

2019/20  
**Annual Report**



DISCOVER CHRISTIAN'S STORY





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Vision, Mission and Values

## Our **Vision**

Each person on the autism spectrum lives the life they choose in an inclusive society

## Our **Mission**

Is to be the first choice for individuals on the autism spectrum, supporting them to turn their potential into reality

## Our **Values**

We care about People  
We have Integrity and Honesty  
We Work Together  
We are Innovative and Problem Solve  
We provide Dignity and Respect  
We have Ambition  
We harness Heart



## About **Autism SA**

Autism SA is the first organisation of its kind in Australia and was founded in 1964 by people with autism and their families.

The founding members were families driven by the desire to ensure that they had access to the best information, education, treatment and support. They advocated for acceptance and understanding. They encouraged research and leadership in the community. Since 1964, Autism SA has been single-minded in its focus upon supporting the autism community. Autism SA has been at the forefront of service development and advocacy with a strong legacy of being responsible for bringing many firsts to the community in South Australia and nationally.

Today the organisation prides itself on a strong values-driven culture of empowerment of, and support for, individuals living with autism.

Autism SA has over 13,000 registered individuals on the autism spectrum. Autism SA's workforce, of currently over 290 staff, provide a continually expanding range of quality services and supports, that are innovative and follow evidence based practice, to individuals across the lifespan, their families and professionals in a range of locations including the clinic, in-home, the community and schools. Autism SA aims to improve life outcomes for people on the spectrum by providing and facilitating the very best information, connections, expertise, education, services, support and a strong representative voice for people in our community.

Autism SA has earned a positive and consistent reputation for autism specialisation among individuals with autism and their families and supporters, disability stakeholders and the general public. It is our policy that our activities must be sustainable and meet our high standards for service quality, ethical practice and generate positive, person-centred outcomes for individuals, families, carers and others supporting our community.

Our strategic goal continues to be for Autism SA to remain true to its foundations whilst taking advantage of the biggest social reform for the disability sector, the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

We have five strategic pillars of focus – our clients, our community, our people, processes and technology, leadership and governance.

With 55 years' experience in providing services and programs, we continue to expand our services and supports to meet what individuals on the autism spectrum, and the autism community, want to support them to live the life they choose. We are creating an inspirational culture of engaged, invigorated and empowered staff who are connected to our vision.

We are streamlining processes, focused on quality and safeguard outcomes and implementing systems to underpin the new environment in which we operate to enhance the customer experience for individuals and their families.

We support and encourage activities that build community capacity to create conducive environments to improve the social and economic contribution of people on the spectrum. This includes being the home of Autism Friendly where Autism SA has made a significant footprint in enabling businesses, recreational facilities and other iconic places around the nation become autism friendly.

Autism SA continues to advocate for policy change both locally and nationally. Autism SA is an elected member of the National Disability Services State Committee and a partner of the Australian Autism Alliance and Board member of the Australian Advisory Board of Autism, of which both have representation on the NDIA Autism Advisory Board.

Autism SA is quality certified, and is a registered provider of:

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

Whilst some might choose to forget the last 12 months, the board thanks our Autism SA staff for their tremendous effort and commitment to the Autism community.



## Chair's Report Richard Price

The last year has been unlike any most of us have experienced.

When COVID-19 disrupted our lives we had no idea what we were facing. This uncertainty raised the stress and anxieties that were already heightened in our community. So far, we have been incredibly fortunate to be living in a state, and a country, that has fared better than almost any other in the world, but if you have been affected by the disease or your income cut, that is of little comfort. So at Autism SA we have been, and must continue to be, especially patient and understanding in our dealings with the community, partner organisations and each other.

During 2019/20, Autism SA has continued to build on the hard work of recent years in laying a solid financial base for the organisation. We are growing and providing support to more members of our community each year. Over 3800 new service plans were created and over 9000 clients received services from Autism SA.

In community support we have increased our provision of Supported Independent Living, which included the purchase of property that we have modified to our needs. We are determined to ensure that none of these clients and especially vulnerable children "fall through the cracks". This is demanding but rewarding work and we will continue to grow these services in the coming year.

In specialised support we were severely challenged by school closures due to COVID-19, and in some cases were unable to return to our original facilities once it was safe to do so. This forced us to open an early intervention facility at Redwood Park which was turned around in only two months.

COVID-19 safe considerations forced us to revisit the way we deliver clinical health services and included introducing "Telehealth" delivery for some. Whilst much will return to face to face delivery, we will also continue to use remote delivery to make services more accessible to clients.

All of these and other outstanding efforts resulted in an underlying operating surplus of \$826k (a 46% increase on prior year) on a total income of \$28.4 million (up 52%). We also were able to recognise in this year payments of \$5.2 million for services delivered in earlier years, which took our net financial result for our consolidated activities to \$6.010 million.

***The next 12 months will be incredibly exciting as we move into our purpose-built facility at Tonsley, which opens up opportunities for our community in the South to access more services. There is more to come as we examine new ways to support our community wherever they live in South Australia.***

Whilst some might choose to forget the last 12 months, the board thanks our Autism SA staff for their tremendous effort and commitment to the Autism community. We remain the leaders in our state in supporting those on the autism spectrum to live the life they choose in an inclusive society.

Jenny Karavolos

A year of rising to the challenges – continuing to evolve and grow with our community



## CEO's Report Jenny Karavolos

2019/20 has undoubtedly been an unusual but very purposeful year. While there has been changes and the extraordinary disruption of the global pandemic, which no one anticipated, what has remained a constant was our unwavering dedication to our community and workforce. If anything, it has reinforced the reason why we exist. A time our community needed us, possibly more than ever before, to help navigate the uncertainty and ensure business as usual of critical services and supports. At this same time, the National Disability Insurance Scheme continued to change.

Despite the challenges, what we have achieved as a workforce, with the support of our clients, families, community, partners and key government stakeholders was rewarding. We were able to respond by changing how we deliver services, while also continuing on our strategic path to bring to our community more of what they want. It's amazing what innovation transpires out of necessity that has now become part of our new way of operating.

***At the foundation of our success is that each and every person engaged at Autism SA did not lose sight of the reason we exist - to enable each individual on the autism spectrum to live the life they choose in an inclusive society. This was displayed in their unwavering resilience, commitment, flexibility and passion that drives them.***

Our success is measured by our outcomes of which some are outlined throughout this annual report. To that end, it's been a massive year with more services in quantity, type and form of delivery to meet the individual needs of our clients whilst continuing to strive for an inclusive world.

**Some of the highlights below are:**

- Completion of our NDIS Quality and Safeguards audit without any recorded non-compliances;
- Increasing use of technology to streamline transactions and enable better service delivery;
- Investment in a number of sites to enable the delivery of life-changing services;

- Continuing with activities that advocate for the autism community in partnership with the Autism Alliance and Australian Advisory Board for Autism;
- Launching capacity-building resources including the Spectrum (free online information platform), and the Autism Friendly App;
- A significant increase in supported independent living and foundations skills group services;
- Creation and delivery of unique programs such as Aquatic Therapy, Augmented Alternative Communications for Communication Partners, Next Steps and a myriad of online services; and
- Significant progress of the build of our Southern hub at Tonsley.

