



AUTISM SA

ANNUAL REPORT

2016/17

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ABOUT AUTISM SA

Autism SA has a long and rich history as the state's recognised leader for the provision of specialised consulting and services to individuals on the autism spectrum, their families and the broader community.

With a strong legacy of bringing many firsts to the community – both in South Australia and across the nation – we have been responsible for initiatives such as:

- Staging the first national conference on autism in 1967;
- Establishment of the first national federation of service providers specialising in autism in 1969;
- Publication of the first autism journal in 1979;
- Operation of the first autism specific school in South Australia;
- Establishment of specialised employment services;

- Development of the first recognition awards program in 2007 to celebrate achievements within the autism community, which later evolved into a national program;
- Hosting the Asia Pacific Autism Conference (APAC) in 2013 and - as part of that event - initiating the first national 'Future Leaders' program to involve and engage people on the autism spectrum;
- Research and development of the iModeling™ app; and
- Creation and delivery in 2015/16 of the Autism Friendly Charter, which builds inclusive business and recreational environments across the country.

Autism SA has earned a positive and consistent reputation for autism specialisation among individuals with autism, their families and carers, as well as with disability stakeholders and the general public. We deliver sustainable, ethical and high quality services, generating positive, person centred outcomes for individuals on the autism spectrum, their families, carers and others supporting the autism community.

The organisation is accredited and registered as a provider through:

- National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA);
- Helping Children with Autism (HCWA) package;
- Better Start; and
- The Government of South Australia Disability Services Provider Panel.

Our VISION is for a society that enables people on the autism spectrum to get the most out of life.

Our MISSION is to improve life outcomes for people on the autism spectrum by providing and facilitating the very best information, connections, expertise, education, services, support and a strong representative voice.

Our VALUES

TOGETHER we strive
CURIOSITY in our thinking
TRUTH in decision making
COURAGE to take action
RESPECT for each other
ADVENTURE in how we do things
CELEBRATE contributions to making the workplace better

ENGAGING WITH OUR BRILLIANT COMMUNITY

Autism SA spent much of the year connecting with individuals on the spectrum and their families, participating in activities that raise awareness and understanding, building capacity and celebrating our community.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Jenny Karavolos, journeyed across South Australia to meet many wonderful families and hear heartfelt stories of their successes and the challenges they had faced. During these visits, Autism SA joined forces with local autism groups to collaboratively discuss what support and services are most needed in metropolitan, regional and remote communities, and how Autism SA can assist.

The broader Autism SA team engaged with the autism and wider disability communities at various expos and community events - such as the inaugural KYD-X Disability Expo, the ever popular Disability, Ageing and Lifestyle Expo, and various National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) expos. Our participation in these events allowed Autism SA the opportunity to meet with a wide variety of disability sector participants and partners, as well as families seeking advice and support on how to navigate their NDIS journey.

We also participated in a number of community inspired events, including one that aimed to set the world record for the most number of fidget spinners spinning at once, and our team joined forces with Inclusive Directions and Baiada Steggles to run the City-Bay Fun Run for Autism SA.

We worked closely with Flinders University to educate new graduates in special education through a scholarship program. In 2016, the first graduates successfully completed the program with a Graduate Certificate in Education (Special Education). The program will ensure community inclusion reaches our school yards - a fundamental first step in creating an inclusive society.

Further learning opportunities came during 2016/17 in the form of comic relief, with comic author and illustrator Gina providing two free comic writing workshops for older individuals on the spectrum and their siblings. The workshops enabled a group of budding comic writers and illustrators to learn the finer art of creating a comic, and to have some fun with their brothers and sisters in a relaxed environment.

533 professionals, families and individuals attended the Autism Conference Series in Adelaide

Throughout the year, a variety of engaging and enjoyable activities were offered to our community, including swimming and surfing under the auspices of the Autism Friendly Charter. Some families took to South Australia's coastal waters for autism friendly surf lessons, while others preferred the relative calm of a new sport and recreation centre closing its doors to the public for a few hours to allow guests of Autism SA to float around the pool.

We spread our wings as far as London when the Adelaide Fringe arrived, with a critically acclaimed performance of 'We Live By The Sea' - the story of a young girl on the autism spectrum. Families were offered reduced price tickets, and the actors collected donations for Autism SA at the end of every show.

Keeping with our theme of creativity, we were delighted to partner with the artists behind the Marion Art Show - an exhibition featuring work from South Australian artists, including many on the autism spectrum - to raise funds for Autism SA and provide an opportunity for our artists to sell their work to an audience of art lovers.

A final highlight came through the many collaborations we undertook throughout the year. One such collaboration was with Medic Alert, which resulted in the launch of the Safe Return program, a new identity system designed specifically for individuals on the autism spectrum and their families. The program provides identity bracelets to assist people to identify the needs of the wearer and provide assistance in emergency situations.

Engaging with our community is a vital part of the role we play at Autism SA. This was only a small snapshot of what we did and what is to come. We look forward to hitting the road again next year.

926 diagnosed individuals supported post diagnosis

159 professionals, families and individuals attended the Autism Conference Series in Darwin

93%
Attendees rated the Autism Conference series presenter as excellent

92%
School holiday program places filled

5333 queries responded to by Autism SA Infoline

3094 hours of school holiday program support provided

AUTISM FRIENDLY CHARTER PILOT IN SA EVOLVES TO NATIONAL PROGRAM

The Autism Friendly Charter received a major boost during 2016/17 – securing Federal Government funding for a national rollout of its capacity building training program.

The program supports mainstream organisations, community groups and businesses to become more inclusive of individuals on the autism spectrum.

The Charter - sponsored by the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and launched in South Australia in 2016 - was designed by Autism SA in partnership with individuals on the autism spectrum and their families. It was created in response to concerns that a perceived lack of community understanding was preventing people on the spectrum from participating in society.

With the autism and wider communities increasingly looking to Australian businesses to demonstrate their commitment to corporate social responsibility and community inclusion, Autism SA developed the Charter and created training, resources and information to support signatories to become autism friendly.

The South Australian pilot program resulted in 103 organisations registering interest, and participation from organisations as diverse as recreation centres, hairdressing salons, retailers, driver training schools and an entire regional community. The training and support provided by Autism SA received positive feedback from participants and provided a foundation upon which to springboard an Australia-wide rollout of the program.

Pilot program participants reported the Autism Friendly Charter had been successful in:

- Building awareness, understanding and support of autism within the community;
- Building the capacity of organisations and venues to ensure environments are autism friendly; and
- Assisting individuals on the autism spectrum to access mainstream services that are autism friendly – therefore helping to increase social participation for those people and their families.

In June 2017, Autism SA was awarded National Readiness Grant funding through the Australian Government's Community Inclusion and Capacity Development (CICD) – Implementing Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC). Focused on inclusion, ILC aims to create connections between people with disability and their communities by supporting projects that will:

- Build the capacity and readiness of organisations and the community to operate within a nationally consistent approach to ILC; and/or
- Build the foundations required to deliver ILC activities on a national scale.

Thirty nine projects across 36 organisations received ILC National Readiness Grants during first round funding - 15 in the category of Capacity Building for Mainstream and 24 under Community Capacity Building.

As a national initiative, the Autism Friendly Charter project will further develop a register of participating organisations, community groups and businesses - a publicly available reference guide for those seeking to engage with inclusive organisations and assist in creating environments that are truly autism friendly.

A program targeting rural, regional and metropolitan locations is currently being developed, with an Autism Friendly Charter roadshow and online training modules to commence in early 2018.

