from 12+ months to 6-8 months) and the South West (from 6-8 months to 2-3 months). Grants were received from a variety of donors for the upgrading of infrastructure, resources and therapy equipment for the Foundation Skills Group. This included a grant of \$12,800 from the Ministerial Advisory Committee for the enclosure of the Foundation Skill's verandah, a Community Benefit SA grant of \$20,000 for an upgrade to the Foundation Skills Playground and funding from the Moriata Trust of \$9,091 for resources and replacement of the sand pit structure.

Baiada Select Poultry Children's Charity Nest generously donated \$10,000 towards an upgrade to the Autism SA Therapy Room as well as an additional \$14,000 to support the new fit out of two Therapy Rooms at Autism SA, Netley. Baiada also donated \$11,500 to support the Autism SA Early Development Program Resources and School Inclusion Program IT Resources.

The School Inclusion Program provides collaborative support to educational staff so that inclusive provisions are made for students with ASD in educational settings. This includes planning, professional development, goal setting and the introduction of individualised programs. This year the Program has been a great success, having responded to the needs of over 3,000 students and their communities, 500 of whom are based in regional South Australia. The Program received a grant of \$9,572 from the Charity Committee of the Liquor Industry, which enabled the purchase of equipment for therapy and intensive education support programs. Another achievement for the Program is the expansion of the fee-paying services requested by school communities. Such a service allows more educators to access the information needed to contribute to inclusive educational options for students on the Autism Spectrum.

Some changes were made to the delivery of the School Inclusion Program services with the goal of improving the model of support. Two new teams were established in each area of Adelaide – a School Assessment Team and a School Intensive Team. This structure is being reviewed and refined to ensure an effective and responsive model of service is being delivered in educational settings.



The Autism Advisor Program has provided access for 341 families to the early intervention funding provided by the Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA). There is no waiting list to see an Autism Advisor in South Australia. Once a notification of diagnosis is received, eligible families receive a call from an Autism Advisor to inform them of funding available and assist families with accessing services.

Due to the increasing demand for Brief Clinical Support, Spectrum Advisory Services (SAS) have developed a new group therapy approach for children and adults utilising the innovative approaches of Mindfulness Cognitive Behaviour Therapy and Digital Story Telling. SAS underwent professional development in using Mindfulness in intervention settings, which is proving to be a successful technique in addressing the mental health needs of people with ASD.

During 2009 / 2010, Autism SA developed a much stronger role in the Northern Territory. The Autism Advisor Program processed 67 families across the Northern Territory as eligible for the Australian Government early intervention funding. This was much greater than the 23 families the Government had predicted and was a great achievement given the remote nature of the Northern Territory. The NT Program worked as the Positive Partnerships Key Local Facilitator for parents and carers. It combined the delivery of 11 Early Days workshops with visits to remote areas across the Territory to provide face-to-face appointments with families and professionals and to promote the Helping Children with Autism package.

The Autism Advisor NT Program also assisted in establishing the PlayConnect play group in Darwin and liaised with a range of interstate early intervention services who offered outreach services for families in the NT. Approximately 150 people across Alice Springs and Darwin attended a series of three presentations by Dr Cheryl Dissanayake from La Trobe University about the early signs of ASD in infants and toddlers.

Throughout the NT, a series of training sessions about ASD were delivered to a range of professionals such as Frontier Disability Services, Somerville Disability Services, foster carers and a range of pre-schools and area schools.

And to round out the numerous feats achieved by Autism SA during the reporting period, the new Autism SA website was launched in February 2010. Designed by DBG Technologies, the website provides new easy-to-use navigation tools, a media centre, a search engine, a new look calendar featuring all important dates relevant to Autism SA and the provision of the latest research information and useful links for the end-user. The website allows for a more timely communication method with individual Program Coordinators having the ability to update their own online program information.

