

AUTISM QUEENSLAND LIMITED

ANNUAL REPORT 2017



Autism
QUEENSLAND

Autism Queensland is the lead provider of targeted services to Queenslanders with Autism Spectrum Disorder and their families

Our Strategic Direction

Deliver quality services and supports for people living with Autism Spectrum Disorder through financial sustainability, growth and supportive infrastructure.

Key Drivers



Our Vision

A life of participation, opportunity and choice for people with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Our Mission

To support people living with Autism Spectrum Disorder through responsive, evidence-informed practice and advocacy

Our Values

- Excellence
- Innovation
- Equity
- Person-centred
- Consumer-driven

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Patron	Directors	Company Secretary	Auditor
His Excellency the Honourable Paul de Jersey AC, Governor of Queensland	Wendy McTainsh	Rod Cameron	BDO Audit Pty Ltd
	Vera Pennisi	Life Members	Solicitor
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	Karen Hauff	Prof Robert van Barneveld	
	Joanne Peulen	Paul Burton	
	Chief Executive Officer	Bruce Fay AM	
	Rod Cameron	John Lee	
		Helen McBride	
		Margaret Outridge	

Chairman's Message

As I've reported for the past two years, the rollout of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) has meant a time of great change and often uncertainty for Autism Queensland, and the disability sector as a whole.

In 2017, Mackay continued to be the only centre in the organisation to be fully operational under the scheme, although with the rollout in the Ipswich and Scenic Rim areas, clients in two of our residential services transitioned across and our Sunnybank centre began to deliver services to clients with NDIS funding.

The Rockhampton and Gladstone centres began the transition from late 2017, and this July our teams will experience the largest transition in terms of our client base as the rollout commences in the Brisbane, Gold Coast, Logan, Redlands, Cairns and Far North Queensland areas.

This means that from July onwards all services, apart from Brighton, will be delivering services under the NDIS and the impact of the funding changes, which the Board and executive have been working so hard to address, will be well and truly experienced.

I'm delighted to report that Autism Queensland recorded a strong financial result for 2017, and this has placed the organisation in good stead for the uncertainty ahead. Success aside, we have continued to actively identify all possible strategies to ensure Autism Queensland's capacity to be self-sufficient under the NDIS is realised.

This report will also be my last as Chairman and a Board Director. It has been an honour and a privilege to have held this role since August 2015 - back when the board first began preparing for the introduction of the NDIS. I thank the directors, past and present, for the support they have offered and the role they have played in leading Autism Queensland to the place where it can look forward to a dynamic and successful future.

I would like to congratulate the Executive and their teams one last time for the tremendous contribution they make to this organisation and its future. They continue to work tirelessly within the constraints of

an increasingly challenging financial environment without sacrificing the quality of the services delivered to our clients.

It will be with great pride I watch Autism Queensland continue to expand its expertise and services to meet the increasing needs of the autism community.



Barry Dennien
Chairman

2017 Creative Futures Recognition Awards winners and special commendees with Autism Queensland patron and Awards host, His Excellency Paul de Jersey AC, Governor of Queensland (front centre) and Barry Dennien (back row left).



CEO's Reflection

2017 was a year of maintaining existing services and building new ones against the backdrop of the NDIS rollout. It was also a time of reflection of past achievements, marking 50 years since the organisation opened its first school.



The advent of the NDIS has been one of the greatest changes experienced by the Australian disability sector, and as a service provider it has been vital we maintain a business as usual approach to ensure we continue to meet the needs of a growing client base.

So, while the Autism Queensland NDIS Readiness Team continued to learn and plan from the rollout experience in Mackay, our service teams forged on.

In the early childhood space, Autism Queensland continued its investment in training staff in the Early Start Denver Model (ESDM) early intervention. We are now the only autism provider in Queensland with therapists fully qualified to deliver this evidence-based, manualised intervention for children under the age of five that sees such good results.

Across the year our therapy teams experienced strong growth in both requests for, and delivery of, therapy and support services for adults with autism. We also began offering diagnostic assessments to support the process of a diagnosis of ASD in children, adolescents and adults at the Sunnybank Hills and Brighton centres.

At the Autism Queensland School, there was another first with the addition of full time Prep placements at both the Brighton and Sunnybank campuses, alongside the existing part-time groups. This opportunity was embraced by families and all places were filled. The 50th anniversary of the school was also celebrated with a somewhat rainy, but still successful open day in October at which we welcomed former students alongside prospective families.

A new role, Manager Client Services and Support, was created in early 2017, to work alongside the information service Autism Queensland has long provided to the broader community. The new role provided support for increased demands on this service, especially the need for specialised advice on the NDIS.

In October we went to the people with a survey to assess the needs, Queensland-wide, of people of all ages living with autism, their families and carers. The results, which include feedback on our services, will help us plan future services and ensure the needs of people on the spectrum and their families are being met.

Nationally, Autism Queensland continued its involvement with the Australian Autism Alliance, providing our input on issues important to the ASD community.

Many more challenges await this year, but as with my reports in previous years, I would like to recognise and thank the Board of Directors, fellow Executive members and all staff for their unfailing dedication in ensuring Autism Queensland continues to maintain client outcomes as the sum of our success.

Rod Cameron
Chief Executive Officer

Rod Cameron (right) and School Principal Cae Ashton (left) with Brisbane City Councillor Kim Marx (Runcorn Ward) at the Sunnybank Hills campus.

Services Overview

Autism Queensland is a registered provider of NDIS supports and has been providing specialised services for individuals with ASD and their families for over 50 years.

Our highly skilled professionals with expertise in ASD deliver services statewide from centres in Brisbane, Gladstone, Rockhampton, Mackay and Cairns.

Accredited, Independent School

The Autism Queensland School comprises two Education and Therapy Centres in Brisbane at Brighton and Sunnybank Hills that operate as a single accredited independent special school providing specialist education for children with ASD from Prep age to 18 years. Our team of teachers, teacher aides, psychologists, speech pathologists and occupational therapists support the students with an individualised program, effective interdisciplinary team, and collaboration with their families and other school settings, in order that they develop skills to participate to their fullest extent in their home, school and local community.

Autism Advisor Program

Autism advisors assess eligibility for the Helping Children with Autism (HCWA) early intervention funding package and provide advice and information about early intervention services and other related community and support services for young children with ASD and their families. This program is funded by the Department of Social Services. (This program is no longer available in all areas due to the rollout of the NDIS.)

Community Services

Autism Queensland provides support for people to live in the community across the Brisbane region. We also offer community access programs tailored to suit individual's needs and interests.

Customised Services

We offer a range of services and supports that are individually designed to meet a diverse range of client needs. These services are available for individuals and families, as well as to community organisations, schools and early childhood services. They may involve therapy and support delivered in the home, work place or community, as well as training of staff to support the inclusion of the individual in these settings.

Diagnostic Assessments

Autism Queensland provides comprehensive specialist and diagnostic assessments to support the process of a diagnosis of ASD in children, adolescents and adults. These assessments are conducted by our team of psychologist, speech pathologists and occupational therapists at the Sunnybank Hills and Brighton centres. A range of assessments for individuals who may already have a diagnosis of ASD are also available.

Early Childhood Intervention

Autism Queensland delivers a range of flexible and individualised family-centred Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) services for children under seven years old. These programs are developed and delivered by a team of therapy and education professionals and focus on the key features of ASD including behaviour, communication and social skills. ECI services are

delivered from our centres in Brisbane, Gladstone, Rockhampton, Mackay and Cairns. Autism Queensland is the only autism service provider in Queensland with therapists certified to deliver the Early Start Denver Model (ESDM) intervention.

Early Intervention Indigenous Liaison Officer Program

This national project, hosted by Autism Queensland, aims to raise awareness of ASD and other disabilities in indigenous communities. It is funded by the Department of Social Services as part of the HCWA and Better Start programs.

Group Therapy Programs

These programs focus on elements such as behaviour, development, social skills, communication, anxiety, eating and other challenges faced by individuals with ASD. A range of programs are available for different age groups and run during term time and school holidays.

Host Provider Service

This service is for individuals living in South East Queensland who are receiving individual funding packages and wish to self-direct this support. It is part of the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services Your Life Your Choice (YLYC) Self-Directed Support Initiative.

Individual Therapy

Autism Queensland provides individual therapy sessions for people of all ages. These are administered by our qualified allied health professionals and include speech and language pathology, occupational therapy and psychology.



Professional Learning and Development

Our professional learning facilitators have many years' experience working with individuals with ASD. They deliver ASD-specific workshops to professionals and parents across Queensland; develop customised workshops with individualised content; and deliver the HCWA-funded Early Days workshops to parents of young children with ASD in Queensland.

Research and Business Development

Autism Queensland is committed to evidence-informed practice. Our Research and Business Development team works collaboratively with researchers across Australia to develop and support ASD research programs. It is also responsible for the collation, critical review and dissemination of research evidence to inform current and new services. Autism Queensland is an essential participant in the Cooperative Research Centre for Living with Autism Spectrum Disorders (Autism CRC).

School Advisory Visits

Autism Queensland's specialist teachers and therapists visit schools throughout Queensland to provide information, advice, support, and individualised strategies to staff, other key professionals and parents. This service is supported by the Queensland Government through the Department of Education, Non School Organisations Program.

Short Term Accommodation and Holiday Programs

Autism Queensland provides overnight and weekend short term accommodation services in two locations, at Sunnybank for children aged under 18 years, and Greenbank for individuals ages from five years to 65. These services provide individuals with the opportunity to experience life away from home in a nurturing environment with experienced staff and facilities that cater for their needs. School holiday programs are offered twice a year in the June/July and December school holiday periods at Sunnybank Hills and Brighton.