"It is great to know there is such good support for people working with and relating to autism clients. It can seem like you are out there on your own at times, and the going can be challenging. I could put the techniques and ideas into practice immediately, with great effect. Keen to learn more and get better at what we do so we can better support our autism clients." - Autism Friendly Charter signatory

120 hours of autism friendly organisation training provided

SQUEALS OF DELIGHT FOR AUTISM INCLUSION IN AGRICULTURE PILOT PROGRAM

A program designed to target individuals on the autism spectrum - recognising their talent for high attention to detail in specialist animal care roles - left participants squealing with joy when Australian agriculturalist SunPork Farms offered nine people across two states roles in its piggeries.

Initiated by the company's Chief Executive Officer (CEO), SunPork's Autism and Agriculture pilot program was created to assist people who may previously have experienced barriers to employment to develop successful career paths in the agriculture industry. The pig care program commenced in Queensland and swiftly expanded to South Australia in March 2017, after the company realised the benefits of employing people on the autism spectrum.

With the support of Autism SA, candidates were interviewed and those selected were offered a trial position – with continued work available, subject to successful completion of a three week orientation program, including a week spent in a virtual piggery.

The pilot program was developed in South Australia in consultation with Autism SA, to ensure it accommodated the learning styles of the successful applicants. SunPork subsequently identified alterations and additions that could be made to its broader orientation process, implementing them for employees across the business.

In addition to training staff on the spectrum, our team provided training to SunPork's managers and mentors, to assist them to gain a better understanding of autism and develop strategies to support staff on the spectrum.

Autism SA also supported some of SunPork's new recruits – many of whom had been unemployed for some time – to relocate to new regions, develop independent living skills, and improve nutritional awareness.

The new team members incrementally increased their work hours across a four week period, consulting with managers during week five to develop individual timetables suited to their needs.

All those involved with the pilot program reported positively on their participation, and SunPork's CEO was subsequently invited to visit the United Nations to discuss Autism and Agriculture and share its successes with an international audience.

For Autism SA, the pilot assisted in demonstrating the benefits of employing people on the autism spectrum, and provided a blueprint for future service design and development to harness the skill set and create conducive environments to improve the social and economic contribution of people with autism.

AN EVENING OF INSPIRATION AND RECOGNITION

The 2016 Autism SA Recognition Awards was a night to celebrate the outstanding achievements of individuals on the autism spectrum and to recognise the contribution and success of parents, carers, organisations and educational services.

2016 marked the 10th year of staging the awards and its post celebration event, with the program's longevity highlighting the importance of raising and awareness continuing to recognise and celebrate the autism community. Due to the growth and diversification in nominations, two new categories were added to the awards program – the Appreciation Award and the Excellence in Education Support Award.

Fifty nominations were received across all categories, with award recipients recognised at the Goodwood Community Centre on 4 November 2016 in front of an audience of more than 130 people. The evening got off to a swinging start with musical entertainment performed by Jamie and the Coastguard Jazz Band, and the formality of the award ceremony was then followed by a fully catered family fun evening, complete with a bouncy castle, giants games, face painting, arcade games and science activities. It was a fun and inspiring evening for all involved!

Award recipients included:

Recognition Award	Recipient(s)
Hilary Johnson Award	Michelle De La Perrelle
Partnership Award	Hotel Royal
Appreciation Award	Carers SA South East
Special Inspiration Award	Melanie Bickley, Meg Eusope and David and Sonya Ludlow
Individual Achievement Award	Indiana Andriessen (12 years and under) Candice Green (13 years and over)
Special Commendations for Individual Achievement	Wyatt Egan (12 years and under) Declan Egan (12 years and under)
Excellence in Education Award	Cummins Area School
Special Commendations for Excellence in Education	Port Lincoln Special School

3671

participants attended professional focused workshops as part of the Professional Development Workshop series and through tailored support packages

SHINING A LIGHT ON THE AUTISM SPECTRUM

Autism SA celebrated Autism Awareness Month throughout April, delivering a range of awareness raising activities to the community... as well as a lot of fun!



We kicked off the month with celebrations of World Autism Awareness Day, recognising the 'Light it Up Blue' campaign to illuminate buildings across the world and shine a light on autism. In South Australia, the Adelaide Convention Centre, the Riverbank Bridge and the Adelaide Entertainment Centre lit up to show their support for autism, while SA Power Networks shared a message on its Anzac Highway power board on behalf of Autism SA. The activity drove traffic to our digital and social media platforms, and increased visibility of the initiatives undertaken by Autism SA throughout the month.

We joined forces with a number of organisations to provide autism friendly events to our community for the first time. The first was a private session at Brick-a-laide, where the doors opened to Autism SA an hour before the general public, allowing our guests to explore the Lego creations installed in the space and interact with the comic characters performing at the venue. A separate entrance was provided, to enable attendees to avoid the flashing light display upon entry, and a quiet room was also available on site.

Latitude and Bounce also climbed on board to help us celebrate during April, with each venue providing early opening hours, in an exclusive one hour session for the autism community.

The sessions were delivered in an autism friendly environment, with music and television screens switched off, lights dimmed, fewer participants than at regular sessions, and a designated room for quiet space. Both events were a great success, with families jumping for joy when additional autism friendly sessions were offered by the venues throughout the remainder of the year.

Autism SA also operated awareness raising stands at a number of shopping hubs, and participated in expos and stalls throughout the month of April. In another first, we attended a packed 'Strong Aboriginal Children's Expo', with more than 400 families visiting the stand to seek advice and information on services and support. We also had a presence at a 'Learning in the Disability Sector' event, sharing new opportunities for adult learning and employment preparation through our adult social skills groups, tailored support packages and new employment and community inclusion initiatives.

To wrap up a terrific month of celebrations, an enormous number of individuals, schools and organisations donated funds they raised for Autism SA, while also raising awareness and understanding of the autism spectrum.

Our community is truly amazing!



TROY MOHLER PRESIDENT

The past year has been one of continued change for Autism SA and, indeed, for the whole disability sector.

As the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) rollout began to accelerate, it became apparent that adaption to a new funding model was not enough, a new paradigm was required; those in the sector needed to operate like commercial entities to be sustainable, while at the same time maintaining our respective missions and visions.

Early in 2016/17, Jenny Karavolos - at the request of the Autism SA Board - stepped down from the Board and her role as President to take up the position of Interim Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for a planned six month period. This was necessitated as the organisation was lagging in its efforts to adapt to a changing sector under the NDIS. Jenny was immediately effective in kick-starting the process of transforming Autism SA into a more agile, commercial organisation to survive in the new landscape.

People on the autism spectrum represent one of the largest groups of individuals requiring support and services under the NDIS. The challenge for the sector is, and will continue to be, to increase the capacity and depth of services available to meet the needs of those on the spectrum. The NDIS creates a never before seen level of choice of both services and providers, and the supply side challenge to Autism SA is to build capacity and capability, while ensuring quality of service is never sacrificed.

With more than 50 years' experience in providing services, support and advocacy for individuals on the spectrum, their families and carers in this state, Autism SA is best placed to continue to lead the interests of our community to ensure the best outcomes for all. To do this, we will continue to work with the NDIS and other stakeholders to help shape a community that allows the people we support to excel.

Autism SA will need to be agile to adapt to the NDIS model, while also adjusting its service offering to meet the evolving needs of the people we support as they start to appreciate the choice and flexibility offered to them.

The transformation of the organisation is one that requires significant investment in the processes and systems that make Autism SA tick. The need to build capacity within not only the organisation, but also the community, increases the dependency on effective and efficient systems to allow this to be done in a sustainable manner.

Near the end of Jenny's six month interim period as CEO, it became apparent the organisation had refocused and was headed in the right direction, with much work still to be done in order to transform. The Board approached Jenny after completion of an independent recruitment process, inviting her to make a long term commitment to Autism SA in the role of CEO, which was confirmed in April. With Jenny's commercial acumen, motivating personality, and deep personal connection to the goals of the organisation, the Board is confident we have the very best person to lead Autism SA to better and greater things.