**I would like to sincerely thank the contributors to our success:**

- Our funding bodies for their support including the Department of Human Services, Department of Social Services, Department of Child Protection, Office of Public Advocates, National Disability Insurance Agency and Department for Education;
- Our many grant providers, business partners, ambassadors, volunteers, fundraisers, sponsors and life members whose contributions are invaluable;
- The dedicated work of the Board who are resolute in their commitment to our vision;
- The autism champions employed at Autism SA whose passion, commitment, resilience and professionalism never fails to humble me as they make a world of difference every day;
- The extended leadership team and COVID-19 task force for their stellar efforts, dedication, flexibility and stewardship; and
- Our amazing clients, families and broader autism community who continue to inspire us by what they achieve on a daily basis.

We are so looking forward to meeting our strategic goals for next year so we can continue to stand tall for autism and build towards an inclusive society.

**Jenny Karavolos**  
Chief Executive Officer

## Christian's Story

As Christian approaches his 21st birthday, a significant milestone in the life of any young person, his mum Sarina looks back on their long association with Autism SA, and the journey we have all been on together.

Christian made a somewhat unexpected and unusual arrival into the world. Mum, Sarina, and Dad, Frank had been told they couldn't have children, and so when Sarina was feeling unwell for a few days, the last thing they expected was that they were about to become parents. They were so unprepared that Sarina actually delivered Christian herself in the front seat of their car on the steps of Ashford Hospital!

Born at only 24 weeks, Christian spent the first three months of his life at the Women and Children's Hospital, much of it in intensive care. As a consequence, his development continued to be closely monitored by health professionals, and this is what led to Christian receiving an early diagnosis of autism at about 3 years of age, something for which Sarina is very thankful.

**"That's why it was picked up so early," she explained. "And I am so, so grateful, because I am a firm believer that with autism, the earlier it gets diagnosed, get some supports in, the better it is. The better outcome for the child and for everybody else."**

The family began receiving support from Autism SA before Christian started school. He attended speech therapy and OT sessions at Autism SA's former location in Myrtle Bank one or two days a week, in order to develop his communication and social interaction skills.

This early intervention helped Christian learn to express himself, and the support continued once he started at kindergarten, where members of the Autism SA team worked in partnership with kindy staff to provide guidance on the best ways to support Christian in his development.

Autism SA continued to support the family once Christian began primary school. Members of our team met every term with school leaders and teachers to help develop a modified curriculum

for Christian and to observe him in the classroom. This support was vital and without it, **"He could have easily fallen through the cracks,"** recalls Sarina.

When he moved to secondary school at Cabra Dominican College, Christian was in mainstream classes, but had additional support provided by the school's Learning Centre. This included help with homework tasks, which was especially important as it alleviated some of the stress Christian felt when working on his own at home.

Sarina and Christian reconnected once more with Autism SA at the end of his schooling at Cabra.

Since that time, Christian has received one-on-one support through our Psychology, Behaviours Support and Counselling team, and with two regular support workers who have assisted Christian with his independence. With the assistance provided by this support, Christian has been an enthusiastic participant in our Next Step group program, a skill development program for school leavers and young adults looking to take the 'next step' in enhancing their social and life skills, including being work-ready.

Being part of Next Step has been transformative for Christian, according to his mum.

**"Christian is very, very social which, in a lot of ways, he defies the autism traits,"**

explains Sarina, and so Next Step was invaluable in helping him to develop a social network. It's also enabled him to develop a greater sense of independence when it comes to functional skills like taking public transport and being able to get around the city on his own.

*Nothing demonstrates the progress that Christian has made through being a part of the program more than the fact that he has made many of the arrangements for his 21st birthday off his own bat, including booking a hall and sending out invitations — "all behind my back!" says Sarina.*

"I've said it to Paul and Jason and Brian [Next Step team], I really can't thank them enough for everything they've done. They're great. How they help these kids to develop and grow. And I think it's been a combination of both that has got him where he is."

One of Christian's most recent achievements is that Christian now has an 18-month contract at West Torrens Library as a Library Support Officer, a position which he began in May 2020, managing to land the job despite being in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic. He currently works 3 days a week, and the job even brought with it some media fame when Christian was interviewed about his new role by Channel 10 News.

**"I believe with my whole heart that that early intervention program that we attended with Christian at Autism SA was the building blocks for him to go on to achieve the life that he has,"**

said Sarina. "And I think Autism SA will always be in our lives and in Christian's life in one form or another."

A story like Christian's is an inspirational and rewarding one from many perspectives, including the many people at Autism SA who have had the pleasure of working with Christian over the years to achieve his goals. It has been a privilege to be part of Christian and Sarina's journey and to see firsthand how the support has helped him to develop and progress where Christian has now completed his education, entered the workforce, and can look forward to a future with much greater independence and living the life he chooses. We are so very proud of you Christian, Sarina and the family and thank them for the honour of choosing us to be their supports.





## Services and Supports Diagnostics

Autism SA's specialist diagnostic service has always been committed to ensuring that individuals of all ages have access to a thorough, rigorous, standardised assessment to determine if a diagnosis of autism helps to explain their presentation and can provide guidance for intervention and support. In the late 1980s, using new criteria to identify autism in individuals with no intellectual disability or language delay, the service began assessing adolescents and young adults.

By the mid-1990s the diagnostic service had developed an assessment process specifically for adults to meet the growing need in the area. In the 2019-2020 financial year, 25% of the 532 referrals to the service were for adults and 37% of the 207 assessments conducted were for adults.

The diagnostic service has continued to work in partnership with private and public professionals to maintain diagnostic standards and has met with the NDIS to assist in increasing their understanding of autism. During the past 12 months the service has also been involved in a project with the Primary Health Network to assist children to access subsidised diagnostic assessments.

The impact of COVID-19 unfortunately reduced the number of diagnostic assessments conducted for a number of months. This challenge presented the opportunity to develop a quality framework for conducting adult assessments via Telehealth, which has now become an option we continue to offer.

Over the past 12 months the diagnostic team has seen an increase in demand for our training program that assists professionals to develop their skills and understanding of autism. This successful program works with agencies who support individuals on the spectrum, helping them to understand their strengths and challenges and to assist them to move towards independent living, as well as liaising with professionals to support adults involved in the justice system.

### CHRISTIAN'S STORY



**Born at only 24 weeks, Christian spent the first three months of his life at the Women and Children's Hospital... This is what led to Christian receiving an early diagnosis of autism at about 3 years of age.**

## Services and Supports

### Advice, Assistance and Access

Throughout 2019/2020 our Advice, Assistance and Access channels were able to support:

- Over 1500 newly diagnosed families to get on their path;
- Numerous walk-ins to Autism SA to seek information;
- In under 6 months, supported over 70 families in NDIS pre-planning;
- The creation of over 3800 service agreements to access specialised services; and
- Over 5500 direct calls, and over 500 live chats to Infoline.

**3800**  
Service agreements

**5500**  
Direct calls

**500+**  
Live chats to Infoline



## Services and Supports

### Early Intervention

Our Early Intervention (EI) Consultants provided essential support to families and Early Childhood Educators, to promote the development of preschool aged children on the Autism Spectrum, and their successful inclusion in preschool settings.

- **'Newly Diagnosed Support'** was offered to all families of newly diagnosed children, in the form of home visits or Autism SA site appointments. The challenging circumstances in early 2020 saw our consultants offer extended telephone and video appointments.
- **'Short term Consultation'** was provided to help parents at home with strategies for their child's development including sleeping, toileting, social development and play skills, positive behaviour support and practical ideas to help children with transitions to preschool and school.
- Through **'NDIS funded Early Intervention Consultation'** parents were provided capacity building home visits to engage with their child and to model strategies to use when teaching their child play and social skills, including turn-taking, waiting and sharing.
- **'Consultation to Preschool settings'** mentoring was provided to Educators and community and private Child Care Centres. Just under 70 metropolitan centres were provided with this service.