Studio G

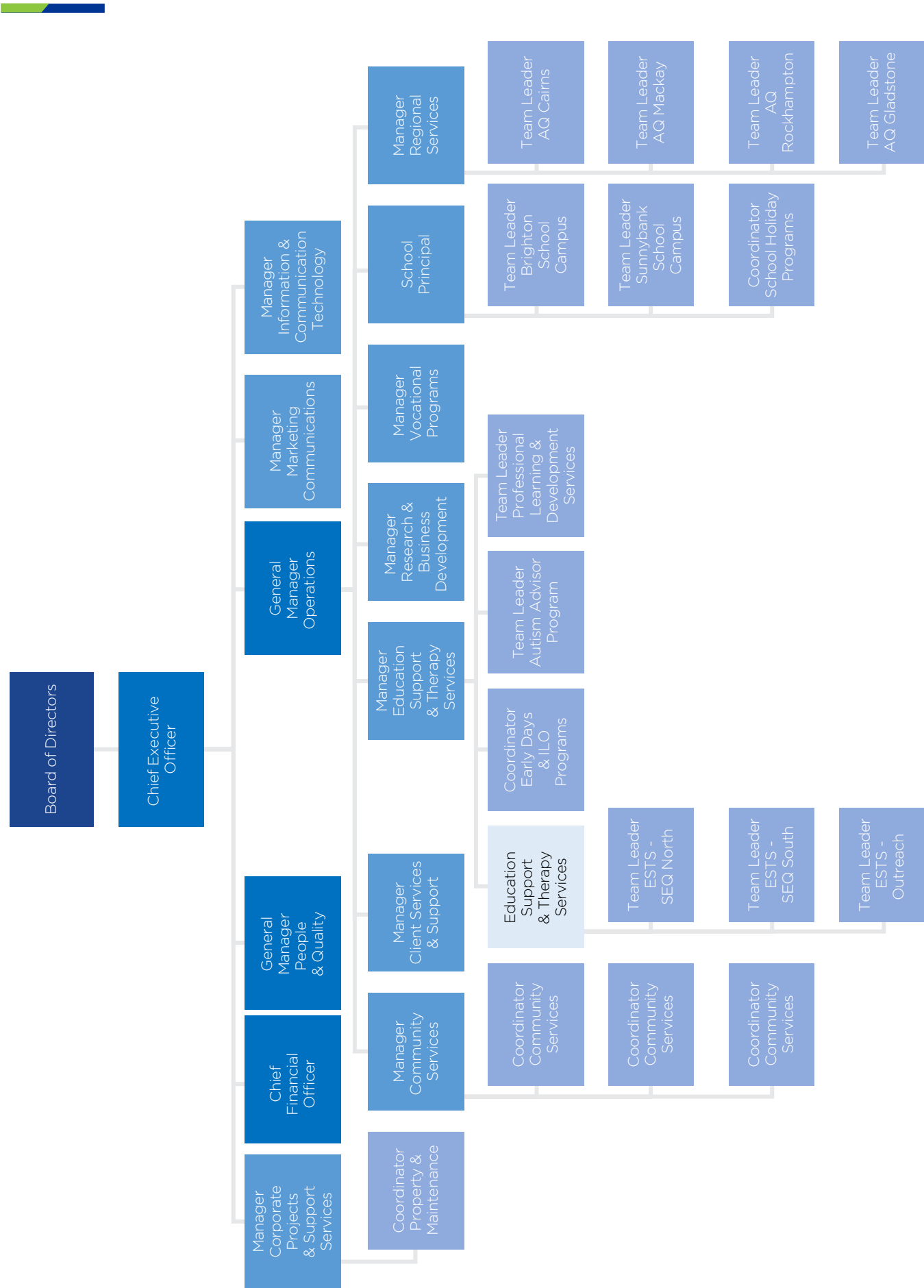
Studio G is an interactive workshop and group-based digital arts program guided by a case management structure that aims to support young people aged 15-24 years in the development of social, job and life skills. Studio G runs twice weekly in Brisbane, Mackay and Cairns.

Teen Tech Shed

This social group for young people with ASD aged 12-15 years encourages appropriate socialising around technology while students extend their knowledge of programming, coding and digital media. Teen Tech Shed operates at the Department of Education's Autism Hub.



Autism Queensland Limited



Autism Queensland School

Autism Queensland runs two Education and Therapy Centres in Brisbane at Brighton and Sunnybank Hills that operate as an accredited independent special school providing group-based programs for children diagnosed with ASD from Prep to Year 12.

During 2017 the School catered for 132 students (equivalent to 69.6 full-time enrolments), with a teaching, therapy, transport and administrative staff of 55.2 FTE including a principal and two campus team leaders.

Autism Queensland's Education Service Agreement with the Department of Education, under the Non-State Special Needs Organisations Program, facilitates shared placement of students with ASD in a part-time school-based program at Autism Queensland with enrolment at their base or "home" mainstream school.

This partnership promotes an inclusive program for students specifically designed to:

- Enable students to maintain connection with their peer group and local school curriculum
- Enable students to practice identified skills for generalisation to a mainstream setting
- Continue social connection with their local community
- Provide opportunities for observation, data collection and sharing of expertise among key stakeholders.

Students attending the school are grouped according to age, ability and needs, with a maximum of six students per group. Each group is staffed by a teacher and teacher aide, with additional support provided by speech pathologists, occupational therapists and psychologists. Our inclusive approach is underpinned by regular collaboration and communication with parents, local school staff, and other related professionals.

2017 highlights for the Autism Queensland School included:

New fulltime Prep pilot program

In addition to existing part-time groups, a full-time Prep program was introduced for students identified as benefitting from intensive early intervention. Its aim was to increase the potential for successful transition to a mainstream setting and address a growing demand by families for the provision of specialist services to young children with ASD at school. At any time throughout the school day, a therapist, teacher and teacher aide work with the students. Baseline observations and informal assessments were administered to determine priorities for planning with student progress and parent feedback used as criteria for the program's success and basis for expansion. Provision of the new full-time Prep classrooms involved the refurbishment of the largely disused multipurpose room at Brighton and relocation of complementary part time classes to consolidate the use of existing classroom spaces at Sunnybank.

New Sunnybank Team Leader

New team leader, Cathy Drummond, has been a welcome addition to Sunnybank campus, reflected in the shared enthusiasm by staff. Cathy has been a long-term employee of Autism Queensland and her wealth of experience is a huge asset for the school.



Revised therapy model for the school

The therapy model within the school changed for 2017. Therapists are now based at one school site to reduce the need for travel and also improve targeted intervention for specified students. Time is explicitly allocated for joint planning with teachers and the therapy team for identified students, group intervention and whole school universal design for learning. This represents an exciting chapter in the School and staff embraced the change with flexibility and innovative practices.



External Providers/ Stakeholders

- The introduction of external providers for swimming lessons at Sunnybank was successfully implemented in Terms 1 and 4 to provide staff the opportunity for greater focus on implementing ASD-specific strategies for students that target the different sensory environment, associated anxiety, and socialisation.
- A grant from the Australian Sports Commission funded an external coach and equipment for coaching athletics, delivered twice weekly at Sunnybank for a term.
- Additionally, students from both campuses accessed a sport coaching session provided by Livestreams Organisation one afternoon per week throughout the year.

School Cyclical Review 2017

The Autism Queensland School Cyclical Review committee was established to consider data and documentation required to demonstrate compliance with accreditation criteria contained in the Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2001 and the accompanying Regulation and opportunities for further improvement in school performance within the following areas:

- Governance and administration
- Financial viability
- Educational program and student welfare
- Resources and facilities
- School improvement.

It was noted that the introduction of the Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2017 taking effect from January 2018 would not impact Autism Queensland's review plan for 2017.

The Nationally Consistent Collection of Data for Students with Disability (NCCD)

Each campus team reviewed the process of identifying the level of adjustments required for individual students to be submitted in August 2017 for the NCCD. This was to be the first time the NCCD submission would underpin Commonwealth funding for students with disability. Planning days were held over the June school holidays at the Brighton campus for school administration officers, team leaders and principal. Reporting for the remainder of 2017 and 2018 was mapped, and details regarding changes to processes for collecting evidence for the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) and student attendance were discussed at length. Training was implemented at subsequent staff meetings during Term 3.

Autism Queensland School (continued)

Community Engagement

- The Taiwan Women's League of Queensland raised \$15,500 for Autism Queensland at their annual Mother's Day Charity Concert in Sunnybank in May.
- The Bracken Ridge Lions Club continued their generous support during 2017 through sponsorship at mini train days and the Bracken Ridge Backyard Bonanza sausage sizzles hosted by Brisbane City Council.
- Work on Brighton campus' Sensory Garden project continued throughout 2017 with the support of local members of the community, both in cash and in-kind support.
- Brighton campus hosted an international visit by teachers and administrators from the Philippines in May, funded by DET and facilitated through QUT. Visitors participated in workshop activities and visited classrooms throughout the day.
- Brighton campus received notification that it was nominated for an Inspiring Schools Awards for 2017 through the Woolworths Earn and Learn Program.

Ongoing participation in Independent Schools Queensland programs

The school participated in the following Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ) programs and activities during 2017. Each of these programs provided opportunities to foster relationships with other independent schools, enhance professional learning communities and evidence-informed practice, and moderate student outcomes with like-minded professionals outside of Autism Queensland:

Self-Improving Schools Program

2017 was the fourth year of Autism Queensland's involvement in the program which is facilitated by a consultant through ISQ. All school staff were issued an ISQ login to access professional training online with emphasis on the Autism Queensland methodology and evidence-informed practice through the development of an autism-specific pedagogical framework. Staff wellbeing and improved teaching and therapy spaces were also flagged as areas for attention for 2017 and beyond.

Educational Data Project

Following a whole-school staff collaborative review of assessment and reporting protocols, revised templates were published internally for all therapists and teachers to use to collate information available from prior assessments and reports to set goals for individualised program planning and report on student progress. The objective was to reduce the surfeit of school reports (at times replicated across therapies and teaching disciplines), but still meet the requirements for planning, establishing baselines for student progress and accountability reporting.

Great Teachers in Independent Schools Professional Growth Tool

Team leaders and the principal worked with ISQ consultant Kate Crowe to set priorities for professional development for school staff. The introduction of a Teaching and Learning/Curriculum Coordinator with significant knowledge of curriculum and the Standards for teachers was recommended to drive explicit professional learning in planning, implementing, assessing and reporting of curriculum for students with ASD.



Differentiated Curriculum Project

Focus areas included our pedagogical framework (what we teach and why), current strategies, professional skills, and development needs of staff identified as essential for the successful delivery of a differentiated curriculum in our school. ISQ Executive Manager Curriculum and Assessment, Jenene Rosser, presented valuable workshops for teaching and therapy staff to support the delivery of differentiated curriculum for students attending our school.

Building Assessment Communities

The Autism Queensland School leadership team met with guests from ISQ and The Glenleighden School to discuss differentiated curriculum for students with complex needs, the challenges this presents for special schools, and how social moderation and collaboration between the schools might be successfully achieved. Assessment processes and data collection, and sharing what we know/learn from others with similar learning environments were identified as key elements to building successful learning communities for our students.