With much work to be done, the Board has made the decision that, for the new financial year, we will invest heavily in the organisation to ensure we build the capacity to be the first choice for individuals on the autism spectrum.

I firmly believe that an agile, sustainable Autism SA is a key component of our community to assist those we support to turn their potential into reality.

The service and support we provide to our clients is completely dependent upon our staff. The Autism SA team is passionate about our community and we need to capture this passion in every level and activity within the organisation. The Board and CEO recognise that processes and systems are secondary to culture in achieving a high functioning organisation and I am a strong believer that culture trumps even strategy. For this reason, the Board will continue to work with the CEO to ensure the right culture is embedded throughout the organisation – we want our staff to not only love what they do, but to love the organisation and team that they do it with.

I would like to thank Noelene Wadham, who regretfully had to resign from the Board during 2016/17 due to other opportunities presented to her that were dear to her heart. Noelene was a valuable member of the Board and we will miss her contribution and insight.

This will be my last year on the Board of Autism SA, after joining the Board back in 2008. The cause of Autism SA will always be a very personal one for me and I know that Autism SA and the Board will continue the path to ensuring each individual on the autism spectrum lives the life they choose in an inclusive society.



JENNY KARAVOLOS CEO

Having been in the role of Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for a little over nine months, the best way to sum up the experience is to liken it to that of a ship's captain.

Each day, navigating through uncharted waters to the new world, facing uncertainty as to whether the next wave will present a challenge, an opportunity, or both - but always sailing closer to the ultimate destination of enabling each individual to live the life they choose in an inclusive society.

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), the biggest social reform ever seen in this country, continued to grow and change throughout 2016/17. With autism being the second most common disability across all NDIS trial sites, the sector struggled to meet the increasing need for experienced, quality, specialist people with the skills required to provide a wide range of high level services and supports.

Autism SA's predominant focus across the year was to transition to a path of transformation, enabling us to grow and better meet more of the needs and desires of the community we serve, and create community capacity.

With the guidance of our moral compass, we have remained true to the legacy of our founding members, who were driven by the desire to ensure individuals and their families had access to the best information, education, treatment and support, encouraging research and leadership in the community, and advocating for understanding and acceptance.

To this end, we increased our engagement with the autism community, working with them to develop an intrinsic understanding of their critical wants and needs. We also recognised the vital importance of supporting individuals through the NDIS journey - creating new positions within the organisation to provide support both before and following NDIS planning meetings.

Autism SA was involved with a vast number of collaborations to enable sector development and capacity building. This included co-working with state and federal agencies to ensure recognition of the importance of adhering to best practice standards and criteria for diagnosis, highlighting the essential part diagnosis plays in creating a profile of an individual's condition, identifying lifelong impact, and providing options for meaningful therapy, intervention and support.

We worked closely with South Australia's Department for Education and Child Development (DECD) to achieve a common goal of ensuring more inclusive practices and reasonable adjustments in educational settings. Autism SA strongly advocated for choice, including the inclusion and participation of individuals with disabilities in mainstream educational environments.

There was also attention on autism specific employment throughout the year, with a number of employers working with us to support the recruitment of people on the spectrum to perform roles that enable their talents to be harnessed. In conjunction with Autism CRC, we are now researching factors for success.

We held training and development sessions to support sector development, including the highly successful Autism Conference Series in South Australia and the Northern Territory.

Other collaborations and sector development partnerships included various Commonwealth and State Government initiatives, university research, and working with the Australian Advisory Board on Autism Spectrum Disorders, the Australian Autism Alliance, education parent forums, Early Childhood Intervention Australia and more.

Autism SA successfully secured funding through the Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) National Readiness Grant - for the national rollout of the Autism Friendly Charter, which seeks to facilitate and advance positive societal change.

Underpinning our endeavours were internal changes within the organisation. In addition to the appointment of a new CEO to spearhead business evolution, strengthen our position on the Australian disability landscape, and capitalise on the opportunities presented by the NDIS for the autism community, we welcomed new members to our Board. We mapped our new strategic direction and moved toward a more flexible and responsive organisational structure. This included a series of internal initiatives to shape a common vision and culture designed to balance person centred practice - keeping people at the heart of the organisation - with a profit for purpose customer mindset.

To expand our service offering across age groups, we recruited additional staff with multidisciplinary skills and experience of working with people with a broad range of disabilities. A new service hub was established in Adelaide's north - with further expansion planned - and we continued to engage in outreach and consultancy to regional and remote areas.

In summary, 2016/17 has been a year of thinking differently, capacity building, change and growth - increasing our services and supports, connecting, collaborating and truly reflecting on our beginnings and purpose.

As we continue to transition to a social enterprise model, balancing heart and mind, I would like to thank all of our stakeholders. From the individuals on the spectrum, their families and carers - who inspire us to be the best we can be - to the wider autism community, our brilliant staff and volunteers, government, businesses, corporate partners, agencies and fellow not for profits, we have welcomed and benefited from their willingness to collaborate with open minds and hearts to achieve successful social reform. With the adult population set to begin transition to the NDIS in July 2017, we look forward to continuing to work together as a collective to transform, build and grow to facilitate the support and service needs of our autism community.



SERVICES AND SUPPORT

We provide services and support to children, adolescents and adults across South Australia and the Northern Territory. Our evidence based and innovative practices are delivered by specialist staff with expertise specific to the autism spectrum.

Diagnostic Service

Our diagnostic team has specialised in assessments for more than 40 years. Assessments are provided across all ages, having ranged from 2 to 72 years. On average, each year the team will see 250 people for an assessment, most of whom are children, although there has been a marked increase in demand observed with the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) rollout.

In 2016/17, Autism SA's team of allied health professionals:

- Maintained a wide ranging diagnostic service in accordance with internationally recognised best practice standards;
- Provided assessments in metropolitan and regional areas of South Australia;
- Delivered training and consultancy to professionals; and
- Provided input to various forums, including Autism CRC, regarding the new diagnostic guidelines to ensure best practice standards are maintained.

Foundation Skills Group

Autism SA's Foundation Skills Group delivered our targeted group program to develop foundation skills for children aged from 3.5 to 6 years of age (or until they go to school). Based around the SCERTS® model, the program includes both free play and structured activities, working toward facilitation of skills required for pre-school and school environments.

In 2016/17, the multi-disciplinary team:

- Delivered the program to 70 children and families; and
- Refined the program with the latest contemporary practices in a relaxed and fun environment.

76 children under six years of age attended Foundation Skills Group

Therapy Services

Our diverse and vibrant team of professionals - comprising speech pathology, occupational therapy and psychology - delivered a range of services to achieve individual's outcomes during 2016/17.

Highlights included:

- Providing individualised services to young children, adolescents and adults in a range of settings, including at home, Autism SA sites, at child care facilities, schools, kindergartens and elsewhere;
- Supporting more than 600 people on the spectrum to develop skills and independence, and supporting participation and engagement in activities and the community;
- Capturing countless progress reports and developing multiple concise National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) reports outlining achievements and growth toward individual aspirations;

- Delivering a range of multidisciplinary, individualised programs - including social skills, problem solving, communication and improved relationships;
- Facilitating well attended school holiday groups;
- Undertaking training in areas of contemporary practice to supplement skills and expertise;
- Delivering professional training for teachers, health professionals, community workers and others; and
- Representing Autism SA in a range of forums and committees.

560+ therapeutic sessions delivered weekly

SERVICES & SUPPORT

Early Intervention and Information

Pre and post diagnostic information is vital for families and individuals as a stepping stone to success. It consists of practical support and information about pathways and services at the crucial time, helping families to access services and increase understanding of the autism spectrum and the disability services system.