#### CHRISTIAN'S STORY



***That's why it was picked up so early," she explained. "And I am so, so grateful, because I am a firm believer that with autism, the earlier it gets diagnosed, get some supports in, the better it is. The better outcome for the child and for everybody else".***



## Services and Supports Foundation Skills Group

The Foundation Skills Group program is an intensive trans-disciplinary autism early intervention group designed to support young children and their families to reach their goals.

Our Occupational Therapists, Speech Pathologists and Developmental Educators work collaboratively with families, educators and other service providers to form a team around the child, utilising best practice strategies and approaches to achieve significant meaningful outcomes in all areas of a child's learning and development.

### In the 2019/20 financial year, Foundation Skills Group recorded the below achievements:

- Provided early intervention therapy to 110 children and their families in the Adelaide community;
- Expanded from two Autism SA operated locations to four, including our new signature centre in Redwood Park;
- Adapted to the COVID-19 climate by introducing a home program, which saw continued progress towards children's therapeutic goals within the home setting and increased carer capacity building;
- Implemented targeted toilet training programs for 86 children;
- Introduced over 30 tailored Augmentative and Alternative Communication systems (AAC) to children with communication differences;
- Engaged 94 children in group-based learning and activities for the first time;
- Supported 41 children with specialised behavioural interventions for behaviours of concern, utilising a Positive Behaviour Support framework; and
- Provided placement opportunities for students from the Speech Pathology and Disability and Developmental Education courses at Flinders University, two of which have led to employment with Autism SA.

### CHRISTIAN'S STORY

*Before he started school, Christian attended speech therapy and OT sessions in order to develop his communication and social interaction skills... This early intervention helped Christian learn to express himself.*



### Testimonial

#### Foundation Skills Group

*"We are already seeing big improvements and wanted to thank you for the amazing job the team is doing with him. Dad was in tears this morning of how far he had come."*

- From a parent



## Testimonial

### School Program

*(The staff member) did a fabulous job supporting our students and staff (ESOs and Teachers). (She) shared appropriate strategies that had been initiated and well-practised with (the student) and also worked on lessening the anxiety of transition to secondary school for (the student).* – Teacher



## Services and Supports School Support

Autism SA's Consultants and Facilitators ensured the safe delivery of services and continuity of care for our clients, families and educators throughout 2019/20.

In addition to delivering our high-level short term and intensive support via face to face service delivery in educational settings, services were also delivered via Telehealth and through home support packages during term time and school holidays.

Using a strengths-based person-centred approach to help improve outcomes for individuals on the autism spectrum, Autism SA worked with over 2000 students and their educators in Department for Education, Independent and Catholic education settings across the state. Regional consultancy support was continued to be delivered to outreach school communities enabling capacity building for educators and for individuals.

In early 2020 we delivered a new school holiday social development program - the evidence informed "Lego® Club". This has become an increasingly popular program for school aged children with its structured, professionally led communications and social skills focus.

## Services and Supports Social Work

Throughout the 2019/2020 financial year, the Social Work team provided three levels of support to the autism community, including support coordination, specialised coordination of supports and social work.

Our supports especially escalated with the global pandemic. The team expanded and converted to online services providing many critical supports. **These involved:**

- **Support Coordination** – Providing support to assist individuals and their families to form networks, access both funded and mainstream supports, and build capacity to manage their supports independently. The team also provide support through points of crisis and support families through these times whilst building resilience.
- **Specialised Coordination of Supports** – Our Social workers continue to build the networks of individuals and provide support in managing points of crisis, whilst addressing any barriers to support.
- **Social Work** – Providing participants the opportunity to build their capacity in a range of areas, with our social workers assisting families to address areas which are preventing them from meeting their health, social and disability needs and outcomes. With a focus on empowering individuals, social work is a person-centred support, assisting people to achieve their goals using a wide range of evidenced based therapeutic inventions and tools.



## Testimonial

### School Program

*"Because of the work that you did with him, he was able to be successful in high school. He also aspired to support others the way that you had supported him. Some incredible long-term feedback... never forget the impact that you have on peoples' lives. You do some amazing work."* – From a school

## Services and Supports

### Therapy Services

Throughout 2019/20, our highly experienced team of Speech Pathology and Occupational Therapy staff supported just under 800 participants to achieve their goals.

Our team of therapists deliver person-centred, evidence-based therapeutic services across the lifespan, including assessments, 1:1 supports, and group-based therapy.

#### Key achievements across the financial year include:

- Delivery of services across all ages, and for their families and caregivers;
- Provision of more than 15,000 1:1 and 1200 group-based service delivery hours across a range of settings including Autism SA's purpose-built clinics, childcare centres, schools, kindergartens and out in the community;
- Expansion of service offerings in the areas of Mealtimes and Alternative Augmented Communications (AAC) and being recognised industry leaders in these areas;
- The design and delivery of innovative services to enable capacity building through upskilling families and caregivers, supporting them to empower the individuals in their lives who they support;

- Collaboration with individuals, the team around them, and the NDIS to facilitate the achievement of goals, whilst also supporting the same individuals and their families to exercise choice and control;
- Continued investment in research, training and other professional development opportunities to ensure currency in evidence-based practice and maintain provision of a high-quality service;
- Staff representation at external forums and committees, highlighting Autism SA's professional standards and expertise;
- Supervision and support of student placements to facilitate capacity building of knowledge in the area of autism therapeutic supports; and
- Delivery of professional training to teachers, health professionals and the community to broaden awareness of how to support people on the spectrum through being more inclusive and autism friendly.

## Services and Supports

### Therapy Groups & Programs

Recognising the need for broadening social skills, creation of independence, and encouraging engagement in group-based activities, Autism SA's passionate team of Speech Pathology & Occupational Therapy (SP/OT) staff continued to provide, and implement new, multi-disciplinary groups.

Over the last financial year, the SP/OT team designed and delivered several new groups and programs:

- **Augmentative, Alternative Communication (AAC) Program** for communication partners assisting them to building their capacity to achieve communication goals with the people they support;
- Ongoing thanks to SA Water, expansion of our fun and supportive **Aquatic Therapy Program** to enable more participants to enjoy the therapeutic benefits, both 1:1 and group format school holiday programs;
- Series of **summer school holiday programs**, encouraging peer interaction through social activities and themed sessions to support skill development;

- **Teenage Girls Group**, for females aged between 12 – 17 years, supporting understanding of their autism diagnosis and navigating changes they may face;
- **What's the Buzz Group** online with participants building social connections through skill development; and
- **Mealtimes Group** refined and expanded enabling participants to progress with tolerating and eating various textures to assist with growth.





## Testimonial

### Art Steps

*"Since coming to Art Steps I have reignited my passion for creating work that comes from inside me. I get to spend time with some amazing people."* – Art Steps Participant

### Next Step

*"Next Step has changed my life, but more importantly, my outlook on life"* – Next Step Participant

#### CHRISTIAN'S STORY



**Being part of Next Step has been transformative for Christian, in helping him to develop a social network. It's also enabled him to develop a greater sense of independence when it comes to functional skills like taking public transport and being able to get around the city on his own.**



## Services and Supports Community Support and Inclusion (CSI)

Through our person-centred approach, we have been able to successfully establish and continue to provide 24/7 support to individuals from early childhood to mature adulthood. We specialise in a range of independent living supports including supporting individuals with specialist disability funding through the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). We provide support and care for children in Voluntary Out of Home Care alongside the South Australian Government Department of Human Services Exceptional Needs Unit. We are contracted as a specialist disability service provider in the delivery of services within the Department for Child Protection's Therapeutic Residential Care model.