Education Support and Therapy Services

Autism Queensland's Brisbane-based Education Support and Therapy Services team of speech pathologists, occupational therapists, psychologist and teachers provide a range of funded and non-funded services to children and adults living in South East Queensland and other areas of the State that do not fall in the service catchments of Autism Queensland's centres in Gladstone, Rockhampton, Mackay and Cairns.

The team is divided into three service delivery areas – South East Queensland (SEQ) South - including South Brisbane, Bayside, Logan, West Brisbane, Scenic Rim, Ipswich, Toowoomba and Gold Coast, SEQ North - including North Brisbane, Caboolture, Pine Rivers and Sunshine Coast, and Regional Outreach.

The SEQ South and Regional Outreach teams are based at Sunnybank Hills, and SEQ North at Brighton. They deliver the Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) centre-based group programs, short term and school holiday group programs, individual centre-based and off-site programs, Autism Consultant services, assessment services and school advisory visits.

In addition to a comprehensive internal professional development and compliance training schedule, staff participated in a range of external professional development opportunities including Team Teach, Restorative Practice in Schools, Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) training, ESDM Introductory and Advanced Training, Functional Behaviour Assessment and Positive Behaviour Support, Autism and Anxiety, The SOS Approach to Feeding, and Sensory Processing Issues in People with ASD. Representatives from the team also attended the 2017 Asia Pacific Autism Conference (APAC) in Sydney.

Early Childhood Intervention Group Programs

ECI programs are flexible and individualised for children under the age of six years. Developed and delivered by Autism Queensland's ESTS professionals, they focus on the key features of ASD including behaviour, communication and social skills.

In 2017, five centre-based programs supporting 30 children were delivered in Brisbane by the ESTS team – three at the Sunnybank Hills and two at Brighton. Each centre offered a group for children under the age of 3½ years which was staffed at a higher level to recognise the extra individual input required for such young children.

School Advisory Visits

In 2017, Non School Organisations (NSO), Department of Education, continued to provide funding support for the provision of a School Advisory Service that supports students with ASD attending State, Independent and Catholic schools. Across the year, Autism Queensland staff visited 1016 students in 468 schools across the State through this service.

Visits to schools in the SEQ region, including Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast and Toowoomba, occurred on an ongoing basis throughout the school year.

A successful pilot of a similar local service delivery provided by staff from the Rockhampton, Mackay and Cairns centres in the second half of 2016 saw the model implemented in 2017. Schools in the Gladstone region continue to be supported from Brisbane due to the smaller staff numbers at the centre.

Schools in areas where a local Autism Queensland centre does not exist continue to be supported through a program of scheduled outreach trips, details of which are released early in the year to enable schools to plan for, and book into, that visit by the advisory team.

Regional outreach services in 2017 included four trips to Emerald, Kingaroy and Gympie, three visits each to the Bundaberg, Charleville and Chinchilla/Tara Dalby regions, two each to the Roma/St George/Goondiwindi, Townsville, Gladstone, Warwick/Stanthorpe, Maryborough/Hervey Bay regions, and one to Longreach, Mount Isa and Weipa.

Many of these regional trips included visits to small and remote towns and the homes of students participating in School of Distance Education.

It must be acknowledged the additional trips to schools in Charleville, Kingaroy, Gympie and Emerald were made possible after a request for additional funding was lodged with the NSO and accepted.





The Gympie and Kingaroy regions experienced a higher than usual demand, and at the end of year five visits had been made to schools in the area. Staff liaised closely with the schools to prioritise support and provide the best possible assistance. In 2018 schools in this area will receive ongoing visits alongside other schools in the SEQ region.

An annual evaluation of the service indicated a high level of satisfaction with 87 percent of respondents rating it as very or highly effective, and less than three percent respondents rating the service as not effective.

Individual Therapy, Education and Mentoring Support

The ESTS team provide on and offsite services to individuals including speech pathology, occupational therapy, ESDM therapy, psychology, mentoring and life coaching. These services are delivered at Autism Queensland's Brighton and Sunnybank Centres, homes, schools and other community settings.

Autism Consultant Service

The Autism Queensland Autism Consultants provide a highly flexible and individualised service to schools and their students through provision of individual therapy or education support, professional development, teacher coaching and mentoring, parent liaison support and/or case management. An Autism Consultant works as an integral part of the school across the year, ensuring ASD expertise is embedded within the school. Schools opt for an Autism Queensland teacher, speech pathologist or occupational therapist depending on their specific needs.

During 2017, Autism Consultants worked at eight schools in the Brisbane area, and in all instances the feedback was overwhelmingly positive regarding the quality of the Autism Queensland staff and the effectiveness of the model in supporting students, school staff and families.

Group Programs

The ESTS team offered a range of holiday and short-term programs during 2017. The *Cool Conversations* program to help children aged 8-12 years build conversation skills continued to grow in popularity across the year, and two new programs, *Mind your Moves* and *Senior Survival Skills*, were introduced. Both continue to be reshaped to suit the needs of the participants accessing them. The *Fun, Friends and Feelings* social skills program for children aged 5-7 years and their parents continued to be well attended.

The Secret Agent Society (SAS) program to develop social/emotional skills for children aged 8-12 years was again offered, and a Sibling Group was developed and successfully run by a Social Work student under the supervision of the SEQ South Team Leader.

Staff continued to be involved in two projects with The Cooperative Research Centre for Living with Autism (Autism CRC) in 2017.

Education Support and Therapy Services (continued)



The Early Years Behaviour Support Project uses remote technology to support more traditional methods of face-to-face support to address the needs of classroom teachers in rural and remote regions and students with ASD and complex needs. An Autism Queensland team of teacher, speech pathologist and occupational therapist worked with three schools in rural Queensland during 2017, with additional support from an Indigenous Liaison Officer for two students.

The Models of Practice for Teachers to Support Transition through School Project focused on the feasibility and sustainability of teaching practices to support students on the autism spectrum to make successful transitions within early and middle year classrooms in mainstream schools. An ESTS teacher provided coaching support to teachers at a school in South East Queensland.

Information Service

Autism Queensland has for many years provided a telephone and email information service. Phones are manned, and emails responded to, 8.30am-4pm, Monday to Friday.

This unfunded service is a vital means of accessing support and links for parents and carers, educators, other professionals and members of the wider community. In 2017, the team responded to 2050 telephone, and 424 email, requests for information and support, in addition to providing ongoing contact with families and schools regarding school visits and programs. There was a significant increase in the number of enquiries relating to the NDIS and adults with autism.

Assessment Service

In response to a demand for diagnostic assessments and comprehensive multidisciplinary assessments, ESTS established a specialised assessment service. Development of Autism Queensland's diagnostic service was based on the Australian National Guidelines for Autism Diagnosis.

Autism Advisor Program

The Autism Advisor Program (AAP) is a national program which is part of the Helping Children with Autism (HCWA) package, funded by the Department of Social Services, Australian Government.

The role of the Autism Advisor is to provide families who have a child diagnosed with an ASD under the age of six years with information about autism, available funding, workshops and local support services they may access for their child and family. The advisors, also through their contact with families and local services, increase awareness of ASD and the importance of identifying and linking families with early intervention services in a timely manner.

A focus for the advisors during 2017 has been the increasing roll out of the NDIS in the specific towns and surrounding areas of Townsville, Mount Isa, Mackay, Toowoomba, Ipswich, Scenic Rim and Bundaberg. With the implementation of NDIS, registrations of children with a new diagnosis of ASD for the HCWA funding have ceased in most of these areas. Despite this, there has only been

a minimal reduction in the numbers of overall referrals for AAP, and advisors continue to support families in these areas who are currently receiving the HCWA funding until they become registered with NDIS. The result of the closure of these registrations for the HCWA funding has also meant a reduction in the budget provided by DSS to run the program.

The advisors have linked with the NDIS Early Childhood Early Intervention Partners for these areas to understand the referral pathways for families with a child with a new diagnosis. They have also had to manage an increased number of enquiries from families, pediatricians, and community agencies about the NDIS.

Over 2000 families attended initial consultations with the AAP during 2017. The program also continued to work closely with the Early Intervention Indigenous Liaison Officers and the team that provides the Early Days Workshops to ensure these programs and the AAP were meeting the needs of newly identified families.

Early Days National Coordination

Early Days is a national program that provides a series of free workshops for parents, grandparents, carers and families of young children (0-6 years) who have ASD or are going through the assessment and diagnostic process.

The goal of the workshops is to assist families to understand more about ASD and at the same to develop the skills and confidence to support the development of their child's learning at home and in the community. The workshops also provide opportunities for families to connect with others raising a child with ASD, and to increase understanding of how to work with support services to achieve the best possible outcomes.

The eight workshops in the Early Days suite are delivered nationally and can be tailored to suit the needs of Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse families.

Autism Queensland hosts the Early Days National Coordinator who oversees the development, review and evaluation of the workshop program. The role includes supervision and guidance of facilitators to ensure sufficient workshops are provided to participants to acquit target requirements.

An Early Days Facilitator National Forum was held in May 2017 to review workshop content and explore multi-modal delivery styles. It also provided the opportunity for facilitators to share successes and develop strategies to mitigate challenges in the current changing social sector.

Since the commencement of the program in July 2011, 2671 workshops have been delivered to approximately 22,000 people across Australia. In 2017, 303 workshops were delivered to more than 2700 people.

Early Days workshops are funded by the Department of Social Services under the HCWA initiative.

Early Intervention Indigenous Liaison Officer Program

The Early Intervention Indigenous Liaison Officer (EI ILO) program provides workshop delivery to families, carers and service providers throughout Australia. Its primary aim is to raise awareness of childhood disability within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and build relationships between communities, service providers, and disability organisations.

Liaison officers (EI ILOs) based at Autism Queensland are responsible for the national delivery of the program. They provide information and assistance relevant to the needs of childhood disability in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities such as:

- Recognition of developmental red flags
- Pathways toward diagnosis
- Information about disability
- Funding options
- Connecting with service providers.

Working in close consultation with these communities, the EI ILOs maintain strong relationships with facilitators of the Early Days program, and support state and territory autism associations, Carers Australia, disability service providers, Aboriginal health and medical services, child care and other early childhood services.