In 2016/17, our consultants, family support officers, community liaison and autism spectrum advisors:

- Responded to more than 5300 queries and requests for advice or online chats from individuals, families and carers;
- Provided more than 2000 hours of post diagnosis information support to families, carers and children at homes and in kindergarten, child care and preschool settings, regarding pathways facing parents, strategies, interventions, and issues such as toileting and eating;
- Supported individuals, families and carers in a number of ways, including through counselling, individual and/or group support, information and specific behaviour support;
- Facilitated social development groups, such as our Social Digital Enterprise Program – offering learning opportunities and informal networking for participants, their families and carers, and providing a safe environment within which to develop and use social skills;
- Provided family workshops offering a safe and supportive environment for participants to seek information and connect with others in similar situations; and
- Delivered specific behaviour support, developed behaviour plans, and facilitated mentoring through a range of different programs and expertise.

3000+ children supported in school or early intervention settings

784 participants attended Professional Development Workshops

Specialised Support Services

With more than 9000 students on the autism spectrum registered with Autism SA, the demand for our service has continued to increase this year, with our highly experienced school team:

- Supporting students on the autism spectrum in all education sectors;
- Supporting preschool aged children in metropolitan and regional areas;
- Collaborating and partnering with the education sectors to enable more effective outcomes;
- Providing advice on countless effective school based classroom strategies, behavioral strategies, key transition points and reasonable adjustments to enable capacity building of individual students, staff and whole school environments;
- Delivering short term intervention through direct support to individuals or small student groups;
- Liaising respectfully and competently with education professionals, families and other agencies to enable the achievement of goals through effective positive behavior and learning support plans;
- Sharing the latest advances in training and consultancy across school sectors;
- Developing many visuals and other resources to support individual students and teachers alike; and
- Providing mentoring and support to educators under scholarships in the Flinders University Graduate Certificate in Education (Special Education) autism spectrum scholarship program.

Training and Consultancy

More than 5000 individuals accessed training and consultancy services through Autism SA during the 2016/17 year, achieving an increase in sector development and capacity. Participants were drawn from a wide range of backgrounds, including individuals on the spectrum, families, carers, the education sector, autism professionals and other disability sector participants.

Activities undertaken by our training and consultancy team included:

- Providing a vast range of professional and family workshops through Autism SA's Professional Development Series, Early Days Workshops, In Focus and General Family Workshops;
- Delivering a significant number of consultancy packages to the wider autism community, including the 2017 Adelaide and Darwin Autism Conference Series, showcasing international presenter, Kari Dunn Buron; and
- Researching and undertaking training to enable the provision of practical, evidence based strategies delivered by experienced and up to date professionals.

"Thank you. Very helpful as a grandparent who wants to learn and understand." – Grandparent

Autism Advisor Program

Our Northern Territory based Autism Advisor Program continues to provide access to the Helping Children with Autism (HCWA) Program until the full rollout of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

During 2016/17:

- 91 children registered with HCWA;
- 130 people attended Early Days Workshops;
- Autism SA successfully introduced an Alice Springs advisor, who presented a number of well received training workshops;
- We delivered well attended indigenous specific workshops; and
- Our team assisted individuals, families and carers to enter into the NDIS.

370 participants attended Early Days Workshops in South Australia

91 individuals registered for Helping Children With Autism (HCWA) Package

130 participants attended Early Days Workshops held in the Northern Territory

"Fantastic workshop - great for us all to come together and share." - Family

A really interesting and informative presentation! Excellent team work by both presenters." - Professional

SERVICES & SUPPORT

Community Support and Inclusion

Autism SA continued to expand its services during 2016/17, providing a range of flexible, person centered and individualised centre and community based programs to children, adolescents and adults. Our team provided support across a range of services, including supported living, day options, community support, respite, school holiday programs and social groups.

Achievements included:

- Co-designing and delivering supports matched to individual skills, interests and abilities;
- Matching staff to supports to pursue the best possible outcomes for individuals;
- Diversification in individualised community and respite support across all age groups;
- Significant growth in the provision of National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) community support services and non-NDIS community support;
- Increasing access to day options – both centre and community based;
- Providing responsive emergency respite supports;
- Delivering regular and in demand school holiday programs;
- Delivering supported living with tangible improvements and achievement of goals toward the independence of individuals;
- Restructuring our operational service support coordination to enable a more effective service; and
- Increasing our focus on wellbeing and training of community support workers.

Key Work and Pre Planning

In response to the growing need to support National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) participants with coordination of their services, we developed the key work team to provide all three levels of support – support connection, support coordination, and specialised coordination.

Our key workers work with NDIS participants and/or their families to connect with informal, mainstream and funded supports, optimising their budgets to achieve their goals.

Furthermore, to support participants and/or their families on their NDIS journey, Autism SA offered a no cost, one hour appointment for registered individuals and families to assist them in setting goals in preparation for their NDIS planning session.

Achievements during 2016/17 included:

- Working with more than 250 NDIS participants and/or their families and carers to connect with informal, mainstream and funded supports;
- Effective application of participant budgets to achieve individual goals;
- Completion of more than 150 individual pre planning appointments with people registered with Autism SA; and
- Supporting the majority of those advised in the pre planning stage to achieve funding for plans that supported their goal related outcomes.

"Thank you so much for allowing him to have that fun time for the weekend. He always has a great time at respite - we can see it in the expressions he makes. It makes us happy when we see that he's happy." - Parent

9300 hours of weekend
respite provided

"Really pleased with how well my son is progressing. He has made me one very proud mummy. I am really amazed at just how well my big boy is doing. Couldn't be any happier." - Parent

5550 hours of individualised and
emergency respite provided

152 pre-planning appointments were
delivered to registered clients

"Thank you so much for all of your information sharing today. Your input is invaluable. You have just the right mix of why we do things, how we do them, and what to do if you are stuck." - School



TRISTAN'S STORY

LIKE TAKING A BIG BREATH OF FRESH AIR

It was shortly after his first birthday that Tristan's parents began to notice their young son was no longer speaking and the energetic boy they had come to know was struggling to keep up with his peers.

"He progressed normally until he was one," said Martha. "He could jump and clap and he had a few words, but just after that everything went downhill and he stopped."

"We'd already realised that Tristan was experiencing some difficulties with talking and he'd been having speech therapy for a while. But when things started to change, we sought more help, and just after he turned two he was diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and intellectual disability.

"No one knows your child and their needs better than you do, and we made sure to get the right people on board to work with Tristan straight away. Immediately after his diagnosis he had support from an early intervention facilitator from Autism SA, who came to our house twice a week. When Tristan went to kindy, she kept working with him and someone from the Department of Education also provided regular support."

Tristan continued at kindergarten until he was six years old, when Martha and her husband David identified a suitable school for their son. The pair, adamant they wanted a mainstream educational setting for Tristan, eventually identified a small local school that offered a special needs class set within its broader environment.

"We didn't want Tristan to go to a special school, but we wanted to find the right school for him," said Martha. "The one we ultimately chose was fantastic. It offered reverse integration, with the kids in mainstream classrooms spending time each day during recess and lunch with the kids in the special class, which was really great for Tristan's social development." "That environment really set him up for the future by helping to improve his ability to communicate with others and interact with and enjoy the world around him."

In the lead up to his transition to high school, Tristan's family advocated for the continued benefits a mainstream environment offered their son, and so a special unit was created in a nearby government school, where Tristan stayed until Year 12.

Now 25, Tristan receives 1:1 support from Autism SA for between five and six days each week, with support workers spending time with the young man in his family home or supporting him to access a range of social activities.

Martha said the positive experiences Tristan had in small group settings during his school years left her and David seeking similar opportunities for their adult son, with a focus on community support and inclusion.