We work closely with our clients and their nominated important people to ensure each support is specifically tailored towards each individual's unique preferences and living needs. These preferences include where they would like to live, how their home environment is to be set up, and in our approach to the level and style of supports. Tailoring this way, ensures our services reflect our client's unique qualities as well as meets their interests, needs and goal ambitions.

The trend of increasing demand for Supported Independent Living support to individuals continued in 2019-20. As a recognised specialist provider of supports to people with autism and complex support needs the number of individuals supported to live on their own, or to share living arrangements with a chosen housemate has grown significantly. Being chosen as a long-term partner to deliver new services in our supported independent living programs in the Southern, Eastern, North-Eastern and Northern suburbs of metropolitan Adelaide, giving us the opportunity to enable individuals to live the life that they choose, is an extremely rewarding privilege.

## Services and Supports CSI Groups

The Community Support and Inclusion team facilitates a number of social and skill building groups throughout the year, for ages ranging from school aged to adults. This year has been a busy year, particularly in our Steps programs – with our popular **School Leaver Employment Support** program expanding to include groups in the North, South and Central Adelaide.

We also introduced a new program – **Art Steps**. Art Steps is a program designed to help people on the spectrum to creatively explore subjects they are passionate about and provide a platform to express ideas. The Art Steps program was developed with local Adelaide artists, Claire and Robyn, with each term focusing on a different theme, starting off with creating Zines – self-published, handmade books.

The **Next Step** program has delivered a much-needed support for adults with employment aspirations, goals and targets with work experience and training room activities delivered by our hard working, committed and knowledgeable Group Facilitators. We have seen some amazing successes, with members of the group being supported with university, finding and keeping a job and building social skills for life.

Other groups enjoying continued success are **Southern and Central Explorers, Social Digital Enterprise (SDEP)** and **ALPHA**. SDEP was expanded to be delivered in Elizabeth and is hugely popular with our future computer coders and IT experts. ALPHA is continuing in its quest to bring people together in a social setting that further enhances their network of friends.

One of our other great group success stories is that of our Explorers program. Starting out in the Southern Suburbs, this group has also grown into a Centralised group, and one group specifically for girls. We look forward to introducing the program to the North in 20/21.

## Services and Supports

### Psychology, Behaviour Support and Counselling (PBSC)

It has been another period of significant growth to meet the needs of the community for the PBSC department this financial year with over 500 clients supported.

With a specialised team of psychologists, behaviour practitioners, developmental educators and counsellors, the PBSC department offers a variety of services tailored to meet the psychological, emotional and behavioural needs of each client. Services include the development and facilitation of positive behaviour support plans, specialist and general behaviour support, behaviour therapy, individual and group counselling, psychological assessment and therapy, complex case consultations, mentoring and other individualised programs.

It has been another period of significant growth to meet the needs of the community for the PBSC department this financial year with over 500 clients supported. The global pandemic highlighted the need for supports more than ever with the team transitioning and maintaining online services to be highly responsive as needed.

#### Highlights from the year include:

- Introduction of waitlist management initiatives that has reduced the average wait-time by nearly 50%, while still meeting client outcomes;
- Expansion of the psychology internship program;
- Development of several new behaviour therapy and support programs tailored to our clients' varied needs;
- Expansion of services into regional areas including Port Lincoln, Murray Bridge and Kangaroo Island;
- Greater flexibility in service delivery modes resulting in a significant increase in accessibility for clients; and
- Enhancing our position as the community and sector leaders in psychology and behaviour support for people on the spectrum through capacity building initiatives and educating and supporting a number of key stakeholders.

## Services and Supports

### Training, Consultancy and Research

Autism SA's Training, Consultancy and Research team remained committed to offering innovative, evidence informed training opportunities and support packages for the wider community, despite the challenges 2019/20 brought with it.

#### The following highlights were achieved throughout the year:

- Developing and delivering more than **200** public training and consultancy sessions, **23** of which were delivered by live webinar, to more than **3500** participants;
- Developing and delivering more than **50** internal training sessions to more than **740** participants, to ensure staff expertise remains current and relevant;
- **26** Early Day Workshops were delivered across South Australia and the Northern Territory with **325** registered attendees;
- Our external and internal training sessions consistently receiving feedback from participants that they 'greatly' or 'significantly' exceeded their expectations for both the content delivered and the presenter;
- The iMsocial Program was significantly updated and expanded and the iModeling app was updated and released publicly;
- Successful joint recipients of a Channel 7 Children's Research Foundation Grant to develop and deliver a Robotics Club, based on a joint submission by Autism SA and Flinders University Disability & Community Inclusion faculty;
- The Professional Practice Committee approved five research applications from Flinders University, Autism Spectrum Australia, and Murdoch University;
- Recipients of a substantial Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) Grant to develop an online series of modules specifically for adults with autism;
- Development and launch of the Autism Friendly Charter App, available via the Apple Store and Google Play for free, which attracted **3843** visits to the website over 8 months, over **900** participant trainings completed, and over **80** businesses signed up to the directory;
- Development and launch of The Spectrum website, which attracted nearly **129,000** visitors with over **312,000** page views in the first 8 months after launch;
- The Autism Advisory Program in the Northern Territory continued to support families across the NT by publishing **13** newsletters and connecting them to local supports and services; and
- Development of an online training module, 'My Child and Autism', for supporting families with a child on the spectrum in the early years.



## Testimonial

### Training, Consultancy & Research

*"It was great to hear directly from autistic children/adults on their perspective."* – Family workshop participant

*"Presenter gave a great presentation – lots of useful, practical information delivered in a way that made sense and was able to implement easily. Staff have already put in place some of the suggestions and information."* – Professional workshop participant



## Our People

### We Value Our People

In a year touched by the unique challenge of a pandemic, that left no part of the globe untouched, our workforce continued to demonstrate their unwavering dedication and commitment to the autism community.

We know that the strength and capability of diversity is reflected in our profile. In 2019/20, Autism SA had 370 engaged, dedicated, caring and skilled individuals, which was made up of 340 staff, 20 volunteers and 15 student placements.

In a year touched by the unique challenge of a pandemic, that left no part of the globe untouched, our workforce continued to demonstrate their unwavering dedication and commitment to the autism community, bringing their resilience, exceptional talent and passionate spirit to the workplace every day. This was demonstrated through their enthusiasm, respect, professionalism and creative innovation, making a real difference and enabling individuals on the spectrum to live their potential. This year, more than any other, saw the introduction of more services and supports. These included designing unique programs, delivering at more physical locations and an increase in web-based learning and service delivery.

**Our focus for 2019/2020 was to be agile, flexible and supporting a workforce during challenging times as we continued to operate as one Autism SA:**

- Ongoing business reform and transformation through improved systems, processes and performance measures;
- Capacity building to enable innovation and creation of new services based on what people want;
- Recruitment and retention strategies with a significant focus on well-being;
- Flexible work arrangements; and
- Ongoing creation of career paths, training and professional development.

## Testimonial

### Community Support and Inclusion

*"We would like to express our heartfelt thanks to the carers who have been there for our granddaughters during the COVID-19 emergency... They (the staff) are all a credit to your organisation and we would hope their value is recognised." – Parent*

## Our People

### Celebrating the Autism SA Family - the 2019 Staff, Team and Recognition Awards

Surrounded by a winter wonderland, Autism SA came together at The Grand Ballroom, on Tapley's Hill Road on 26 July 2019, to celebrate the many achievements of our staff and teams.