## Events

In August 2009, PAKA hosted yet another successful 'Lazy Sunday Afternoon.' The event reached capacity of 80 guests and provided an opportunity to network and build relationships with the Telstra Foundation as well as Jennifer Rankine, Minister for Disability, Stephen Wade, the Shadow Minister for Disability and David Pisoni, Liberal Member for Unley.

The 2009 Sunday Mail City-to-Bay Fun Run was again a great success with more than 281 individuals joining the 'Autism SA Team 580.' The Autism SA City-to-Bay Fun Run Committee dedicated their time to securing sponsorship deals and promoting 'Team 580' throughout the autism spectrum community. Participants ran or walked their way to the finish line, helping to raise over \$15,000 in support of the work of Autism SA.

There was a sell out crowd of more than 360 guests at the 2009 Autism SA Fundraising and Awareness Ball, raising more than \$30,000 for the 'Making Cents for the Seven Senses' project. The 'Masquerade Ball at the Adelaide Town Hall', held on 31st October 2009, was not only a platform to help raise funds and awareness but also gave the organisation an opportunity to form new partnerships and build upon existing business relations. The event was managed by a group of Adelaide's young professionals who volunteered their time and expertise to help make the event such a monumental success.

April 2010 was a busy month at Autism SA, with the organisation hosting a number of successful events to celebrate Autism Month. A highlight on the events calendar was the 2010 Autism SA Recognition Awards, held at Government House on Thursday 15th April and hosted by our No. 1 Autism Ambassador, David Palmer. His Excellency Rear Admiral Kevin Scarce AC CSC RANR, Governor of South Australia and Patron of Autism SA, presented the Awards, which recognised the hard work and dedication of individuals and carers living and working with ASD in the community.

Also during Autism Month, Autism SA, in conjunction with TAFE SA, presented a Two Day Seminar by Drs Gerry and June Groden at the Adelaide Entertainment Centre. The conference, which focused on stress and procedures to reduce stress, was attended by 130 delegates from the teaching and disability sector. Many of the delegates wore colourful outfits in support of 'Rainbow Day', an Autism Spectrum Disorder Awareness campaign held on Friday 30th April 2010.

During National Youth Week also held in April 2010, Autism SA, in conjunction with Youth Beyond Blue and the South Australian Office for Youth and Diamond House, hosted a Multi-Arts Workshop for young people with ASD. Three community artists were involved in delivering visual art, poetry and spoken word workshops, which explored mental health and resilience in the context of ASD. Each of the participants were given the opportunity to author and record a poem and to create an artwork that best represented their experiences and demonstrated their capacity for resilience. The results of the workshop are showcased in the booklet titled "I Dream of Many Things..." and a podcast designed to give more information and raise awareness of the mental health issues associated with ASD. The works of art were also displayed in the foyer at the Autism SA head office.

Supported by Artistic Director, Julian Jaensch and Creative Producer, Heather Frahn, Company@ presented Framed Out to a public season in June 2010. Over 200 people attended two performances at Immanuel College's Century Theatre, demonstrating that the use of Disability Arts is a successful strategy for engaging people with ASD and for increasing awareness of ASD.



## Key Partners and Supporters

Autism SA would not be able to provide the range and depth of services currently on offer without the valued and continued support of funding bodies, government agencies, sponsors, media outlets, service clubs as well as big and small donors alike.

Whether in the form of monetary grants and donations, physical items or the provision of services or purely on a networking and support basis, the assistance from our key partners and supporters is invaluable. Their backing is pivotal to the growth, development and improvement of our organisation and, in turn, allows Autism SA to deliver the best services possible to individuals and families living with an ASD.

Our consultants working on the School Inclusion Program and the National Education and Training Team have worked closely with Disability SA, the Department of Education and Children's Services, the Catholic Education Department, the Association of Independent Schools of South Australia, Family Advocacy, the Northern Carers' Network and the Positive Partnerships Project.