"We'd argued successfully throughout school about the benefit to Tristan of placement in a small unit with just five kids and two School Services Officers (SSOs)," said Martha. "So when it came time for him to move on, I didn't think he would fit in with a day options program because they often have up to 20 participants. I just knew he wouldn't cope."

Martha said Tristan, who she describes as being "like a big teddy bear", has a quirky, laid back sense of humour, but his autism and anxiety mean he often has trouble transitioning between activities and extra time and support is required.

At home, he enjoys reading magazines, listening to music and watching original Disney movies - challenging those around him to match his skills in reciting lines and imitating the facial expressions of beloved characters from Aladdin and FernGully: The Last Rainforest.

Tristan's joy at feeling the wind blow through his hair and on his face means car trips to the beach are a firm favourite, and swimming and trampolining also provide much loved outings.

The family has recently secured National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) funding for Tristan, resulting in increased access to services and support.

"Two or three years ago, Tristan was getting three days of support each week from another provider. Then Disability SA suggested we get Autism SA on board, and we've had their support ever since," said Martha.

"He wasn't going out at all before Autism SA stepped in. He refused to go out in the car, even though he'd previously loved that, so he was just staying at home every day. But when his new support team started working with him, we were able to get Tristan out swimming three times a week, as well as trampolining.

"When it came time for us to start planning for the NDIS, we asked Autism SA for help. Their team not only assisted us with all of the paperwork, but one of Tristan's support workers also came with us to our meeting with the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA).

14,520 hours of centre based day options support provided

"Now, with the funding Tristan has, we've been able to have someone spend time with him from 9am until 5pm five days per week, and sometimes also at the weekend. The NDIS money will also pay for occupational therapy, physiotherapy and speech therapy, which Tristan really needs, and we're hoping it will also cover the cost of modifications to our house and a new iPad to help Tristan to communicate more easily with others."

Martha said the increased support now available to Tristan had had a positive impact on the whole family, with her and her husband now able to enjoy outings and trips away – as well as spending much needed time with their daughter Tegan.

"The most important thing I say to anyone who hasn't done their NDIS planning yet, or who might be coming up for a review, is to get help from someone who knows the person you're trying to get funding for and understands how the NDIS works. It makes such a huge difference," said Martha.

"Knowing Tristan now has money to access regular support and the tools he needs is a huge relief. It's taken a lot of the stress off and things are so much better. It's like taking a big breath of fresh air."

33,660 hours of support were provided in supported independent living programs

10,336 hours of community based day options provided

SECTOR UPDATE

The evolving National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) continued its rollout throughout the 2016/17 year. From January 2017, the 15-17 year old cohort joined the Scheme.

In the four years that have passed since the launch of the NDIS pilot in July 2013, there have been 14,723 active eligible individuals - 11,552 of whom have obtained approved plans with the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA). Almost half of those (5429 individuals, totalling 47 per cent) have been identified as having autism or other related disorders. Of this number, close to 4000 people were in the 7-14 years age group and close to 600 were aged between 15 and 17 years. The average value of an NDIS plan for individuals on the spectrum was \$20,000.

The NDIS is intended to be fully operational in 2019/20 and is envisaged to be providing individualised care and support packages to approximately 460,000 participants across Australia – including 32,500 people living in South Australia. The participation rates in the NDIS indicate that autism is the second most common disability across all NDIS trial sites (31 per cent of participants nationally).

Growth in diagnoses in South Australia has been a consistent trend for many years and follows a pattern observed both nationally and internationally. Data specific to the state indicates an annual growth of 9 per cent. In South Australia, more than 13,000 children, young people and adults are diagnosed with autism, and hence require a wide range of autism specific services and supports from disability providers, educators, government agencies, families and communities.

With the adult population set to begin transition in July 2017, the focus will turn to the workforce. Currently, individuals with autism are under-represented in the workforce. In 2015, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) reported the workforce participation rate of people on the autism spectrum was 40.8 per cent among the 75,200 people of working age (15-64 years) living with autism. This is compared with 53.4 per cent of working age people with disability and 83.2 per cent of people without a reported disability. The unemployment rate for people with autism spectrum disorders was 31.6 per cent, more than three times the rate for people with disability (10 per cent) and almost six times the rate of people without disability (5.3 per cent).

Other relevant statistics regarding autism released by the ABS in 2016/17 were as follows:

- There were 164,000 Australians living with autism in 2015;
- Almost two thirds of those with autism had profound or severe disability;
- Almost three quarters of those with autism needed help with cognitive and emotional tasks; and
- Almost half of those with autism needed help with communication.

As the NDIS progresses toward full implementation in South Australia, these statistics demonstrate the paramount importance of Autism SA's role in continuing to provide a strong voice for and with the autism community regarding a fully funded model of support, as well as the critical importance of supporting individuals on the autism spectrum through the implementation of the NDIS, and ensuring that autism is not diluted in terms of the unique needs when developing NDIS plans.

91% Training exceeded expectations of professional development training attendees

95% Professional development training attendees strongly agreed presenters were knowledgeable, able to answer questions well, and had good interpersonal skills

EARLY INTERVENTION ASSISTS IN FACILITATING SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL TRANSITION

As many parents will attest, waving your young child off at the school gates as they navigate their solo journey into the world of learning and social discovery is an emotional and sometimes challenging time.

And for Mums and Dads of children on the autism spectrum, that unsettled feeling often continues for months - even years - after their child first walks through the classroom door and into the unknown world of education.

Adelaide mother Cheryl knows the feeling only too well. Mum to two children on the autism spectrum, she has been by their side throughout the ups and downs of primary school life, supported by the school facilitation team at Autism SA.

Cheryl says mainstream education was the only option she considered for her 11-year-old daughter, Breeanna, and her son Zachary, 8, both of whom she enrolled at a nearby private school with a strong reputation for inclusion.

"Shortly before his fourth birthday, I enrolled Zachary in a mainstream government kindy, but one that had systems in place for kids identified with special needs," said Cheryl. "He also attended a Montessori centre and, over time, the combined period he spent at both places built up to four days per week."

"My children received their early intervention therapy services through Autism SA. I feel every disability service provider should model themselves on this organisation - just amazing people and wonderful support." - Parent

"Our (daughter's) therapists are amazing and really go out of their way - above and beyond the call of duty - and we feel really blessed to have them helping us with her special needs. The Elizabeth office is also always very friendly, helpful and kind. I am very happy and grateful for everyone we interact with from Autism SA." - Parent

"He hadn't been diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) at that stage, but having been through it with Breeanna, I recognised the signs were there.

"When it came time for school, having had such a positive mainstream experience at kindy meant we knew the same environment would suit Zachary for school. I'd seen Breeanna successfully integrated into a mainstream setting - albeit with a few teething problems - and I believed that with reasonable adjustments, the school would be able to accommodate Zachary's needs as well."

Cheryl readily admits Zachary's first year at school was challenging, with the young boy struggling to focus in class, experiencing difficulties with making friends, and often being suspended. In the following year he received his ASD diagnosis, and it became clear to all that the environment had simply been overwhelming for him.

"After his diagnosis, we started working with Autism SA, and these days Zachary seems to get along with his facilitator very well," said Cheryl. "She works with him, in his capacity, and he seems to be quite positive about seeing her. He calls her his 'play lady'."

"I can't explain to you how your guidance has become part of my teaching DNA. We are so lucky to have you." - Teacher

"He has really been coming out of his shell this year. It isn't about giant academic leaps, but his willingness and confidence, and his ability to make friends. He now has a friend he can invite to his birthday party, which has been really positive for his mental, emotional and physical wellbeing."

Cheryl said some 'very simple' adjustments had been made to Zachary's school environment and schedule, following recommendations from Autism SA that were specifically tailored to his needs. These included placing Zachary at the front of the class, allowing him to bring a soft toy to keep on his lap at mat time, and creating visual supports and opportunities for advance notice of events to assist Zachary with his school work and experiences.