The different categories awarded at the annual event reflect the many outstanding ways that staff and teams go over and above every day to make a world of difference for individuals, families, our community, their colleagues and the organisation. While we have many categories there is never enough to recognise the true commitment, passion, expertise and other amazing attributes of our staff. They all deserve accolades.

**Below are those that were formally recognised by their peers for their brilliant contributions this financial year as part of our formal staff awards ceremony:**



Award	Recipient:	Special commendations:
Kate Parker Exemplary Service Award	Jan Prentice	Jessica Steyn
Expr3ss Innovation Award	Next Step Team	Robert Wakeling
Bounce Living the Autism SA Values Award	Lea Turner	Monica Terreri
Community Business Bureau Workplace Excellence Award	Isabella Collins	Maddison Cocks
Street Fleet Bold, Brave and Brilliant Award	Kellie Artis	Craig Zubrinich
Community Bridging Services Inc. Person-Centred Award - Support to others internally	Anh Pham	Lea Turner
Community Bridging Services Inc. Person-Centred Award - Support to clients	Shaonon Li	Marisa Smith
Sam Walker, Aussie Franchisee Volunteer Award	Brian Curnow	Zoran Bekric

## Our People

### Workplace Gender Equality Report

In accordance with requirements of the Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 (Act), on 24 July 2020 the Autism Association of South Australia lodged its annual compliance report with the Workplace Gender Equality Agency. Positively 66% of all staff are female and 73% of all promotions were awarded to females. Autism SA has gender equality across our Board, Leadership and Management Teams.

The report is available on the Autism SA website at: [www.autismsa.org.au/governance](http://www.autismsa.org.au/governance)



**73%**  
of all promotions were awarded to females

**66%**  
of all staff are female

## Our People

### Length of Service Milestones

#### July 1, 2019-June 30, 2020

A number of our wonderful staff have achieved significant service milestones with the organisation. We are sincerely appreciative of the period of time they have committed to the organisation. We also thank them for their exceptional talent and passionate spirit, which continues to make a difference to the people we support.

#### 5 Year Service Milestone

Leanne Dreyer  
 Rose Justin  
 Harry Singh  
 Donna Stapleton  
 Justin Jabo  
 Gary Bhathal  
 Chris Lee  
 Maddy Cocks  
 Rajkumar Karunamurthy  
 Stephanie Decelles  
 Sharryn Campbell  
 Bruno Cocca  
 Peta Richards  
 Juflex Aguila  
 Anu Budhiraja  
 Tamara Hollitt  
 Goutham Madhavapeddi  
 Keira Hewitt  
 Melissa Amee  
 Rebecca Morton (Brett)  
 Karen Petrenko (McMillan)

#### 10 Year Service Milestone

Wendy Kozul  
 Belen Beccar Varela  
 Paul Whitefield  
 Keith Hoskins  
 Peta Phillips  
 VJ Singh

#### 15 Year Service Milestone

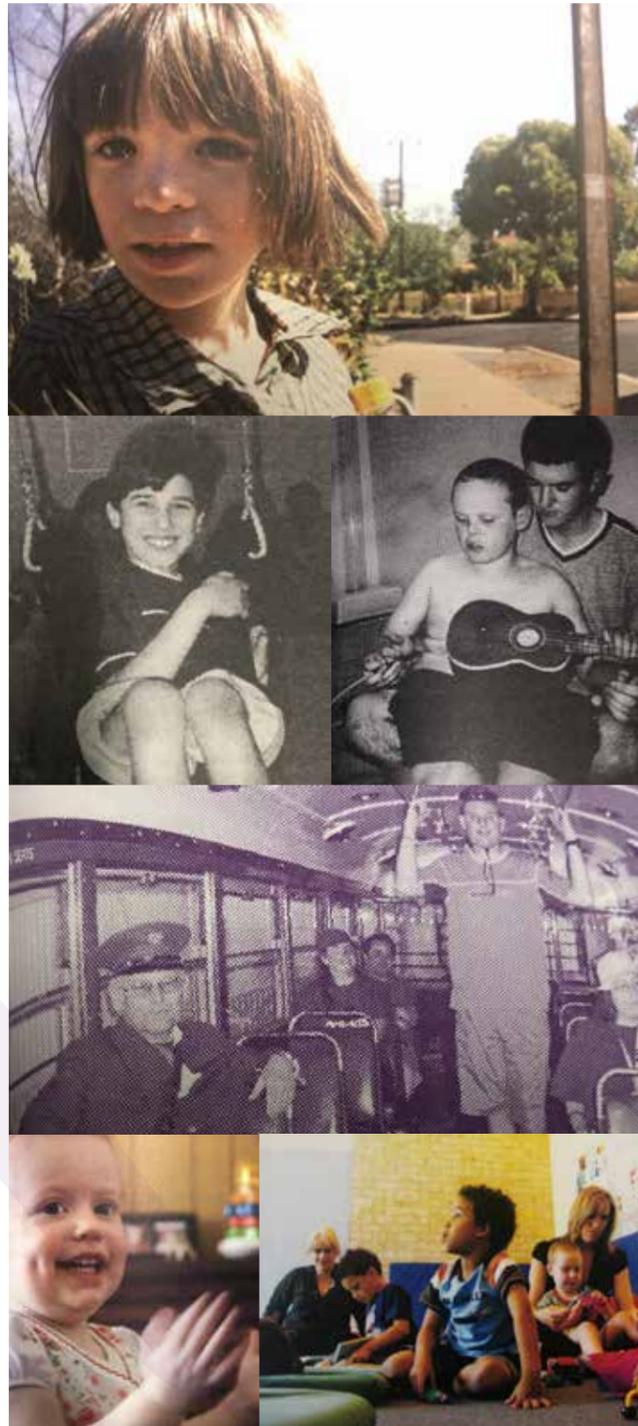
David Palmer

#### 20 Year Service Milestone

Lara Hopewell  
 Jim Leane

#### 25 Year Service Milestone

Amanda Harris



## Our People

### Life Members

**Autism SA recognises that without the contribution of its Life Members we would not be where we are today, with a strong legacy of many firsts and as a recognised leader for the provision of specialised consulting and services to people on the autism spectrum, their families and the broader community.**

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

#### In Memoriam

Betty Davis  
 Dudley Wilson  
 Hilary Johnson AM  
 Ken Foggo OAM  
 Mae Saun  
 Matthew Tiddy OAM  
 Nerida Higgins  
 Tim Fischer, AC  
 Valerie Retallick

## Our People

### Autism SA Ambassadors

#### 2019/20

**Thank you to our Autism SA ambassadors for standing tall for autism: awareness, understanding, acceptance and inclusion as we continue to work towards a vision that each individual on the autism spectrum lives the life they choose in an inclusive society.**

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



Kicking off the start of the year, we held a Morning Tea to celebrate the work of our amazing team of volunteers.



## Our Highlights

### Innovation, transformation, and achievements across a challenging year

Despite the significant challenges of the second half of the financial year, Autism SA continued business as usual, celebrating a great deal of achievements and innovation throughout the past twelve months, including moving further towards achieving our vision of a more inclusive society. Throughout this Annual Report you will read about other amazing achievements, but a few highlights have been included below.