Education Support and Therapy Services (continued)

In 2017, the National Coordinator Early Days reviewed workshop content to reflect the changes in HCWA and Better Start funding streams to the NDIS and community supports.

Throughout the year, the EI ILO team initiated contact with 174 stakeholders, hosted information booths at 18 conferences and forums, and delivered 48 Indigenous Community Workshops to 361 participants, including provision of support to 81 families and carers.

Professional Learning and Development Services

The Professional Learning and Development Services (PLDS) team provides a range of learning opportunities for parents, family members, professionals, and others working with or supporting people with ASD.

Autism Queensland's Professional Learning Facilitators have extensive experience in working with people on the autism spectrum and in the facilitation of effective professional development and parent education.

The PLDS team prepare and present customised workshops with individualised content in locations across Queensland. These workshops are tailored to meet the specific needs of small and large groups and are delivered at schools, childcare centres, disability services, employment agencies and other venues as required.

All workshops are based on a thorough knowledge base and aim to be practical and easy to understand.

In 2017, the team delivered 48 customised workshops across Queensland to disability organisations, State, Catholic and Independent Sector schools, disability employment agencies, employers of people with ASD, government disability and family support providers, Child Care and Outside School Hours Care providers.

They also delivered 35 scheduled workshops on a selection of topics throughout the year in locations including Brisbane, Caboolture, Toowoomba, Roma, Longreach, Townsville, Hervey Bay, Cairns, Rockhampton, Mackay and Mount Isa. Popular sessions included: *Understanding ASD, Clues to Behaviour Success, Behaviour Success with Young Children, Developing Inclusive Strategies for Students, Core Strategies for Out of Hours School Care Success, and Understanding and Managing Stress in Individuals with ASD.*

A Research to Practice series, developed in conjunction with the Autism Queensland Research and Business Development Team and featuring presentations by researchers from Autism Queensland and the Autism CRC, was introduced in 2017. The three seminars, presented in May, July and October at the Autism Hub, Woolloongabba, were fully subscribed with 80 teachers and therapists attending each one.

Team members also worked with the ESTS team on the Autism CRC Early Years Behaviour Support Project, attending the schools, conducting face to face visits, phone calls and skype meetings. They also developed an Individual Learning Plan for students and advised on data collection to analyse behaviour.

The PLDS team is also responsible for delivering the Early Days workshops in Queensland. In 2017 they facilitated 52 group and individual workshops in regional and metropolitan centres. They also attended and presented at the Early Days Facilitator Forum.



Autism Queensland continued its involvement with Positive Partnerships, a program that provides information and education for parents and carers of school aged children with ASD and a professional development program for teachers and other school staff involved in supporting students with ASD. The PLDS facilitators participated in the delivery of a number of these workshops together with facilitators from the education sector and Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect).

In addition to their training commitments, the facilitators liaised with a range of organisations, peak bodies, agencies and government departments. They continued to raise awareness of the needs of individuals with ASD and to share information about other Autism Queensland services.



Regional services

Autism Queensland continued to provide services in 2017 through its regional centres in Gladstone, Rockhampton, Mackay and Cairns.

These services included ECI group programs, short, intensive programs such as the *Fun, Friends & Feelings* social skills program, after school groups including *Social Skills* and *Lego Therapy*, and individual therapy.

In 2017, the centre in Mackay was still the only one to operate under the scheme, with the remainder scheduled to transition in 2018.

Gladstone

In early 2017, the Gladstone team welcomed the team leader back from maternity leave, and appointed two new therapists.

This growth in staff saw the service transform into a positive and enthusiastic cohort working proactively to increase capacity and ensure retention of clients through quality services and a nurturing approach towards families. Improvements to the ECI group were also made, incorporating workable and realistic strategies from the ESDM. Training received across the year helped to consolidate current understandings and directly enhance programming that was already occurring.

The growth in staff numbers and services, also resulted in increased hours for the roles of both the team leader and administration officer.

Preparations for the rollout of the NDIS in the Gladstone region included pre-planning meetings with over 70 families, attending and hosting information sessions and increasing staff awareness and procedures.

Community networking continued to bring fresh faces in the door and information packs about available services and the NDIS were distributed to medical and Community Health centres.

Autism Queensland Gladstone helped initiate and plan a number of events for the Children's Festival for Under 8s

Week, Disability Action Week, Agnes Waters Information Day, a Professional Networking Night, Community Meeting, the Collaborative Community Sector Action Group, as well as a movie night during April for the Go Blue for Autism campaign.

The Children's Festival Week also won a State Award for its efforts to celebrate our Under 8s.

Rockhampton

The Rockhampton service ran four ECI group programs in 2017, including for the first time, a toddler (under 3½ years) group. The increase in demand was attributed to the improvement in diagnosing at a younger age and registration with Autism Queensland of younger children.

Observation of the rapid progress of the young children attending this program has reinforced the importance of early intervention services and the privilege it is to provide this service in regional Queensland.

Challenges with recruiting allied health professionals necessitated repeated advertising of still unfilled positions. However, despite gaps in the team, program delivery has remained aligned with the Autism Queensland approach of being highly client-focused and family-centred.

The extension to the centre, which had been made possible through a grant by The John Villiers Trust and completed in 2016, was officially opened in June by Trust Chairman Darvell Hutchinson AM. Children attending the centre and their families joined other invited guests at this special event. For the children, the highlight of the day was a colourful and delicious cake.

Feedback from families attending the centre continued to be positive with one recognising our service as 'very important people in my family's village'.



The NSO School Advisory Visits were well utilised in the Central Highlands area with staff delivering these for a week each term, however requests for visits in Rockhampton and surrounding areas were slower, possibly due to the regionalising of this process.

The team is optimistic that demand will increase in 2018. They enjoy delivering these services as they create opportunities to build positive relationships with schools and families throughout the Central Queensland region.

Training opportunities for staff were exciting, innovative, and focused on evidence-based approaches. Staff attended many courses and conferences including: Early Start Denver Model, Secret Agent Society, SOS Feeding Therapy, and APAC 2017. Bringing these learnings into practice has been beneficial for the families and children with whom we work.

The team continued to provide information and advice by phone and to people who drop in to the centre, as well as providing resources and books on loan to parents and professionals. They also supported a number of community events including Under 8s Day, Disability Action Week, community fairs and expos.

Darvell Hutchinson AM, Chairman, The John Villiers Trust and Mary Wilson, Team Leader Rockhampton, at the official opening of the centre's extension.



Mackay

The Mackay team commenced the year with a full calendar and waiting list.

The roll out of the NDIS in the Mackay-Whitsunday region provided funding to many individuals with ASD in the region, which in turn led to a high demand for all services including occupational therapy, speech therapy, ESDM therapy, social skills groups and ECI group programs.

The centre continued its transition from offering early intervention only to working with clients of all ages and all therapists having a full caseload.

Demand for ECI groups was sustained and three, two-day groups were delivered in 2017.

Due to demand, a second speech pathologist commenced at the beginning of the year, and mid-year was joined by a second occupational therapist and behaviour support teacher. The increase in service delivery also necessitated the expansion of the administration role with a part-time administration officer appointed to support the existing full-time role.

The Mackay centre's successful ESDM journey continued in 2017. Two more professional staff became certified ESDM therapists, three new therapists completed the three-day intensive training in Brisbane and commenced individual ESDM therapy sessions with clients, and one certified therapist undertook para-professional training.

Across the year all staff delivered a high number of face to face services and 2017 ended as it started, with a very positive outlook and continued enquires for services from potential clients.

'Without NDIS, our children would not have been able to access all the amazing therapy they have benefited from this year through Autism Queensland! Because of their plans, we've celebrated achievements & milestones and reached goals that have made such a positive impact on our lives.'

Sherri-Lee, mother

'NDIS has enabled Patrick to have a one on one support worker who has worked intensely with him over the past 9 months. He has gone from being at home in his own environment for an extended period of time and refusing to leave the house, to being able to leave the house, and wanting to! He is able to go to new places, is learning how to make social connections, is increasing his tolerance to others and noise in general. ... We are all looking forward to the next 9 months of achievements.'

Johanna, mother

Autism Queensland Regional Team Leaders: (l-r) Tanya Kunzler (Cairns); Mary Wilson (Rockhampton), Ann-Marie Watson (Manager Regional Services), Kylie Smith (Mackay), Bonita Chard (Gladstone).

Regional services (continued)

Cairns

The Far North Queensland Centre of Excellence at Edmonton, near Cairns, delivers services to the Far North Queensland region, including the Cape, Tablelands and Johnstone regions.

In 2017, two ECI programs were delivered for children aged 3-5 years, as well as other short after school programs including *LEGO Robotics*, and *Mindfulness and Self-Regulation*. The *Fun, Friends and Feelings* groups supported school-aged children in school holidays.

Staff steadily maintained caseloads supporting ECI clients, individual therapy clients and provided regular school advisory visits during the year, including a one-week trip to Weipa to visit nine children.



Staff changes throughout the year include the happily anticipated return of the administration officer from maternity leave, and a new occupational therapist, teacher and psychologist joining the team. We also had the joy of meeting a new gorgeous baby born mid-year to one of our teachers. Sadly, we also farewelled two staff who had been an integral part of the Cairns team.

Staff attended various professional development opportunities during the year including attendance at APAC 2017. Two more staff were trained in the ESDM.

Another successful Charity Golf Day was held at Paradise Palms in Cairns, and the 27 businesses who registered teams raised over \$9000 for the centre.

The focus in late 2017 was the NDIS as the roll out date of July 2018 approached. Families started to attend pre-planning meetings and prepare themselves for this new funding opportunity. Staff were also required to increase their face to face delivery of services.

'Thanks Nicole, for giving me the opportunity to come observe my son in class today. I appreciate all you and the teacher aides do for him.'

Jennifer, mother

'Thank you very much for your time today when you visited Yungaburra State School regarding my grandson. I appreciated your interest in him and your ideas regarding other management strategies for him - especially the notebook idea which I shall implement today!'

Maxine, Grandmother

Team building opportunities presented to the regional centre team leaders in 2017 allowed for increased collaboration and built greater rapport. This has helped align regional services and been extremely helpful in developing a closer relationship between the centres.

Vocational programs

2017 saw the continued expansion of Autism Queensland's popular *Studio G* program.