Alongside this, Zachary also began occupational therapy, and was assessed for speech therapy. A psychological assessment is also planned to provide a complete picture of his developmental, social and emotional needs.

"It is always so much more valuable to have these types of sessions for the whole staff - we are all on the same page and talk the same language." - School

"Autism SA has been the main player in Zachary's school life," said Cheryl. "Obviously parents can't be there in the school environment because people act differently and it ends up being more of a hindrance than a help. Having a facilitator there to set things up and observe has really helped us all."

"Autism SA is great at facilitation. The person who works with us is absolutely fantastic. She's switched on and really aware, and she keeps us up to date with the process. Autism specialists are able to look at the whole picture and give guidance to help families to understand the next steps.

"I'd encourage everyone to speak to an organisation with experience and expertise around the autism spectrum. Involve people like school facilitators, medical professionals and allied health professionals, and do whatever you can to give your kids support at school from day one. Having the right people there straight off the bat, when your kids really need it, makes a huge difference."

1317 post diagnostic notifications resulting from verifications of an autism diagnosis

243 diagnostic assessments performed in metropolitan and regional areas

PEOPLE AT THE HEART OF OUR PERSON CENTRED WORKPLACE

Our people are the lifeblood of the organisation.

In 2016/17, Autism SA employed close to 200 people – the majority of whom were engaged in delivering services directly to individuals on the spectrum, their families and carers, or indirectly supporting our service delivery teams.

Our staff continually demonstrate they are committed to the people we support, bringing enthusiasm, respect, talent, professionalism and creativity to the workplace every day. This makes a real difference and enables individuals on the spectrum to live their potential. Autism SA team members are also sought after experts who train others, with many of our staff invited to represent us at or participate in forums as domain experts.

As we continued to prepare and adapt to the changing National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

landscape during 2016/17, we focused on adopting a formalised person centred approach, including:

- Person centred practice training rollout;
- Shared vision and values;
- Renewed focus on on-boarding and recruitment;
- Flexible work arrangements;
- Career paths - including training and professional development;
- Forums and channels for recognition, collaboration, improvement and employee assistance; and
- Action plans based on results from a high performance workplace index survey.

A Night of Stars

In recognition and celebration of our staff, who diligently, professionally and inspirationally work together to enable individuals on the autism spectrum, Autism SA headed to The Gallery in Adelaide’s CBD for the 2016 Staff Team and Recognition (STAR) Awards. Surrounded by art as unique and bright as our staff, the following individuals were recognised in heavily contested categories for their outstanding contributions:

STAR Award	Award type	Special commendation(s)	Recipient(s)
AON Adventure Award	Team or individual	Lyle McVeigh	Chloe Hopkins
Telstra Curiosity Award	Individual	Maddison Cocks and Annie Sunners	Rebecca Brett
CBB (The Not4Profit People) Together Award	Team	Foundation Skills Group Team and Mealtime Assessment Team	Emma Brewis, Melanie Dolphin, Stephanie Decelles and Tara Fraatz
MRS Property Courage Award	Individual	Jade Bilusich	Adrian Raggatt
Steggles Living the Values Award	Individual	Anisa Mackenzie	Rebecca Brett
Kate Parker Exemplary Service Award	Individual	Trudy Hall and Anisa Mackenzie	Annie Sunners

Staff Milestones

Autism SA is proud of the commitment of its staff. In recognition of this commitment to the organisation and the individuals we serve, we have listed those staff members who reached milestone years in the following periods:

2015/2016	2016/2017
5 years of service Sara Wright Jade Bilusich Trish Wachtel	15 years of service Julie Peters Jim Leane 25 years of service Chris Aram
10 years of service Monica Terreri	5 years of service Kathryn Vogt Alison Gallo Anne Williamson Justin Joseph Sarah Durrant Kate Exner
	10 years of service Louise Williams Emma Brewis 15 years of service Catherine Barry Annie Sunners

You are a credit to the organisation and the autism community.

“A person-centred organisation has people at its heart – both people it serves and people it employs”
- Helen Sanderson, Director Emeritus of the International Community for Person-Centred Practices

Workplace Gender Equality Report In accordance with the requirements of the Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012, on 7 June 2017 Autism SA lodged its annual public report with the Workplace Gender Equality Agency.

The report is available on the Autism SA website at: www.autismsa.org.au/governance

PARTNERING FOR ASHTON'S POSITIVE NDIS OUTCOME

As all of Australia knows, the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) has changed our nation forever – and with it the lives of countless individuals and families living with disability.

For people like Dani, the impact is very real. As the mother of 14-year-old Ashton, who received a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) at the age of seven, Dani – along with her husband Paul – has spent years navigating the country's ever changing disability landscape.

With support from Autism SA since the time of their son's diagnosis, Dani and Paul have not only learned about the nuances of the autism spectrum, but also the supports and services available to Ashton and the avenues through which they can be sourced and funded.

"When Ashton was a toddler, we noticed his speech was delayed, so we sent him to a specialist speech and language kindy," said Dani. "From there, he went to a special unit at a government school, and in year two we moved him to a mainstream class at a private school."

"When his speech delay continued, we investigated further, and eventually Ashton received a diagnosis of ASD. As parents, we first had to digest it all. Then we booked in to speak to someone at Autism SA and they talked everything through with us. It was a new thing for us, something we didn't know much about, so we got the right advice and from there we started to plan."

"Although there were challenges, the determination was way higher. Highly impressed. Thank you all for making this happen!" - Parent

1090 hours of general counselling support provided

In the years since his diagnosis, Ashton has progressed through school and will soon successfully complete Year 8. He has a close bond with his elder brother Ky, and has worked hard to develop friendships with other children, particularly those he has met through a social group he attends with his father.

But last year, when the illness and eventual loss of Ashton's beloved grandfather hit him hard, Dani said accessing services and support to assist her son with processing his grief and managing his emotions was critical.

Ashton began seeing a psychologist experienced in supporting individuals on the autism spectrum, and Autism SA stepped in to support Dani and Paul as they prepared for the review of Ashton's NDIS funding.

"The rollover to the NDIS was a very hard process for us to navigate," said Dani. "At that time, we were going through a difficult period for our family, and it was like our support coordinator from Autism SA was sent here at just the right time to get us through."

"He helped us out tremendously with better understanding the Scheme and planning for Ashton's current and future needs."

1517 hours of group support provided

"The first time we met him, he just listened to our frustrations, then he made the time to chat with Ashton, and to respect and acknowledge Ky and the tough job it is for siblings. He understood the needs of our entire family."

With Ashton's NDIS review meeting pending, Autism SA worked with the family to complete the necessary paperwork and prepare for the review.

On the morning Dani was scheduled to attend the meeting, another family member passed away. Dani arrived with her 'mind and heart elsewhere' and was greeted by Ashton's Autism SA support coordinator.

"He offered to support me through the meeting as an advocate," said Dani. "He took the lead and said everything I would've said in a normal frame of mind. He really advocated for Ashton and his needs, and for the funding we all believed Ashton would benefit from."

"I was struggling, but he clearly articulated in the right language what Ashton needed and pushed for funding in the right areas to keep us moving forward. We were overwhelmed with the outcome – it was very favourable."

Following confirmation of his funding, Ashton began attending more regular psychology appointments, which helped him to identify his feelings and better understand the perspectives of others. As he progresses, the focus will shift toward speech therapy and occupational therapy to support him with social interaction and physical activity.

"A lot of times support is taken for granted, but without Autism SA I wouldn't have been able to navigate my way through the system," said Dani.

"Just having someone there to support us as a family really helped. It was a lot like having a security blanket – I just felt safe."