Kicking off the start of the year, we held a Morning Tea to celebrate the work of our amazing team of volunteers. A highlight of the event was the presentation of an award and gift to Jamie, commemorating his five years' service in a variety of volunteer roles at Autism SA. These volunteer roles added to Jamie's amazing talents leading him to his career path.

We next celebrated seeing one of our amazing staff members, Kellie – a Support and Inclusion Group Facilitator - appear in a recruitment campaign for TAFE SA, entitled Learn It, Work It 2020, which was a huge hit! The promotions for TAFE SA, featuring our Kellie, were featured across the state on billboards, TV, Radio, social media, and even on the backs of some buses! We were so thrilled that we were able to highlight the positive relationship we have with TAFE SA, and to share the incredible impact the work we do has. It was reported that the ad featuring Kellie, and Autism SA, was the most frequently visited and recalled ad of the campaign!

We were also pleased to partner with one of South Australia's longest and most loved community events, the Royal Adelaide Show. As part of the initiative, we produced a number of accessible resources for families which included a Social Narrative, Visual Schedule, and Sensory Guide, and assisted the Royal Adelaide Show by consulting on their very first Sensory Friendly Quiet Zone, based on the Autism SA Autism Friendly Charter. This Quiet Zone was sponsored by the wonderful Royal Adelaide Show to be staffed throughout the event by Autism SA Support Workers.

The response from the community was overwhelmingly positive and we look forward to working again with Show organisers to make subsequent years bigger and better.

In October 2019, we were pleased to launch a program of Aquatic Therapy, initiated by two of our incredible Occupational Therapists and supported by SA Water. This program was designed to support participants as they work towards their individual goals and has had amazing outcomes leading to holiday group programs. The programs also help to develop social skills, functional skills, community engagement, play skills and much more – all while having lots of fun!

The Autism SA Pathways team also had a busy time in October 2019. We had a hugely enjoyable time at Kyd-X and the Disability, Ageing & Lifestyle Expo, where we hosted lots of fun activities at our stands and provided information. We also produced a range of helpful information, tips, and strategies during Occupational Therapy Week (21 - 27 October) on our social media pages.

A very exciting event of the year was the completion of the "Autism Friendly Charter App" and its new website [www.autismfriendlycharter.org.au](http://www.autismfriendlycharter.org.au), aimed at helping the autism community access businesses that are autism aware.

**The Autism Friendly Charter is a free, online training series that any business can join and which teaches their teams what autism is, and how small adjustments to their business environment could increase participation from people on the autism spectrum, their families and carers.**



**autism friendly**  
an Autism SA initiative





## Our Highlights

### Innovation, transformation, and achievements across a challenging year

The initiative has been extremely successful over the years, with many Charter organisations not only holding autism friendly quiet hours, events and activities, but also making permanent adjustments to the way they operate. Any business can access the online training no matter where they are in Australia, and the app will help connect organisations, such as museums, recreation centres, hairdressers, driver education centres and dentists directly with the autism community.

2019 ended on a high note, with Autism SA celebrating the continued invaluable support of Baiada's Steggles Charity Nest. Our partnership was commemorated with a visit from two representatives from Baiada Steggles to our Northern Hub and Netley Head Office, where they enjoyed a tour to view how their support has been applied and to recognise the support the Charity Nest has provided to Autism SA over a number of years.

We also had a hugely enjoyable day raising funds and awareness about autism at a Golf Day in partnership with the BNI A Team. More than \$4,500 was raised on the day, and enabled people from a range of businesses and industries to learn more about autism while having fun hitting the links.

When 2020 began, no-one could have imagined how this would turn out to be a year like no other. However, we kicked off the year with workshops for parents of primary and high school children in anticipation of commencing the new school year. New Adult Social programs also began, where people on the spectrum receive support to further build their social and communication skills, friendships, and other life skills.

Good news arrived in February 2020 with Autism SA being awarded two significant grants. We were the proud recipient of a grant of \$15,000 from the Liquor Industry Golf Club (LIGC) to provide new sensory equipment for three of Autism SA's short break and respite housing locations at Craigmore, Prospect and Onkaparinga. This has significantly enhanced the support our Community Support & Inclusion Team can provide and will make a real difference to the lives of many in our community who we support.

We also received a grant of \$10,000 from the Future 2 Foundation that enabled Autism SA to purchase video equipment and training for use in our Next Step program and other workshops.

**The grant will allow us to develop high quality and accessible online capacity building platforms that will help our community to share their success stories and inspire others.**

A critical pinnacle was achieved at the beginning of 2020 with the launch of **The Spectrum** ([www.thespectrum.org.au](http://www.thespectrum.org.au)). A free, online resource from a trusted source that provides evidence-informed autism information, answers to commonly asked questions about autism, a wide range of resources, and information appropriate for each stage of the autism journey. This was sponsored under the NDIA through the successful award of an Information, Linkages and Capacity Information grant.

Visitors to the site can also sign up for a regular newsletter that offers useful tips on a diverse range of autism related topics, such as how to tackle toilet training for children, to strategies for managing children who wander, to what to consider if you are thinking about disclosing an autism diagnosis to an employer.



## Our Highlights

### Innovation, transformation, and achievements across a challenging year

Autism SA also partnered with Kmart Australia to trial a Quiet Space initiative designed to enable customers to shop in a considered sensory environment with reduced noise and distractions at their stores in Churchill and Mount Barker.

On 2 April 2020, Autism SA enthusiastically participated in World Autism Awareness Day, a global event celebrating the rights of people with autism. The aim is to promote the need to improve the quality of life for people with autism so they can lead full and meaningful lives as an integral part of society, with this year's theme highlighting how essential support systems and networks are for the autism community.

The day is a wonderful reminder of Autism SA's strong, values-driven culture of empowerment of, and support for, individuals living with autism, and our vision that each individual on the autism spectrum can live the life they choose in an inclusive society. Throughout April, which is Autism Awareness Month, we promoted the raising of awareness, understanding, acceptance, and inclusion through sharing resources, inclusive initiatives, inspirational stories and tips.

However, as 2020 wore on COVID-19 began to have a greater impact in South Australia, with Autism SA, along with the rest of world, required to take steps to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our clients, staff and the wider community.

As an essential services, this meant an immediate focus on providing services and supports with safe hygiene practices and social distancing in place, along with transforming our face-to-face autism-related services and training online so that we could provide continuous support where possible to individuals, their families, carers, educators, health workers and others.

Having already commenced our information technology transformation journey, we were well prepared to transition the majority of our services into the virtual world, as well as being able to swiftly transition our staff to new working from home environments. During this time, to help the community during a very confusing and anxious time, a new website was launched, autismonline.com.au, which was designed to serve as a single, easy to use location for finding up to date information on the extensive services and supports that were available online and through different remotely accessible service modes, both for 1:1 support, groups and training.

**Also, throughout this period our stellar teams continued to provide supports directly to many, including 24/7 supported independent living.**

COVID-19, unfortunately, was able to stop one of our significant events. We had to reschedule our Autism Conference Series: Achieving Meaningful Inclusion with Dr Stephen Shore (originally planned for May 2020) to February 2021. This conference has been in the process of being transformed into a virtual event – where Dr Stephen Shore will be live streamed to our conference audiences – from anywhere across the country from his home in America. Whilst unfortunate, this now means more people can access this amazing conference.

As we moved into May and the COVID-19 restrictions in South Australia gradually began to ease, we nevertheless remained alert to the need to protect individuals, our families, the Autism SA community and our staff. We continued to operate a hybrid service delivery model (face-to-face and online services), while maintaining safe clinic and social distancing protocols where necessary.