Spectrum Advisory Services also has working partnerships with Disability SA as well as Families SA, Marion City Council, Community Arts Network SA, The Disability Arts Transition Team, Restless Dance Theatre, Tutti Arts, Immanuel College and Embroidery SA, all assisting clients with a range of significant and complex needs. In addition, Diamond House has partnered with Autism SA to offer the opportunity for social development groups to use a community venue at Kilkenny.

Bunnings Warehouse has supplied materials to support funding from the Myer Foundation for the Peer Mentoring Program to carry out the "Aerosol Art Project". The Richard Llewellyn Arts and Disability Trust presented a \$5,299 grant to Company@ skills development program, which will involve guest artists facilitating workshops for the company. Carclew Youth Arts also provided funding for Company@ to develop a Youth Focus in Schools program. Reynella Rotary Club has provided funding for an ASD Women's Retreat and Youth Beyond Blue, through the South Australian Office for Youth, has assisted with funds for the Youth Week Multi-Arts Workshop.

The Autism Advisor Program NT has worked very closely with the paediatricians as well as staff from Carpentaria Disability Services, Child Development Team. They have also received monumental support from the Education Department, Early Childhood Australia and Carers NT.

The Ministerial Advisory Committee: Students with Disabilities, Community Benefit SA, the Morialta Trust, the Unley Garden Rescuers and the Thespian Association all donated funds to assist in the upgrade of resources at the Foundation Skills Group.

Baiada Select Poultry Children's Charity Nest, Harcourt Foundation, Victoria Kapetanios from Ray White Semaphore and the Seaford Ecumenical Mission, just to name a few, have all provided funding, donations and resources for use in therapy. Halliday Hardware Pty Ltd also made a \$2,000 donation towards Autism SA Respite Services.



Parents Assisting Kids with Autism (PAKA) has once again been a major force in the autism spectrum community in South Australia. PAKA is a committed group of parents working collaboratively with Autism SA to raise funds for innovative social development programs as well as raising awareness of issues that parents face in raising children on the Autism Spectrum. Among many things, PAKA formed a key partnership with the Commonwealth Bank Staff Community Fund for their valuable grant in support of the PAKA SOKA program. The West Lakes Rotary Club also supported the program with a \$1,000 donation.

PAKA has also continued its support of the Southern Respite House by raising funds to buy replacement equipment for the Southern Sensory Room. Meanwhile Community Benefits SA, Booze Brothers and the Coopers Brewery Foundation all donated funds in order to upgrade the Northern Sensory Room.

Messenger Community Newspapers have supported Autism SA throughout the year, with on-going media support, particularly during Autism Month in April 2010 and by following the progress of the Southern Respite House. Their commitment has also extended to Gold Sponsorship of the 2009 Autism SA Fundraising and Awareness Ball. Other Gold Sponsors included Coopers Brewery, Yalumba Wines, Queens Court Press, Brock Harcourts Adelaide, Spruikit, SA Life, Epicure Catering, Embellish Flowers, Pro Show and The Autism SA Ball Committee.

Variety, the Children's Charity, has continued their longstanding partnership with Autism SA and in particular has supported the Respite House project, with CEO Sylvia Anderson helping mark the reopening of the Southern Respite House in June.

The Advertiser Sunday Mail Foundation made a valuable donation of \$10,000 in support of Autism SA, as did the Hackett Foundation and the Rotary Club of Reynella with a \$5,000 and \$1,000 donation respectively. Steggle's contributed \$7,000 towards the 2010 Autism SA City-to-Bay Fun Run Team, Autism SA Team 720, in recognition of the 720 individuals who were diagnosed with ASD in South Australia during the 2009 calendar year.

TAFE SA continues to partner with Autism SA, this year in the capacity of Presenting Sponsor for the Drs Gerry and June Groden Two Day Seminar. Relationships Australia (SA) also supported the event as Exhibitor Sponsor as did Bank SA with a \$1,500 grant.