Interest in the Brisbane program of *Studio G* remained strong in 2017, as did Autism Queensland's relationship with the host venue, The Edge, the State Library of Queensland's Arts and Technology hub at South Bank. Our participants, aged from 16 to 25 years, have access to a digital media lab, 3D printing, laser cutting and a sound recording studio. This facility has proven crucial to the program as most of our participants have a keen interest in technology, therefore access to this space has encouraged them to attend *Studio G* and through their attendance, to re-engage with the world in a creative and positive fashion.

Studio G in Mackay continued to be enjoyed by a growing number of attendees. The program runs from the Central Queensland University's city campus. As well as providing participants with strong ties to the university and higher education sector, the location also offers a technologically advanced and central location for participants to engage their digital learning in graphic design and design principles, video, photography post production and web design.

In 2017, the program expanded to Cairns, and continuing our relationship with Queensland libraries, runs out of the Cairns City library in Abbott Street. As with the venues in Brisbane and Mackay, the venue provides participants with a central technological and social hub.

Both the Mackay and Cairns *Studio G* programs are open to participants aged 15 to 25 years. All three programs run for three hours, twice weekly during school terms.

In 2017, the range of programs offered through *Studio G* were expanded to include *The Girls' Guide to Ruling the Internet* and *Teen Tech Shed*.

The Girls' Guide was run as a school holiday program from the Department of Education's Autism Hub at Woolloongabba. The five day program included online safety, finding your YouTube personality, creating a channel and recording and editing videos.

Teen Tech Shed is an after-school version of *Studio G* for participants aged 12-15 years that runs at the Autism Hub two afternoons a week during the school term. The program is a social group for young people on the autism spectrum and encourages appropriate socialising around technology while assisting students to extend their knowledge of programming, coding and digital media.

Teen Tech Shed mentors are current students or recent graduates in Creative Industries programs with a strong IT focus such as Game Design, Coding, Illustration, Animation and Film and Television. They work with the participants to promote social skills and create opportunities for the students to learn more about technology.

Professional projects undertaken by *Studio G* participants in 2017 included a collaboration with Griffith University and the Autism CRC on the *Story Time* project which involved our participants developing digital media resources to support libraries in creating more autism-friendly spaces in council libraries.

Studio G participants also created training videos for the Autism CRC that promoted inclusive teaching practices in mainstream classrooms. The videos focussed on structured teaching approaches which incorporated visual schedules and work systems.



Participants were also employed as digital media artists on a goal setting tool designed by Autism Queensland to help adolescents on the autism spectrum use as part of their NDIS planning meetings. They also provided the illustrations for up to 80 flash cards containing imagery that expresses the lived experience of young people on the spectrum.

This paid work improved their professional opportunities, increased their skills set and provided useful contacts within the university, government and private sectors.

Community Services



Autism Queensland provides accommodation and social support services to young people and adults with ASD living in the Brisbane area.

Short Term Accommodation

Overnight and weekend short term accommodation services are provided at Sunnybank for children aged under 18yrs and Greenbank for ages 5 years to 65.

These services provide individuals with the opportunity to experience life away from home in a nurturing environment with experienced staff and facilities that cater for their needs.

Short term accommodation assists individuals to build their skill capacity which in turn reduces the lifetime costs associated with their care and support. Individuals accessing these services have the opportunity to expand on a variety of skills, including but not limited to:

- Coping in social environments
- Coping with change
- Personal care skills
- Expressing and developing self-determination.

In 2017 the Community Services team provided short term accommodation for 73 families. This support was made possible through ongoing partnerships with a number of organisations and government departments including the Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors.

Supported Independent Living

Autism Queensland supports adults aged 18 to 65 years to live in their own home in several locations across South East Queensland. These individuals receive 24 hour support by lifestyle support workers who are skilled in developing individual capacity whilst managing support needs, including behaviour support.

They receive assistance to complete all aspects of daily living, maximising choice and control and the development of independence including:

- Personal care
- Health Management
- Financial management of personal expenses
- Behaviour management
- Social inclusion and community access
- Transportation.

In 2017, the Autism Queensland Community Services team supported 18 adults living in seven houses throughout Brisbane.

Two of these long-term accommodation services transitioned to, and are now delivering, services under the NDIS. As the roll out commences in Brisbane from July 2018, the remaining five will transition across.

In-home Support

Autism Queensland's Community Services team also provides support to individuals within their family home. They work collaboratively with the person and his/her family to build skills, achieve goals, facilitate individual choice and control and optimise independence in key aspects of daily living, including but not limited to:

- Personal Care
- Cooking
- Behaviour management
- Transportation.

Host Provider Service

Autism Queensland is a registered Host Provider for *Your Life Your Choice* and provides assistance to families who wish to self-direct funding provided to them by the Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors.

Self-directed support is a funding approach that enables people with disability and their families to have greater choice and control over the disability services they received. It is also a key part of preparing Queensland for the NDIS.

Community Access

Autism Queensland provides community access services for individuals aged five to 65 years who wish to independently engage in community, social and recreational activities. In 2017, the team also continued to offer two regular social groups for adults and adolescents with ASD.

The Adult Recreation Group meets every second Friday evening in the Brisbane CBD to have dinner, go to the movies and the markets, listen to bands

and attend other events. This group is open to people aged 18 years and over who are independent and continued as always to be a positive experience for all those who participated.

The young people who are part of the Computer Club meet each week to enjoy movie and bowling nights along with internet café time. This Club provides these adolescents and adults with the opportunity to practice their social, communication and independent living skills as inclusive members of the community.

School Holiday Programs

Recurrent funding secured by Autism Queensland back in 2011 continued to enable the delivery of twice yearly school holiday programs at the Brighton and Sunnybank School campuses during the 2017 June and Christmas school holidays.



Client Services & Support

The role of Manager Client Services and Support was created in early 2017 with the aim of improving and streamlining the provision of information, services and support to individuals and families accessing Autism Queensland's services, or intending to do so.

Valerie Preston, formerly Manager Early Intervention and Regional Services, and a long time and very experienced member of the Autism Queensland team, was appointed to the role.

A new email address was set up and rolled out across the website, on program flyers and other access points in order to provide a direct access point into the organisation.

The role involved organising and conducting individual intake meetings for new clients to Autism Queensland, in addition to providing information to others who may potentially access a program or service.

The rollout of the NDIS in the Ipswich, Scenic Rim and Toowoomba regions, and the impending rollout in the Brisbane, Logan, Redland and Gold Coast regions has generated most of the work load with activities including:

- Responding to queries
- Conducting pre-planning meetings with clients in the Ipswich, Scenic Rim, Lockyer Valley and Somerset regions (as well as some for more regional clients, e.g., Toowoomba, St George)
- Running information sessions on *How to Access the NDIS* for clients in the Brisbane, Gold Coast and Fraser Coast regions
- Attending wide variety of seminars and workshops delivered by NDIS and others on many specific NDIS topics
- Setting up organisational processes for working with clients who have NDIS funding – Service Agreements, understanding and using the NDIS portal, claiming payments
- Delivering information sessions to Autism Queensland staff
- Assisting Autism Queensland staff in relation to individual NDIS scenarios they have experienced.



Across the year, 36 individual intake meetings were conducted at the Autism Queensland Brighton and Sunnybank Hills centres as well as at the clients' schools.

Fourteen information sessions for Autism Queensland staff at both Brighton and Sunnybank Hills were delivered, and another 14 for individuals and their families registered with Autism Queensland were presented at Brighton, Sunnybank Hills, Helensvale, Elanora and Maryborough.

And finally, 89 individual pre-planning meetings were conducted at the Brighton and Sunnybank Hills centres, over the phone, in clients' homes and even at the Goodna McDonald's.

Valerie Preston presenting to families at the Sunnybank Hills Open Day in October.

Research & Business Development

Autism Queensland aims to conduct and support research, and promote evidence-informed practice that will enhance the potential of individuals with ASD to achieve valued life outcomes.

Supporting and undertaking research on Autism Spectrum Disorder

Involvement in the Cooperative Research Centre for Living with Autism (Autism CRC)

Autism Queensland is an essential participant in the Autism CRC. Dr Jill Ashburner, Manager Research and Business Development is currently the project leader for the following projects funded through the Autism CRC:

- Overcoming the difficulties of students with ASD in written expression using assistive technology and writing strategy instruction.** Students with ASD frequently have difficulties with handwriting and the conceptual aspects of written composition, which can impact negatively on their academic success. Preliminary results supported the effectiveness of a new intervention developed by QUT-based PhD candidate Anne Ozdowska, which includes video modelling and an App to structure their writing. Almost all participants wrote longer compositions and achieved higher NAPLAN scores for writing. The team is currently working on reporting these findings.
- Helping students with ASD stay on-task and transition between tasks.** Students with ASD often have difficulty attending to tasks, and transitioning from one task to another. This research explored an approach that provides explicit cues about 'what to do', 'how long for', 'when the task is finished', and 'what happens next'. All the students who participated in the study demonstrated improvements in on-task behaviour. Research staff, Dr Satine Winter and Stephanie Callaghan, worked on developing an online eLearning resource for teachers on these approaches, including video-clips, online resources, and PowerPoint™ presentations.

- The development and evaluation of a goal setting tool for adolescents and adults on the autism spectrum.** This tool aims to assist young people to develop and prioritise their goals, so they can actively engage in the planning processes of organisations such as the National Disability Insurance Agency, disability services providers or schools. This picture-based, card-sort, tool covers a broad range of areas, including independent living, and social, community, educational and employment participation. Project officer Vicki Tomkins worked with Autism Queensland's Studio G program to develop the pictures for the cards. In 2017, many of the cards were revised in response to feedback from 38 people on the spectrum and 30 family members. The revised tool will be trialled by young people on the spectrum with assistance from professional staff in early 2018.

The Research and Business Development team is also contributing to other Autism CRC projects including:

- Impact of improved classroom acoustics on the educational outcomes of students with ASD.** Students with ASD are known to have difficulties in processing of speech in noisy environments. In 2017, sound field amplification systems (SFAs) were installed in South East Queensland classrooms. The findings with respect to the effect of SFAs on classroom attention, processing of instructions, and academic performance on 18 students on the spectrum and 17 typically developing students are currently being analysed.
- Early Years Behaviour Support Project:** This study aims to evaluate the use of tele-classroom consultation practices to support teachers to meet the needs of students with ASD aged 5-8 years with challenging behaviours. In 2017, a multidisciplinary team from Autism Queensland provided support to rural schools with a focus on the needs of Indigenous students and received very positive feedback.