We were also able to ease some of the restrictions that were applied to our therapy and social groups, working on site and visiting outdoor facilities, and began planning for a return to our new normal including services and supports delivered face to face.

While the coronavirus pandemic was challenging, it did reaffirm our commitment to our autism community, and our vision that every individual on the autism spectrum is able to live the life they choose, in an inclusive society.

**Whether you are a person on the autism spectrum, a client, a parent, a family member, a carer, a teacher, a professional, a donor or fundraiser or an advocate, we look forward to providing as full a range of services, programs and supports as possible, and building an even more positive future as we transition (albeit slowly) to a new 'normal' 2020/21!**



## Facts and Figures

### Autism SA by the Numbers

#### 2019/20

### Social Media

Reached over

# 3,580,000

people on social media

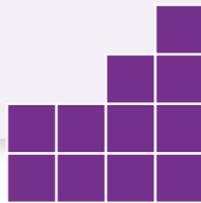


### Autism Friendly Charter & ILC

More than

# 924

individuals completed the Autism Friendly Charter training



### Social Work

More than

# 2500

Hours of support



#### Diagnostics

Over **532 diagnostic referrals**  
**117 diagnostic assessments** to children  
**59 diagnostic assessments** to adults  
**147 new diagnostic reports** provided per month on average

#### Information, Linkages, Capacity Building and Inclusion

More than **7,100 queries** were responded to and addressed to empower individuals and their families - Attended more than **7 significant Expos** to connect with and inform the community - More than **115,000 users** on 'The Spectrum' free online platform (developed by Autism SA) Autism Friendly App and Website attracted **3,843 visits** to the website over 8 months - More than **320 participants** attended Early Days Workshops across South Australia and the Northern Territory

#### Autism Friendly Charter & ILC

Over **924 individuals** completed the Autism Friendly Charter training - **83 additional businesses** completed and became registered as "Autism Friendly" under the Charter creating a more inclusive society

#### Early Intervention

Newly Diagnosed Support was provided for more than **330 families** and children to set them on their pathway to self-confidence and building independence for inclusion support provided across more than **70 preschool centres**

#### Foundation Skills Group

Provided over **25,000 hours** of early intervention services for **110 children** and their families to build critical foundations for future success - Engaged **94 children** in group-based learning and activities for the first time

#### Therapy services

Provision of more than **15,000 1:1 service delivery hours** across a range of settings - Mealtime Therapy provided to more than **110 individuals** - More than **13,100 hours of Occupational Therapy and Speech Pathology** services provided

#### Schools

Supported over **2,000 students** in Independent, Catholic and Department for Education schools across the state to be the best they can be

#### Social Work

Provided over **2,500 hours** of support

#### Psychology, Behaviour Support and Counselling

Serviced over **500 clients**

#### Training, Consultancy and Research

Delivered training and consultancy sessions to more than **3,500 participants**

#### Autism Advisor Program Northern Territory

The Autism Advisory Program in the Northern Territory supported numerous families across the NT including publishing **13 newsletters** and connecting them to local supports and services

#### Community Support and Inclusion - Group Capacity Building Programs

More than **50 Next Step participants** undertook work experience. **7 Next Step** participants gained employment opportunities

#### Social Media

Reached over **3,580,000 people** on social media across the year - Shared more than **500 stories** and photos with the community - More than **143,200 people engaged** with Autism SA on social media across the year - Greater than **12% increase** in community of social media followers

#### Therapy Groups

More than **1,250 hours of group-based therapy** delivered

## Board Representatives

### Table of board members

NAME	QUALIFICATIONS	POSITION	APPOINTMENTS	DATES	COMMITTEES	ATTENDANCES AT MEETINGS
<b>Jenny Karavolos</b>	B.Acc, CPA, MBA (Brooke Scholar), AIPM, GAICD	Company Secretary	Re-appointed	05/12/2018	Finance & Risk Committee	12 Board meetings + AGM 11 Finance & Risk Committee meetings
<b>Troy Mohler</b>	B.Com, MBA, GAICD	Board Appointed Director Chair Client Representative Director (casual vacancy)	*Appointed Re-appointed and re-elected Chair Resigned - end of term Appointed and re-elected Chair	28/06/2013 05/12/2018 27/06/2019 29/06/2019	Finance & Risk Committee	12 Board meetings + AGM 11 Finance & Risk Committee meetings
<b>Ben Willington</b>	B.Com, CA, Registered Company Auditor	Board Appointed Director Treasurer			Finance & Risk Committee	10 Board meetings + AGM 9 Finance & Risk Committee meetings
<b>Voula Nisyrios</b>	B.Sc (Hons), MAICD	Client Representative Director				7 Board meetings + AGM
<b>Richard Price</b>	B.Sc (Tech) Electronics, GAICD	Board Appointed Director	Appointed	01/05/2019		2 Board meetings
<b>Mark Morelli</b>	B. Economics, Grad. Diploma of Accounting, Grad. Diploma of Property, MBA, GAICD, CA	Board Appointed Director	Appointed	15/05/2019	Finance & Risk Committee	1 Board meeting 1 Finance & Risk Committee meeting
<b>Julie McMillan</b>	PhD, MEd, BTeach	Board Appointed Director	Resigned - personal circumstances	13/09/2018		2 Board meetings
<b>Tanya Lancaster</b>	MBA, GAICD	Board Appointed Director	Appointed Resigned - personal circumstances	06/09/2018 01/04/2019	Finance & Risk Committee	7 Board meetings + AGM 5 Finance & Risk Committee meetings
<b>Dorian Tisato</b>	B.Arts, B. Journ	Client Representative Director	Appointed Resigned - personal circumstances	09/01/2019 01/05/2019		1 Board meeting
<b>Luke Dale</b>	B.Com, LLB (Hons), GDLP, Notary Public	Board Appointed Director	Re-appointed Resigned - end of maximum term	05/12/2018 30/05/2019		11 Board meetings + AGM

## Governance

### 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

The 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 Autism SA's Board 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 Chief Executive Officer.

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](http://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 five and no more than eight Directors. This includes two Client Representative Directors (elected by the Ordinary Members) and between three and six Directors (including the Managing Director, if any) with the skills and expertise that the Board determines it requires.

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 a disability.

Board members 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 third-party certification against the NDIS Quality and Safeguard Commission and Service Excellence Framework (SEF) as part of its quality assurance and continuous improvement framework. It also ensures it meets its other requirements and obligations to operate and provide services and supports.

#### 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 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 2020. This report can be obtained online from [www.autismsa.org.au](http://www.autismsa.org.au)

“In a year shaken by the COVID-19 pandemic, due to the flexibility and commitment of our staff we continued to provide the important services we offer to the community, transforming the way many of these were offered.”



## Treasurer's Report 2019/20

### Mark Morelli

In a year shaken by the COVID-19 pandemic, due to the flexibility and commitment of our staff we continued to provide the important services we offer to the community, transforming the way many of these were offered, to ensure continuity of service where possible. Autism SA was able to successfully navigate the path of uncertainty and ended the financial year in a much stronger financial position.

The financial performance of the consolidated entity is summarised below, showing the underlying surplus prior to the recognition of funding for prior year services:

<b>TABLE 1</b> PROFIT AND LOSS POSITION	<b>2019 - 20</b>	<b>2018 - 19</b>	<b>% CHANGE</b>
<b>Operating Revenue from current year services</b>	23,284,754	18,692,882	25%
<b>Operating Expenses</b>	22,458,775	18,128,871	24%
<b>Underlying surplus</b>	825,979	564,011	46%
<b>Operating revenue from prior year services</b>	5,184,041	-	
<b>Net surplus</b>	6,010,020	564,011	966%

Operating revenue, from current year services, of the consolidated entity increased 25 per cent while expenditure (primarily staffing costs) increased by 24 per cent. An expansion in the workforce allowed us to better respond to the increased demand for NDIS services in core areas.