7656 hours of community support provided to adults and children

486 registered participants in family focused workshops

250+ individuals and families supported by key workers

AUTISM SA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Autism SA has a highly qualified, skills based and diverse Board, structured to bring a range of expertise to ensure the effective governance of the organisation.

The 2016/17 Board was comprised of the following people:

Name	Qualifications	Position	Committees	Attendances at Meetings
Jenny Karavolos	B.Acc, CPA, MBA (Brooke Scholar), AIPM	Managing Director (appointed 14/09/2016) Company Secretary (elected 14/09/2016 & 14/12/2016) Director & President (retired 14/09/2016)	Finance & Risk Committee	11 Board meetings + AGM 11 Finance & Risk Committee meetings
Troy Mohler	B.Com, MAICD	Board Appointed Director (re-elected 14/12/2016) President (elected 14/09/2016) Treasurer (retired 09/05/2017)	Finance & Risk Committee	11 Board meetings + AGM 11 Finance & Risk Committee meetings
Ben Willington	B.Com, CA, Registered Company Auditor	Board Appointed Director (first appointed 09/05/2017) Treasurer (elected 09/05/2017)	Finance & Risk Committee	2 Board meetings 2 Finance & Risk Committee meetings
Luke Dale	B.Com, LLB (Hons), GDLP, Notary Public	Board Appointed Director	N/A	10 Board meetings + AGM
Julie McMillan	PhD, MEd, BTeach	Board Appointed Director	N/A	10 Board meetings + AGM
Brad Manuel	B.Psych, MBA	Board Appointed Director (first appointed 30/11/2016)	Finance & Risk Committee	5 Board meetings + AGM 2 Finance & Risk Committee meetings
Donna Dias	AdvDipBusAdmin, Dip ECECD, Dip Bus, Dip FI&SVV, Cert IV CS, Cert CM	Client Representative Director (re-elected 30/11/2016)	N/A	8 Board meetings
Voula Nisyrrios	B.Sc (H), MAICD	Client Representative Director (first elected 30/11/2016)	Finance & Risk Committee	6 Board meetings + AGM 3 Finance & Risk Committee meetings
Louise Davies	B.Sc, PGCE, Dip Mgmt	Company Secretary (retired 14/09/2016)	Finance & Risk Committee	4 Board meetings + AGM 2 Finance & Risk Committee meetings
Noelene Wadham	Fellow Australian Marketing Institute Teacher's Registration	Board Appointed Director (resigned 08/03/2017)	N/A	6 Board meetings + AGM

AUTISM SA GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

The Board of Autism SA accepts overall responsibility for the corporate governance of the organisation and is committed to ensuring that the principles of good governance are implemented with integrity.

Autism SA Governance

The Board is required to act in accordance with the objects of the Autism SA Constitution to:

1. Lead performance improvement of Autism SA through strategy formulation, policy development and monitoring management actions; and
2. Ensure compliance of Autism SA and the correct conduct of Directors, both as individuals and collectively as a Board.

Corporate Governance Statement

Autism SA's Board Charter clarifies the responsibilities and boundaries of the Board in setting the strategy and direction of Autism SA and managing and controlling the organisation.

As extracted from the Charter, 'Autism SA is a Company Limited by Guarantee and operates as a not-for-profit organisation with the status of a public benevolent institution. It is governed by a constitution approved by members.'

The Board delegates the responsibility for the management of the organisation to the Managing Director.

The Board reports to members through the Annual Report, Annual General Meeting and such other meetings as may be called by the Board or the membership.

Membership

Membership of the Company comprises of two classes: Ordinary Members and Associate Members who pay an annual fee. For further information regarding organisational membership, please refer to the constitution of Autism SA, which is published publicly on the Company website at www.autismsa.org.au

Composition of the Board

The composition of the Board is determined in accordance with the Autism SA Constitution. The Board is comprised of no less than six and no more than nine Directors. This includes two Client Representative Directors (elected by the Ordinary Members), between three and six Board Appointed Directors with the skills and expertise that the Board determines it requires, and the Managing Director of the Company.

The Board has a Board skills matrix and is responsible for succession planning and making Board appointments. Details of Directors' experience and qualifications are included in this document. They are all advocates and champions for the rights of people with disability.

Board members (except the Managing Director) serve on a voluntary basis, except for out of pocket expenses.

Board Committees

The Board has established a number of committees to assist it in carrying out its responsibilities. The Board determines the membership, role and responsibilities of each committee.

Ethical Standards

Autism SA is committed to maintaining the highest of ethical standards. The organisation follows good practice in governance to ensure integrity and influence. This includes the Board placing great importance on Board members declaring any existing or potential conflict of interest in relation to their duties as Directors.

The organisation has also developed extensive policies and maintains third party certification against the Service Excellence Framework (SEF) as part of its quality assurance and continuous improvement framework.

Privacy Policy

Autism SA values support from the community and is committed to ensuring the privacy of the personal information that is entrusted to the organisation by responding to the 13 Australian Privacy Principles in the Privacy Act, as amended in 2012, dealing with the collection, use, disclosure and data security of personal information. The respect for privacy forms part of the ongoing trust the organisation wishes to maintain with stakeholders.

Details regarding the Board and Autism SA's financial position are outlined in the audited financial report for the year ended 30 June 2017. This report can be obtained online from www.autismsa.org.au



BEN WILLINGTON TREASURER

Autism SA has been focused on its business evolution and growth in 2016/17.

The net financial result for the consolidated activities of the Autism Association of South Australia and the Autism Trust Fund of South Australia for the year ended 30 June 2017 was a deficit of \$6505. The decrease from the surplus of \$280,837 recorded for the year ended 30 June 2016 results from investment in capacity building and transformation to maximise outcomes for the autism community.

The total revenue of the consolidated entity for the year ended 30 June 2017 was \$12,337,865 - an increase of 15 per cent from the prior year. This increase relates primarily to additional fee for service income generated by services provided under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

Government funding increased by four per cent from the prior year and represented 62 per cent of total revenue for 2016/17.

As a proportion of total revenue, this represents a decrease from 68 per cent of total revenue in 2015/16. Fee for service income, which includes services provided to NDIS participants, increased by 49 per cent and represented 34 per cent of total revenue for 2016/17, as compared to 26 per cent of revenue in 2015/16. The increasing proportion of fee for service income has been the trend since the launch of the NDIS trial sites in the 2013/14 year, and is expected to continue in future years as the rollout of the NDIS progresses.

In contrast, government funding as a proportion of total income is expected to continue to decrease as funding transitions from existing grants into the NDIS.

The change in the proportion of government funding compared to fee for service income is illustrated in the graphs contained in this report.

Expenses have increased by 18 per cent from the prior year, which relates primarily to an increase in employee expenses in the current year, resulting primarily from increased employee numbers.

The financial performance of the consolidated entity is summarised below:

Table 1 - Profit and Loss Position

	2016/17	2015/16	% change
Operating revenue	12,337,865	10,757,092	15%
Operating expenses	12,344,470	10,476,255	18%
Net surplus	6505	280,837	-102%

The net asset position of the consolidated entity increased by four per cent from \$3,354,842 as at 30 June 2016 to \$3,482,273 as at 30 June 2017, as presented below:

Table 2 - Balance Sheet

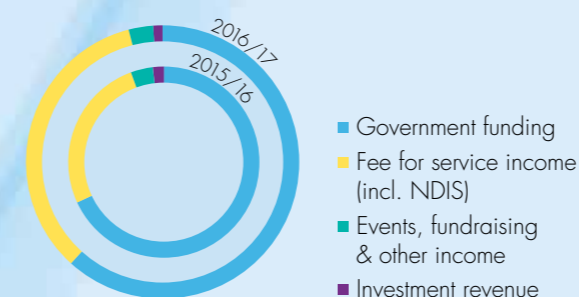
	As at 30/6/17	As at 30/6/16	% change
Current assets	2,162,765	1,908,991	13%
Non-current assets	3,836,205	3,745,063	2%
Total assets	5,998,970	5,654,054	6%
Current liabilities	2,316,798	2,195,788	6%
Non-current liabilities	199,899	103,424	93%
Total liabilities	2,516,697	2,299,212	9%
Net assets	3,482,273	3,354,842	4%

Total assets increased by six per cent, primarily represented by an increase in the trade receivables balance corresponding to the increased proportion of fee for service revenue, and an increase in the value of available-for-sale financial assets (investment portfolio).