- Transition Models of Practice in Primary School and Secondary School:** This project concerns the evaluation of models of practice and related multimedia resource packages to support students with ASD in transitioning into primary school and secondary schools. In 2017, three Autism Queensland teachers provided in-class and online coaching in metropolitan, regional and remote area schools. The results of this study are currently being analysed.
- ASD Educational Needs Analysis:** This project led by QUT researcher, Dr Beth Saggars, involved a nationwide online survey on the educational needs of students with ASD which was completed by 248 educators, 179 specialists, 107 students on the spectrum and 934 parents. Dr Ashburner conducted an analysis of data pertaining to the sensory issues of students which suggested that classroom noise is the most problematic issue, followed by unpleasant touch, crowding, and excessively bright lights.

Ongoing Autism Queensland research projects

- My Sensory Experiences** is a tool developed by the Autism Queensland research team that utilises photographic representations of sensory experiences in everyday contexts (e.g., classrooms, supermarkets), combined with open-ended questions to assist young people to describe their sensory experiences. The tool includes child/adolescent and adult versions, and a family observation form. This tool has been refined using three cycles of action research involving 44 children and adults on the spectrum aged 8 to 49 years, 33 parents and five occupational therapists. The team is currently working on reporting the findings.

Research & Business Development (continued)

- The Have Your Say Survey** project involved sending out five surveys for parents of children yet to start school, primary school-aged children, secondary school-aged children, and adults on the spectrum, in addition to a self-report survey for adults on the spectrum. The surveys included a range of open and closed questions on a wide range of issues, including (a) experiences with autism diagnostic services, (b) support needs of the person on the spectrum, (c) support needs of the family, (d) education support needs and schooling preferences, (f) employment, tertiary education or other day-time activities of adults, (g) levels of independence. In December 2017, 668 completed surveys had been returned. The data will be analysed in 2018.

Supporting local Autism researchers

The Research and Business Development team has continued to support research that promises to enhance the outcomes of individuals with ASD by advertising projects to potential participants. In 2017, Autism Queensland assisted with recruitment of participants for 18 external research projects. People with ASD or their families interested in participating in research should consult the Autism Queensland website for details.



Above & next page: Sample of cards used in the goal setting tool for adolescents and adults on the autism spectrum

Sharing research findings through publications

Dr Ashburner and research officer, Natasha Bobir co-authored an article on the Studio G program: *Evaluation of an innovative interest-based post-school transition program for young people with ASD*. Dr Ashburner also co-authored eight journal articles including four articles on bullying of students with ASD, one on sound-in noise perception of students with ASD, and one of strategies to increase the on-task behaviour of students on the autism spectrum. She also co-authored a chapter with Dr Saggers on: *Creating learning spaces that promote wellbeing, participation and engagement: Implications for students on the autism spectrum*. An article on Autism Queensland's *Family Goal Setting Tool* written by Senior Occupational Therapist Judy Jones and edited by Natasha Bobir is currently under review. Two chapters were contributed to a text published in 2017: *Occupation Centred Practice with Children, 2nd Edition*, edited by Sylvia Rodger and Anne Kennedy-Behr, including a chapter on "Occupational Goal Setting with Children and Families" by Judy Jones and a chapter on "Occupation Centred Intervention in The School Setting" co-authored by Dr Ashburner.

Sharing research findings through conference and workshop presentations

In 2017, the Research & Business Development team assisted with the organisation with, and contributed to, presentations for a Research to Practice series showcasing recent research conducted by Autism Queensland and the Autism CRC. The first seminar, *Sensory processing issues of people with ASD: What we can do to help*, was held on 19 May. The second seminar on 21 July focused on *Supporting students with ASD at school using a Universal Design for learning approach*, and the third on 29 October was titled: *Social & Emotional Well-being of people with ASD*. Dr Ashburner also presented on *My Sensory Experiences: A tool with*

visual cues to enable people on the spectrum to describe their sensory challenges at the Occupational Therapy Australia National Conference in Perth on 19 July, and APAC 2017 in Sydney on 8 September. She also presented a paper on: *The development and evaluation of the Adolescent/Adult Goal Setting Tool* at APAC with Vicki Tomkins.

Supporting undergraduate and post-graduate education

Autism Queensland continues to support the education of undergraduate and post-graduate students. Senior speech pathologist Karly Green provided a lecture on ASD and early language development to University of Queensland speech pathology students in May. Dr Ashburner is currently co-supervising two PhD students at the University of Queensland and one PhD student from QUT. Student placements are also regularly considered and accepted when possible.

Promotion of evidence-informed, high quality practice at Autism Queensland

- During 2017, staff conducted literature searches on 178 different topics to support Autism Queensland programs.
- Karly Green and Judy Jones have made important contributions to high-quality evidence informed practice at Autism Queensland in the two days per week dedicated to the senior therapy role. Judy has changed to a role in the ESTS team, and Caitlin Taggart has taken over the role. The senior therapists have contributed in the following ways:
 - Providing regular professional supervision to all therapy staff (up to 23 speech pathologists and 19 occupational therapists) with the frequency of contact depending on the level of support required.
 - Work-shadowing the therapists to provide on-the-job advice on clinical issues.



- Visiting Autism Queensland's regional centres to provide supervision and work-shadowing of therapists based at these centres, and to provide discipline-specific consultation to the programs, particularly when therapy positions have been vacant.
- Contributing to recruitment by providing feedback on the written applications for therapy positions.
- Providing input into the selection and use of formal assessment tools at Autism Queensland.
- Providing recommendations of protocols for assessment, goal setting and outcome measurement across Autism Queensland.
- Providing recommendation on documentation and report writing protocols in Autism Queensland services.
- Organising multi-disciplinary mentoring meetings on a range of topics including play assessment and intervention, Social Thinking™ approaches, universal design for learning, the CO-OP cognitive approach, and feedback from the APAC conference.
- Contributions to and review of information papers for teachers and parents.
- Karly Green has also contributed to high quality practices at Autism Queensland by:
 - Supporting staff undertaking certification to be ESDM practitioners.
 - Coordinating ESDM programs across Autism Queensland.
 - Providing professional development to program assistants on the ESDM approach.
 - Providing input into the use of goal setting tools in pre-planning meetings prior to the NDIS.
- Contributions to Autism Queensland by Judy Jones included:
 - Providing advice on the use of goal-setting tools for NDIS pre-planning.
 - Providing information to group leaders on complex toileting issues.
 - Consulting with other organisations (e.g., State Library of Queensland) regards the creation of autism-friendly environments.



Community Engagement

Autism Queensland's involvement with the autism community is extensive. Our teams participate in community forums, attend special events and partner in special projects, and we also engage with our registered clients, supporters, and other stakeholders through social media, e-newsletters and the Autism Queensland website.

The 2017 Go Blue for Autism campaign commenced as it always does on April 2, World Autism Awareness Day, but this year with a special event at Warner Bros Movie World. A wet morning did not dampen the enthusiasm of the many families who took advantage of a special entry price, access to the park for an hour before the official opening time, and adjustments to some of the rides to make the experience more pleasant for those with sensory issues. The following week Autism Queensland's Professional Learning and Development team presented free information sessions at the Brisbane City Council's Brisbane Square Library.

Go Blue for Autism supporters held over 130 events during April, and as far afield as Weipa and Quilpie. Over half (58 percent) of these events were run by schools, while the remainder were divided between early childhood centres and kindergartens (28 percent), businesses and other organisations (10 percent), and individuals (nine percent). Over \$46,000 was raised through the efforts of these fundraisers and the people who supported their events, combined with general merchandise sales and donations.

Other major activities across the year included a Charity Golf Day at Paradise Palms Cairns in August, where over 100 locals swapped their work day attire for golfing clothes to enjoy a day on the greens in support of the centre in Edmonton; and an Open Day at Sunnybank Hills in October to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the opening of the school. Coincidentally 2017 also marked 40 years since the opening of the first buildings on the site.



On Friday, December 1, finalists in the 2017 Creative Futures Recognition Awards gathered at Government House in Brisbane as guests of His Excellency the Honourable Paul de Jersey AC, Governor of Queensland and Mrs Kaye de Jersey. His Excellency, as patron of Autism Queensland, hosted morning tea with Mrs de Jersey and presented awards to winners and special commendation recipients in six categories. The Awards are presented annually and recognise the contributions of people living with autism, as well as the parents, carers, schools and businesses who support them.

In 2017, Autism Queensland was again fortunate to be the beneficiary of donations received for annual appeals, through workplace giving, community events and other fundraising activities. Many organisations also contributed in the form of providing volunteer groups who attended working bees at the centres.

We would like to sincerely thank everyone who supported Autism Queensland across the year.

1. Above: Artwork by students at the Sunnybank Hills school campus added a special touch to the entrance during April.

2. Opposite page top left: Tanya Kunzler, Team Leader Cairns with Felicity Maxa from Maxa Constructions at the Cairns Charity Golf Day.

3. Opposite page top right: One of the many spectacular displays at the Forest Oak Drive Christmas Lights Fundraiser, Coomera.



2



3

The following were major supporters in 2017.

- Ashmore State School
- Australian Sports Commission
- Autism CRC
- Autism Hub and Reading Centre
- Bracken Ridge Lions Club
- Brisbane City Council
- Carbrook State School
- C & M Calvert
- Cairns Libraries
- Credit Union Australia
- Cooktown Crusaders
- CQUni Mackay
- Deloitte Australia
- Department of Social Services, Australian Government
- Footprint Books
- Forest Oak Drive Christmas Lights Fundraiser
- Funk It Up
- G&K Bird
- Gardening a Difference
- GG-SWF Foundation
- Go Blue Charity Events
- Harold Wheen Preschool
- IGA Brighton
- Interdepartmental Accounting Group Inc
- A&B Jennings
- J.J. Richards & Sons Pty Ltd
- Linemarking Professionals
- Lucky Star Tavern
- Local Matters Grill'd
- Loganholme State School
- AN Longland
- Magpies Senior Rugby League Club Mackay
- Master Engraving
- Maxa Constructions
- C McCaul
- Mustang Owners Club of Australia (Qld) Inc
- Non School Organisations, Department of Education
- Piccones Supa IGA
- Quest Eight Mills Plains
- Quilpie Shire Council
- R Stephen
- Rotary Club of Mackay North
- 7SCR Foundation, Department of Defence
- Suncorp Group Brighter Futures Community Giving Program
- Sunnybank Community and Sports Club
- Taiwan Women's League of Queensland
- Tannum Sands State School
- The Australian Decorative and Fine Arts Society (Brisbane River)
- The Cory Charitable Foundation
- The Edge, State Library of Queensland
- The Everhard Industries Foundation
- The Hart Family Perptual Trust
- The Honda Foundation
- The John Villiers Trust
- The Lowood Truck Show
- The Mareeba Calabrian Club & Fagnano Castello Ass Inc
- The Workshops Rail Museum
- Warner Bros Movie World
- Western Cape College
- Westwood Group
- Workcover Queensland

Directors' Report

For the year ended 31 December 2017

The directors present their report, together with the financial statements, on the company for the year ended 31 December 2017.