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 2020 was a surplus of \$6.010M, a significant increase from the previous year's result of \$564,011.

The underlying surplus, excluding the payment for prior year services of \$5.2 million, was \$825,979 which represented an increase of 46 per cent, as compared to the prior year result on a total income of \$28.4 million (up 52%).

We were able to recognise payments of \$5.2 million for services delivered in earlier years. This revenue could not be booked in prior years as it did not meet the recognition criteria under the revenue accounting standard in place at that time (AASB 118), in that it could not be reliably measured. No expenditure was recognised in 2020 relating to the prior year services funding.

The net asset position of the consolidated entity increased by 217 per cent from \$2,755,285 at 30 June 2019, to \$8,728,142 as at 30 June 2020 as presented below:

<b>TABLE 2</b> BALANCE SHEET	<b>As at 30/06/20</b>	<b>As at 30/06/19</b>	<b>% CHANGE</b>
<b>Current Assets</b>	10,335,354	3,884,911	166%
<b>Non-Current Assets</b>	5,366,205	2,464,932	118%
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>15,701,559</b>	<b>6,349,843</b>	147%
<b>Current Liabilities</b>	5,548,800	3,254,612	70%
<b>Non-Current Liabilities</b>	1,424,617	339,946	319%
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>6,973,417</b>	<b>3,594,558</b>	94%
<b>Net Assets</b>	8,728,142	2,755,285	217%

**Total assets increased by 147 per cent, primarily represented by an increase in the cash assets, along with an increase in the value of the available-for-sale financial assets (investment portfolio). The application of AASB 16 Leases resulted in an increase to total assets of \$1,335,318.**

Total liabilities increased by 94 per cent due to increased employee entitlements' liabilities, primarily due to increased employee numbers and reduced leave taken during COVID-19, the recognition of a NDIA cash advance due for repayment in 2020/21 and the application of AASB 16 Leases, resulting in an increase in liabilities of \$1,273,527.

As we move ahead, operating predominately under NDIS funding, we are focussed on delivering superior and innovative services, utilising improved technology solutions and digital initiatives to achieve client outcomes. We continue to strengthen our position as a leading autism specialist in South Australia, ensuring we remain agile and relevant to the changing environment.

Both the Finance & Risk Committee and our Board have continued to work diligently this year, with a strong focus on staying true to our vision and to ensure future sustainability.

The changing environment that we operate in, heightened further by the pandemic, has resulted in the need for adaptation to our services, systems and structure to ensure that we remain relevant in a more competitive market. We continue to place a strong focus on training and development of our staff, and as the workforce expands it is important that we invest in technology and systems to better enable us to meet the demands of clients and become more efficient in a highly transactional market. Innovation is key to maximising the outcomes for our clients and we continue to offer peak body activities, no longer externally funded, to stay true to our vision and support the autism community.

Our focus for the future continues to be on capacity building for the community, achieving client outcomes and providing a supportive and rewarding workplace for our staff. We are committed to delivering specialised services to the autism community and have offered many innovative delivery techniques to ensure disruption was minimised during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Government funding represented 32 per cent of total revenue for 2019/20, down from 34 per cent in 2018/19. The funding was for the provision of peak body services, Northern Territory advisor services, along with school support and early intervention services. Fee for service income, which includes services provided to NDIS participants, increased to 65 per cent of total revenue for 2019/20, up from 62 per cent in 2018/19.

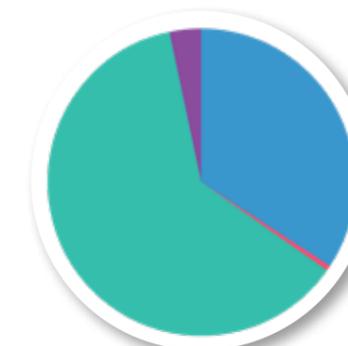
The expansion in the workforce and related employee costs has enabled Autism SA to offer additional services and increase client numbers. The workforce has also needed to increase to continue to operate in a highly transactional NDIS market.

**Revenue by category 2019/2020**



- **Government Funding - current year services**  
3,913,067 - 14%
- **Investment Revenue**  
9,461 - 0%
- **Fee for Service Income (Including NDIS)**  
18,660,752 - 65%
- **Events, Fundraising and Other Income**  
761,450 - 3%
- **Government Funding - prior year services**  
5,124,065 - 18%

**Revenue by category 2018/2019**



- **Government Funding - current year services**  
6,399,823 - 34%
- **Investment Revenue**  
124,310 - 1%
- **Fee for Service Income (Including NDIS)**  
11,578,653 - 62%
- **Events, Fundraising and Other Income**  
590,096 - 3%

# Thank you

Thank you

**Thank you to our generous partners!**

#### **Major Organisation Partners**

*Baiada Poultry - Children's Charity Nest*

*Variety Sprout Fund*

*Department of Human Services*

*National Disability Insurance Agency*

*Department for Education*

*Department of Child Protection*

*Department of Social Services*

*Office of Public Advocacy*

Thank you also to our individual donors and fundraisers, and everyone who has helped to support Autism SA this year. Without you we could not achieve all that we do for the autism community. You make a world of difference!

#### **Supporting Partners**

Autism Angels

Australian Plangon Doll Collectors Club

Beyond Bank

Bounce Inc

Bujinkan Sargent Dojo Buddies

Community Bridging Services (CBS) Inc.

Community Business Bureau

David Jones Magic Cave

Deloitte

Expr3ss!

Future2 Foundation Ltd.

Guarna Legal

HWL Ebsworth

Latitude

Liquor Industry Golf Club

Mitcham Primary School

Paypal

Photographyroom

Platinum Development and Construction

SA Power Networks

SA Water

Saab Australia

Sam Walker

Street Fleet

Telstra

The ARC Campbelltown

The Vines Lifestyle Village

Trinity College - Gawler River Campus

Westpac Lockleys



# Autism SA

## Thank you

To help support the work of Autism SA, please make a tax-deductible donation via our website at [autismsa.org.au](http://autismsa.org.au)

### Autism SA provides the following supports and services:

- Aquatic Therapy
- Autism Advisory
- Augmentative Alternative Communication (AAC)
- Community Support
- Diagnosis
- Early Intervention
- Foundation Skills Group
- Groups - early years, school aged children, teens, adolescents, adults
- Infoline
- In-home Support
- Mealtime Therapy
- NDIS Planning and Goal Setting
- Next Step (transition to work)
- Positive Behaviour Support
- Post Diagnostic Support
- Psychology, Counselling
- Social Work
- Respite
- School Holiday Programs
- School Inclusion consultancy and facilitation
- Social Skills
- Speech Pathology & Occupational Therapy
- Support Coordination
- Supported Living
- Training, Workshops & Consultancy



1300 AUTISM (1300 288 476)  
[www.autismsa.org.au](http://www.autismsa.org.au)

#### Locations

Netley  
Elizabeth  
Lockleys  
Ardtornish  
Craigmore  
Onkaparinga Hills  
Darwin



Home of the Autism Friendly Charter  
[www.autismfriendlycharter.org.au](http://www.autismfriendlycharter.org.au)