Community Benefit SA has been a strong supporter of Autism SA for nearly 10 years and has made substantial contributions to the organisation during that time. In the reporting period, a grant of \$20,000 was supplied for the upgrade of the Foundation Skills Program.

The Australian Executor Trustees Charitable Trusts continues to be one of Autism SA's largest supporters since 2001 and their ongoing allegiance has made a significant contribution to our development.

## Our People

“It’s time for us all to stand and cheer for the doer, the achiever – the one who recognizes the challenges and does something about it.” – Vince Lombardi

Our staff and extended network of volunteers are a true testament to the foundations and core values of Autism SA. Their impressive dedication, energy and expertise contribute significantly to building our reputation as a leading service provider for individuals and families living with Autism Spectrum Disorders.

As the only organisation in South Australia specialising in Autism Spectrum Disorders, it is essential that we provide a high performing workforce equipped with the latest knowledge, appropriate skills and a collective determination and enthusiasm to develop and succeed. Autism SA places great value on the recruitment, retention and development of staff and remains focused on providing a positive and productive work environment with better resources, equipment and contemporary employment conditions.

As part of our commitment to furthering staff development and knowledge, both the Manager and Coordinator of Community Relations attended the 2010 Fundraising Institute of Australia Two Day Conference in March 2010.

Likewise, members of our Spectrum Advisory Services (SAS) and Diagnostic Services team attended the 2009 Asia Pacific Autism Conference. SAS staff also attended National Autism Advisor Forums, FABIC Autism and Behaviour Workshops, Team Building with Developing Potential, Behaviour Interventions with Angela Davis, Floortime Introductory Workshop, the Drs Jerry and June Groden Seminar, Early Days Facilitator Training, Sexual Safety with SHine and ‘How Does Your Engine Run’ training courses.

The School Inclusion Program team attended the Positive Partnerships program, the Special Ed Expo and Western Futures. Members of the Early Development Program underwent sessions on Managing Challenging Behaviour as well as Child Safe Environments and Non-Violent Crisis Intervention. Staff in the Foundation Skills Group attended Seizure Management and Oral, Eating and Drinking training.

The Autism Advisor NT attended the Dr Sally Rogers, Denver Early Start Program One Day Workshop as well as workshops by Dr Robyn Young and Dr Cheryl Dissanayake.

The introduction of the Active Support Framework to Kandu assisted staff development within the Community Services department. The two and a half day training equipped Support Workers with adequate skills to implement the Active Support Principles. Meanwhile the National Education and Training Team have been able to access Webinars, seminars that are broadcasted over the Internet and delivered by National Team Members.

The hard work and dedication of all of our staff, both paid and voluntary, who contribute their time, skills and expertise to the various causes of Autism SA is greatly appreciated. This includes the Professional Practice Committee of Autism SA, the Autism SA Ball Committee, Kaleidoscope, PAKA, the Barossa Autism Awareness Team, the Autism SA City-Bay Fun Run Committee and the various parent groups that have been active in fundraising and undertaking community awareness activities. We extend our gratitude to all individuals, groups, businesses and partnerships that have supported Autism SA during the reporting period.



Recognition of Autism SA staff and volunteers and their numerous achievements was ceremoniously recognised in the fifth Autism SA Recognition Awards Presentation in April 2010. His Excellency Rear Admiral Kevin Scarce AC CSC RANR, Governor of South Australia and Patron of Autism SA presented the Awards to the following recipients:

### THE HILARY JOHNSON PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Alison Kennedy, Teacher

### EXEMPLARY SERVICE AWARD

The Autism SA Ball Committee

### BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP AWARD

The Telstra Foundation

### PATRONAGE AWARD

Parents Assisting Kids with Autism

### PARENT/CARER AWARD

Alison Dix and Kim Montgomery

### INDIVIDUAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Kristie Dix (12 years and younger), Taylor Haar (13 years and older) and Stephen Loveridge (13 years and older)

### AUTISM AMBASSADOR AWARD

Matt Deighton

For a number of years, we have been recognising staff members who have reached significant milestones in their years of service with Autism SA. This year we would like to recognise:

### 5 YEARS OF SERVICE

Linda Blackburn

Tha'is Bussenschutt

Alison Hannagan

Julian Jaensch

### 10 YEARS OF SERVICE

Lara Hopewell

### 20 YEARS OF SERVICE

Chris Aram

Janet Turner

We would also like to congratulate Associate Professor Verity Bottroff on being awarded Life Membership this year.