Directors

The following persons were directors of the company during the whole of the financial year and up to the date of this report, unless otherwise stated:

- Barry Dennien
- Danielle Butcher (Appointed to casual vacancy 25 September 2017)
- Michael Glover (Resigned 18 July 2017)
- Karen Hauff (Appointed to casual vacancy 25 September 2017)
- Neil Makepeace (Appointed to casual vacancy 25 September 2017)
- Wendy McTainsh
- Dr. Venerina Pennisi
- Joanne Peulen (Appointed to casual vacancy 25 September 2017)
- Joanne Stephens (Resigned 19 June 2017)
- Paul Stokes (Resigned 20 December 2017)

Review of Operations

The operating result for 2017 was a surplus of \$1,123,692 (2016: \$926,557).

Government subsidies continued to provide the major operational income for Autism Queensland Limited. Income from fee for service activities has shown steady growth. The results for the year include a capital donation of \$220,852 whereas 2016 included a significant bequest of \$100,180.

With Mackay region's complete transition to NDIS by mid-year the financial impact on the operations for 2017 was limited to only the second half of the year, but our exposure will continue to grow as further regions are transitioned from 1 November 2017 leading up to 30 June 2019 when it is scheduled that Queensland will be fully transitioned.

Objectives

VISION

The vision of Autism Queensland Limited is for a life of participation, opportunity and choice for people with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

MISSION

Our mission is to support people living with Autism Spectrum Disorder through responsive, evidence-informed practice and advocacy.

VALUES

The underpinning values of Autism Queensland Limited are excellence, innovation and equity achieved through person-centred and consumer-driven activities.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Our strategy is to deliver quality services and support for people living with Autism Spectrum Disorder through financial sustainability, growth and supportive infrastructure.

Directors' Report (continued)

For the year ended 31 December 2017

Goals and strategies

Goals:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality Sustainability Growth Infrastructure
Strategies:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consumer focus Quality focus Economies of scale Cost Focus Partnership and collaboration Organisation development IT infrastructure Leverage applications

Principal Activities

- Autism specific education through an accredited independent school, comprising two Education and Therapy centres, for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) delivered by an expert team of teachers, therapists and psychologists
- Early childhood intervention and programs for older children and adolescents delivered through our centres in Brisbane, Gladstone, Rockhampton, Mackay and Cairns
- Autism Queensland's allied health and education professionals deliver a range of services and supports, including individual therapy and assessments, for people of all ages and individually designed to meet a diverse range of client needs
- Education support services delivered by multi-disciplinary teams with expertise in the education of children with ASD across State, Catholic and Independent schools in Queensland
- Holiday, after school and community access programs
- Autism Queensland Limited hosts the Autism Advisor Program for parents of children under the age of 7 recently diagnosed with ASD in Queensland
- Autism Queensland Limited hosts the National Co-ordinator of the Early Days Workshops program for parents of children under the age of 7 newly diagnosed with ASD or undergoing assessment. We also deliver the Early Days workshops in Queensland
- Autism Queensland Limited hosts the Early Intervention Indigenous Liaison Program that aims to raise awareness of childhood disability within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and build relationships between these communities, service providers and disability organisations
- Accommodation for adults with ASD and complex needs by way of full support 24/7, 52 weeks a year
- Respite for children and adults with ASD
- Studio G facilitated group program for 16-24 year olds delivered in Brisbane and Mackay
- Autism Queensland Limited is registered as a Host Provider to assist families to administer Queensland Government funding received
- Non-accredited Training - Professional Learning and Development Services
- Autism Queensland Limited is registered with the National Disability Insurance Scheme to provide services to people with ASD
- Autism Queensland Limited is an Essential Participant in the Autism CRC. Research and development at Autism Queensland Limited is led by Dr. Jill Ashburner.

Directors' Report (continued)

For the year ended 31 December 2017

Performance measures

Autism Queensland Limited receives significant State and Federal Government funding in addition to other sources.

Autism Queensland Limited has a range of Service Agreements with the State and Federal Governments which require reporting against milestones at an operational and financial level.

Information on directors in office as at 31 December 2017

Name:	Title:	Qualifications:
Barry Dennien	Non-Executive Chair	MBA (Dist). Cert Bus Man (AIM), Cert Mech Engin, Trade Cert Fit & Turn
Experience and expertise:	Barry has an extensive association with the water resources industry in Queensland and is the Managing Director of businesses in the tourism and accommodation sector. In addition, Barry and his family have for more than 20 years opened their home as foster carers to less fortunate children.	
Special responsibilities:	Ex officio member Audit and Risk Committee Ex officio member People and Safety Committee	

Name:	Title:	Qualifications:
Danielle Butcher	Non-Executive Director	G Cert BA, B App Sc (Biology)
Experience and expertise:	Danielle has over 20 years' experience leading successful teams, programs and specialised projects. She identifies opportunities to obtain efficiencies and drive reform and has a strong understanding of the not for profit sector, government, policy, governance, asset and facilities management, education and awareness, indigenous issues, disabilities, tenancy issues, hardship and concession programs, customer management, complaints management and standards.	
Special responsibilities:	Member People and Safety Committee	

Name:	Title:	Qualifications:
Karen Hauff	Non-Executive Director	BCom, LLB, GDLP, FGIA, FCIS
Experience and expertise:	Karen is an experienced senior executive and qualified lawyer with more than 17 years' experience in legal practice, including in the areas of risk management, compliance and corporate governance. She has held the positions of General Counsel and Company Secretary at publicly listed corporations in the resources sector, following eight years in private practice, including as a Senior Associate at global legal firm, Norton Rose Fulbright. In addition to her legal qualifications, Ms. Hauff holds a Bachelor of Commerce (Accounting) and has acted in an interim capacity as CEO of Speech & Language Development Australia (SALDA), having previously served for 4 years on the SALDA Board as Deputy Chairman and Secretary.	
Special responsibilities:	Member People and Safety Committee	

Directors' Report (continued)

For the year ended 31 December 2017

Information on directors in office as at 31 December 2017 (continued)

Name:	Title:	Qualifications:
Neil Makepeace	Non-Executive Director	BSc (Hons), MSc, GAICD
Experience and expertise:	Neil is an experienced leader and director with 30 years' experience solving complex problems in Queensland, around Australia and worldwide. He has a strong track record in governance, executive leadership, management consulting, strategic planning, systems development and operations. His passions include driving business growth and creating public value. Neil is a recognised leader in the field of open data.	
Special responsibilities:	Member Audit and Risk Committee	

Name:	Title:	Qualifications:
Wendy McTainsh	Non-Executive Director	BSc, MSc, GAICD
Experience and expertise:	Wendy has strong audit and risk governance skills and is experienced in board membership having been the Chair of the Association for Childhood Language Disorders prior to coming to Autism Queensland, as well as the Chair of the Risk Committee of the Maleny Credit Union Board.	
Special responsibilities:	Chair Audit and Risk Committee	

Name:	Title:	Qualifications:
Dr Venerina Pennisi	Non-Executive Director	BDS, ADA, AICD
Experience and expertise:	Venerina (Vera) is a dentist in private practice in Brisbane who has worked in public and private practice in regional and remote settings. She has experience in School Boards and a not-for-profit disability employment services Board. Vera is passionate about, and well placed with her lived experience, advocating for people living with ASD.	
Special responsibilities:	Chair People and Safety Committee	

Name:	Title:	Qualifications:
Joanne Peulen	Non-Executive Director	BA(Hons), MAppFinInv, AdvDipFinServ, GAICD, JP(Qual)
Experience and expertise:	Joanne has extensive experience in senior management roles in the energy industry and is an independent consultant specializing in strategic financial and business risk management. She brings to Autism Queensland her own personal experience of living with disability and a firm belief in the link between culture, performance and resilience.	
Special responsibilities:	Member Audit and Risk Committee	

Directors' Report (continued)

For the year ended 31 December 2017

Information on directors in office as at 31 December 2017 (continued)

	Full Board		Audit & Risk Committee		People & Safety Committee	
	Attended	Held	Attended	Held	Attended	Held
Barry Dennien	10	10	4	4	1	2
Danielle Butcher	2	2	-	-	-	-
Michael Glover	2	6	-	2	-	-
Karen Hauff	2	2	-	-	-	-
Neil Makepeace	2	2	1	1	-	-
Wendy McTainsh	9	10	4	4	-	-
Dr Venerina Pennisi	10	10	-	-	2	2
Joanne Peulen	2	2	1	1	-	-
Joanne Stephens	4	6	-	-	2	2
Paul Stokes	5	6	1	2	-	-

Held: represents the number of meetings held during the time the director held office or was a member of the relevant committee.

Contributions on winding up

In the event of the company being wound up, ordinary members are required to contribute a maximum of \$1 each.

The total amount that members of the company are liable to contribute if the company is wound up is \$71 based on 71 current members.

Auditor's independence declaration

A copy of the auditor's independence declaration as required by the Professional Accounting Bodies is set out on the following page.

On behalf of the directors,



Barry Dennien

Chairman – Director
Brisbane, 26 March 2018



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Brisbane QLD 4000
GPO Box 457 Brisbane QLD 4001
Australia

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE BY M CUTRI TO THE DIRECTORS OF AUTISM QUEENSLAND LIMITED

As lead auditor of Autism Queensland Limited for the year ended 31 December 2017, I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, there have been:

1. No contraventions of the auditor independence requirements of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 (ACNC Act)* in relation to the audit; and
2. No contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Cutri', with a stylized flourish at the end.