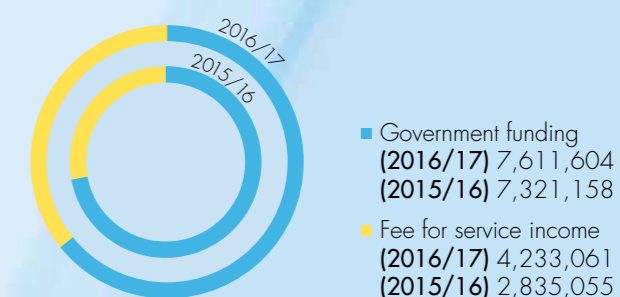
Total liabilities increased by nine per cent due to increased payables and employee entitlements' liabilities, resulting in part from increased employee numbers, offset by a decreased liability for revenue received in advance.

The Financial Report of the Autism Association of South Australia and controlled entity for the year ended 30 June 2017 has been audited by Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu and is available at www.autismsa.org.au

Revenue by category



Government funding/ Fee for service comparison



THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO HAS SUPPORTED AUTISM SA

You help make a real difference to achieving our vision.

Patron

Professor Warren Bebbington,
Vice-Chancellor of the University of Adelaide

*Patronage ended 30/04/2017 upon completion of
term as Vice-Chancellor of the University of Adelaide

Autism SA Ambassadors

Katharine Annear	Lachlan Earl	Kathryn Michaelson	Charlie Stone
Jean Boulter	Alison Gaskin	Helen Neale	Miwa Stynes
Gloria Bryant	Barbara Green	David Palmer	Julie Taylor
Brooke Clark	Julie Julyan	Annette Paterson	Amanda Tulloch-Hoskins
Katy Correll	Alison Keast	Melissa Poole	Donna Webb
Abbey-Leigh Dalton	Stephanie Kowalski	Kristen Richards	Diane Whitaker-Lockwood
Tara Davis	Stephen Loveridge	Linda Sandell	Josie Wilson
Matt Deighton	Vivienne Mangos	Zoe Sandell	Stewart Wymer
Nadia Demasi	Jon Martin (Honorary)	Tamara Sernecki	
Kristie Dix	Bruce Meatheringham	Vaughn Smoker	

Life Members

Roma Aimes	Lloyd Cox	David McLean
Mary Angel	Leigh Hall OAM	Anne Nottage
Rose Baker	Ruth Halpin	John Rosevear
Associate Professor Verity Bottroff	John Harley	Matthew Tiddy OAM +
Richard Bruggemann	Joy Johns	Dr Peter Tillett
Jean Bryant	Betty Jordan OAM	Bernard Vaughn
Cheryl Casey	Dr Margaret Kyrkou	Margaret Wilson
Jean Cox	Judith Leeson	
	Dr Ruth McIntyre	

Please note + denotes a life member who has passed away during the past financial year

Major Corporate Partner

Baiada Poultry – Children's Charity Nest

Supporting Partners

Adelaide East Education Centre	Deloitte	Motor Trade Association of South Australia	St Columba College
Alpha State	Dragonhartz Gaming	MRS Property	St Jakobi Lutheran School
AON	Event Cinemas – Marion	Nippy's	St Mark's Lutheran School
ASC (social club)	Fairview Park Kindergarten	Norwood Foodland	Subnet
Australia Personnel Global	Fay Fuller Foundation	Para Hills High School	Tacocat
Australian Broadcasting Corporation	Flinders University	Patch of Blue Theatre	Telstra
Autism CRC	Gametradars - Marion	Pembroke School	Terry White Chemists
B.d Farm Paris Creek	George Rex Comics	Port Augusta Secondary School	The ARC Campbelltown
Blakes Crossing Christian College	Grace Clothing Charity	Raw Space	The City of Unley
Bounce	Gully Environment Network	Resthaven Bellevue Heights	The Ladies Probus Club of Colonel Light Gardens
Bujinkan Sargent Dojo Buddies	Harvey Norman – City Cross	Ride for Autism	The Probus Club of Blackwood
Cabra Dominican College	HWL Ebbsworth Lawyers	Riot City Wrestling	The Probus Club of Largs Bay
CBB – the not4profit people	Kangaroo Island Medical Clinic	Rotary Club of Glenelg	Trinity College
Christies Beach Primary School	Latitude	SA Health	United Way
Clipsal 500	Lefevre Peninsula Primary School	SA Power Networks	Urban Cow Studio
Community Bridging Services	Madison Park School	Saab Australia	Variety
	Maras Foundation	Smimac	Westpac
	Marion Art Group	South Coast Surf	Wright Financial Services
	MatchWorks	Stevens Partners	

THE ARC CAMPBELLTOWN – MAKING A SPLASH FOR AUTISM SA

It was a burning desire to break down barriers and enable everyone in the community to participate in sport and recreation that led the team behind The ARC Campbelltown to sign up to the Autism Friendly Charter.

With peals of laughter ringing out across the centre and joy scribed on the faces of the adults and children who enjoy its sensory swimming sessions, it's easy to understand why The ARC and its operating council decided to jump on board.

"The ARC is passionate about community programs and committed to making the facility as inclusive as possible," said Programs Supervisor, Jake Culkin. "We're striving to be the benchmark site for inclusion and diversity in recreation, and we're fortunate to share that vision with the operators of our venue, the City of Campbelltown."

"It's terrific to think that we really do make a difference. Seeing the smiles on the faces of the people using the centre to learn to swim or just enjoy our facilities has to be one of the most rewarding aspects of signing up to the Autism Friendly Charter."

The South Australian venue, which attracts a wide demographic of visitors, offers a range of programs such as swimming, basketball and futsal – activities its staff and the local council believe should be open to everyone.

The autism friendly training provided by Autism SA, coupled with simple adjustments such as dimming lights, installing visual signage and utilising splash pads to aid noise reduction, has resulted in an upturn of visitors from the autism community and increased participation across all programs.

Mr Culkin said all staff at The ARC, from its customer service team and lifeguards to swim instructors and café staff, now had a better understanding of how to work with the autism community, and the most effective methods to engage with those participating in recreation.

"Since signing up to the Charter, our staff have changed the way they approach their roles," he said. "We have a different way of thinking now and we're mindful that no two people who come through the centre are the same."

"We want everyone to have the opportunity to be an active part of the community by being engaged in a centre like ours. Being able to create programs that aren't necessarily financially focused, but that allow people to participate without having barriers in place, is central to our business model."

"Autism awareness training can open so many different pathways for businesses. Having the expert advice of an organisation like Autism SA helps organisations to better understand and serve their community and creates so many new opportunities for growth."

A recent survey conducted by Autism SA showed that 92 per cent of people indicated they would use an autism friendly business over another, and those figures are certainly ringing true for The ARC, which has recently experienced a surge in demand for its learn to swim program.

The autism friendly message has further rippled throughout the centre, with community interest in programs outside of the pool also increasing.

"Our ultimate vision is to give everyone an equal opportunity to participate in any and all of our programs, whether it is learning to swim or just having the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of social engagement," said Mr Culkin.

"We recognise that change starts with us. Sometimes that involves doing something a little different or simply thinking outside the box."

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