“Challenges are what make life interesting; overcoming them is what makes life meaningful.”

– Joshua J. Marine

## Emerging Challenges and Strategic Direction

Autism SA is looking forward to a positive and successful future. Our performance will be judged by our ability to continue to improve and expand the quality of services and support we provide to meet the life needs of individuals and their families living with an Autism Spectrum Disorder. We remain resolutely committed to delivering the best services possible and look forward to the opportunities and challenges this brings.

Delivery of accessible, high quality, best practice services that are financially viable and that are responsive to client needs is a major focus of the Autism SA Strategic Plan for 2009 to 2013. Accordingly, Autism SA will endeavour to continue the development of new and innovative services in collaboration with external organisations.

Already a variety of sources have pledged their continued support for the 2010/2011 Financial Year and beyond and each department is committed to overcoming their individual challenges that they have been confronted with in the past.

Although it has experienced great growth and expansion, the biggest challenge for the Autism Advisor Program NT has been isolation. Up until recently the program has been run solely by one staff member, who, apart from the support of Autism SA, has had the huge responsibility of servicing the entire Northern Territory. However, we are pleased to report that we now have another staff member who started in June 2010 assisting in the delivery of the program 2 days a week. The program is now hoping to support more families and increase the number of face-to-face visits to remote communities in the NT and work more closely with Indigenous families and services.

Respite Services have secured a place for the School Holiday Program in its future funding arrangements. Community Services also hopes to expand on the school holiday outings and is aiming to set up additional sporting clinics with UnitingCare Wesley Bowden.

The Early Development Program is striving to meet the specific needs of diverse clients and families and aims to continue to decrease the waiting list for therapy. The program is hoping to run Social Skills groups for both Kindergarten and School age children through the Helping Children with Autism Package as well as the rollout of Oral Eating and Drinking Health Care plans for children on the Autism Spectrum.

The School Inclusion Program is hoping to secure some significant grants in the new financial year and are seeking to embed Speech Pathology services into the School Inclusion Program. They are aiming to effectively address the needs of regional areas and to work with education providers to redress the number of school suspensions involving students with an ASD.

To ensure a sustainable model of service provision, the Diagnostic Service is aiming to implement a full fee recovery system and continues to investigate other sources of funding to ensure an accessible and affordable service.

Spectrum Advisory Services is pleased to report that Company@ is funded to develop an awareness raising ‘Youth Focus’ show exploring the impact of bullying for students with ASD. This show will be developed in conjunction with Unley High School and may be toured to other High Schools through out 2011. Leaps and Bounds is another new partnership between Restless Dance Theatre and Autism SA. Leaps and Bounds is a term’s worth of open access dance workshops in 2011 for young people with Autism in the 8-18 age group. The partnership responds to a need recognised by Autism SA and Restless and will be supported by PAKA.

With the unrelenting commitment, dedication and enthusiasm of our staff, key partners and supporters, we are confident that we will be able to achieve our specific goals and objectives, which have been identified in five key areas; People, Services, Leadership, Sustainability, Partnership and Innovation.

We are also certain to overcome our current challenges and strive to reach our Strategic Direction; that is by 2013, Autism SA will be recognised for responding to clients and for leading collaboration with stakeholders, to promote a service improvement framework that addresses the unique needs of people living with an Autism Spectrum Disorder.

We are committed to remaining positive and solution focused and are looking forward to progressing the organisation through the execution of this plan.