M Cutri

Director

BDO Audit Pty Ltd

Brisbane, 26 March 2018

Statement of Financial Position

As at 31 December 2017

	Notes	2017 \$	2016 \$
Assets			
Current Assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	4	4,528,056	3,320,992
Trade and other receivables	5	173,941	166,567
Other assets and prepayments		139,738	167,287
Total Current Assets		4,841,735	3,654,846
Non-Current Assets			
Property, plant and equipment	6	9,743,326	9,704,161
Financial assets	7	10	10
Total Non-Current Assets		9,743,336	9,704,171
Total Assets		14,585,071	13,359,017
Liabilities			
Current Liabilities			
Trade and other payables	8	1,834,876	1,707,194
Financial liabilities	9	110,195	146,799
Provisions	10	1,416,954	1,376,344
Total Current Liabilities		3,362,025	3,230,337
Non-Current Liabilities			
Financial liabilities	9	228,008	337,307
Provisions	10	303,895	223,922
Total Non-Current Liabilities		531,903	561,229
Total Liabilities		3,893,928	3,791,566
Net Assets		10,691,143	9,567,451
Equity			
Revaluation Reserves		4,001,995	4,001,995
Accumulated funds		6,689,148	5,565,456
Total Equity	11	10,691,143	9,567,451

The Statement of Financial Position should be read in conjunction with the Notes to the Financial Statements

Statement of Comprehensive Income


For the year ended 31 December 2017

	Notes	2017 \$	2016 \$
Income			
Government subsidies		15,388,754	14,661,692
Revenue from rendering of services		4,048,455	3,454,124
Fundraising activities		453,694	321,923
Interest income		29,429	41,123
Sundry income		114,461	53,402
Total Income		20,034,793	18,532,264
Expenditure			
Employee expenses		16,098,621	14,528,837
Facilities expenses		1,854,259	1,965,264
Marketing expenses		123,752	109,132
Depreciation and amortisation expenses		359,795	561,888
Interest expenses		24,341	41,803
Other expenses		450,333	382,235
Total Expenditure		18,911,101	17,605,706
Net Surplus for the year	2	1,123,692	926,557
Other Comprehensive Income			
<i>Items that will not be reclassified to profit and loss</i>			
Net gain on revaluation of financial assets, net of tax		-	-
Other Comprehensive Income for the year		-	-
Total Comprehensive Income for the year		1,123,692	926,557

The Statement of Financial Position should be read in conjunction with the Notes to the Financial Statements

Statement of Changes in Equity

For the year ended 31 December 2017



	Revaluation Reserves \$	Accumulated Funds \$	Total \$
Balance at 31 December 2015	4,001,995	4,638,899	8,640,894
Net Surplus for the year	-	926,557	926,557
Other Comprehensive Income for the year	-	-	-
Balance at 31 December 2016	4,001,995	5,565,456	9,567,451
Net Surplus for the year	-	1,123,692	1,123,692
Other Comprehensive Income for the year	-	-	-
Balance at 31 December 2017	4,001,995	6,689,148	10,691,143

The Statement of Changes in Equity should be read in conjunction with the Notes to the Financial Statement

Statement of Cash Flows

For the year ended 31 December 2017

	Notes	2017 \$	2016 \$
Cash flows from operating activities			
Receipts in the course of operations		21,567,312	19,742,641
Payments to suppliers and employees		(19,822,037)	(18,411,883)
Interest received		29,429	41,123
Dividends received		-	-
Interest paid		(23,766)	(32,062)
Net cash provided by operating activities		1,750,938	1,339,819
Cash flows from investing activities			
Proceeds from disposal of property, plant and equipment		1,564	-
Purchase of property, plant and equipment		(398,960)	(330,088)
Net cash used in investing activities		(397,396)	(330,088)
Cash flows from financing activities			
Finance lease payments		(42,947)	(211,034)
Repayments of borrowings		(103,531)	(244,370)
Net cash used in financing activities		(146,478)	(455,404)
Net increase in cash held		1,207,064	554,327
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year		3,320,992	2,766,665
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year	4	4,528,056	3,320,992

The Statement of Changes in Equity should be read in conjunction with the Notes to the Financial Statement

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 December 2017

1. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Reporting entity

Autism Queensland Limited ("the Company") is a not-for-profit organisation, incorporated as a Public Company limited by guarantee and domiciled in Australia. The address of its registered office and its principal place of business is 437 Hellowell Road, Sunnybank Hills Qld 4109.

Basis of preparation

The financial statements are general purpose financial statements which have been prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards – Reduced Disclosure Requirements, other authoritative pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board and the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012. The Company is a not-for-profit entity for the purpose of preparing these financial statements.

The financial statements have been prepared on an accruals basis and are based on historical costs, except for:

- certain classes of property, plant and equipment which are measured at fair value; and
- revenue is recognised on an accruals basis except for non-reciprocal subsidies and grants; donations; third party fundraising; and bequests which are accounted for on a cash basis.

Accounting Standards issued not yet effective

Australian Accounting Standards which have been issued or amended and which are applicable to the Company but not yet effective have not been adopted at the reporting date. The Company has not yet assessed the impact of these new or amended Accounting Standards.

New and Amended Accounting Policies Adopted by the Company

Impairment measurement of specialised assets

Pursuant to AASB 2016-4 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards – Recoverable Amount of Non-Cash-Generating Specialised Assets of Not-for-Profit Entities, which is mandatorily applicable to annual reporting periods beginning 1 January 2017, the entity has amended its accounting policy on impairment testing of assets of a specialised nature which are not held to primarily generate cash inflows. Accordingly, the recoverable amount of such assets is determined using current replacement cost by applying the relevant principles in AASB 13 Fair Value Measurement.

It has been determined by management that the above changes in the accounting policy do not have any material impact on the financial statements either in the current or prior periods presented.

Critical accounting estimates and judgements

The preparation of the financial statements requires management to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the application of accounting policies and the reported amounts of assets, liabilities, income and expenses. Management evaluate these based on historical knowledge and best available current information. Estimates assume a reasonable expectation of future events and are based on current trends and economic data, obtained both externally and within the company.

Estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised and in any future periods affected.

In particular, information about significant areas of estimation uncertainty and critical judgements in applying accounting policies that have the most significant effect on the amount recognised in the financial statements are described in the following notes:

- Note 6 - Property, Plant & Equipment
- Note 10 - Provisions - Long Service Leave Provision.

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 December 2017

1. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (CONTINUED)

Going Concern

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis, which contemplates continuity of normal business activities and the realisation of assets and the settlement of liabilities in the ordinary course of business.

The Company has recorded Net Surpluses in the last four years and reported strong positive cash flows from operating activities. In addition, as at 31 December 2017 the Company had a net current asset surplus of \$1,485,478 (2016: \$424,509). The Company is reliant on the ongoing support of the Queensland State Government and the Commonwealth Government of Australia in the form of funding. The Company also has approximately \$1 million in available undrawn funds with Westpac Banking Corporation at 31 December 2017 and a Net Surplus has been budgeted for in the 2018 financial year. The Directors believe these factors will provide sufficient cash flow to fund the ongoing working capital needs of the Company for a period of at least 12 months from the date of this financial report.

Accordingly, the Directors believe that the preparation of the financial statements on a going concern basis is appropriate.

Significant accounting policies

The following is a summary of the significant accounting policies adopted by the Company in the preparation of the financial statements. The accounting policies have been applied consistently to all periods presented in the financial statements, except where otherwise indicated.

(a) Revenue recognition

Revenue is recognised on an accruals basis except for non-reciprocal subsidies and grants; donations; third party fundraising; and bequests which are accounted for on a cash basis.

Revenue from rendering of services

Revenue from rendering of services is measured at the fair value of the consideration received and is recognised in the accounting period in which the service is rendered.

Subsidies received

Income from non-reciprocal subsidies and grants is recognised when the Company obtains control of the grant or the right to receive the grant; it is probable that the economic benefits comprising the grant will flow to the Company; and the grant amount can be measured reliably. Income from such grants is therefore recognised on receipt as the revenue criteria are met when the grants are received.

Donations, fundraising and bequests

Donations, third party fundraising and bequests are recognised when received.

Interest revenue

Interest revenue is recognised as it accrues, using the effective interest rate method.

(b) Goods and Services Tax

Revenues, expenses and fixed assets are recognised net of the amount of goods and services tax (GST), except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO). In these circumstances the GST is recognised as part of the cost of acquisition of the asset or as part of an item of the expense.

The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the ATO is included as a current asset or liability in the Statement of Financial Position.

Receivables and payables are stated with the amount of GST included.

Cash flows are included in the Statement of Cash Flows on a gross basis. The GST components of cash flows arising from investing and financial activities which are recoverable from, or payable to, the ATO are classified as operating cash flows.

(c) Income Tax

The Company is a registered charitable institution exempt from income tax under section 50-5 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997.

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 December 2017

1. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (CONTINUED)

(d) Financial instruments

Initial recognition and measurement

Financial assets and financial liabilities are recognised when the Company becomes a party to the contractual provisions of the instrument. For financial assets, this is equivalent to the trade date i.e. the date that the Company commits itself to either purchase or sell the asset.

Financial instruments are initially measured at fair value plus transaction costs except where the instrument is classified “at fair value through profit or loss” in which case transaction costs are expensed to profit or loss immediately.

Classification and subsequent measurement

Financial instruments are subsequently measured at either fair value, amortised cost using the effective interest rate method or cost.

(e) Fair value

When an asset or liability is measured at fair value for recognition or disclosure purposes, the fair value is the price that would be received to sell an asset or paid to transfer a liability in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date. It assumes that the transaction will take place either: in the principal market; or in the absence of a principal market, in the most advantageous market.

Fair value is measured using the assumptions that market participants would use when pricing the asset or liability, assuming they act in their economic best interest. For non-financial assets, the fair value measurement is based on its highest and best use. Valuation techniques that are appropriate in the circumstances, and for which sufficient data are available to measure fair value, are used, maximising the use of relevant observable inputs and minimising the use of unobservable inputs.

(f) Impairment of assets

At the end of each reporting period, the Company assesses whether there is any indication that an asset may be impaired. If such an indication exists, an impairment test is carried out on the asset by comparing the recoverable amount of the asset, being the higher of the asset's fair value less costs of disposal and value in use, to the asset's carrying amount. For non-cash generating specialised assets measured using the cost basis, the recoverable amount is determined using current replacement cost in AASB 13 Fair Value Measurement. Any excess of the asset's carrying amount over its recoverable amount is recognised immediately in profit or loss, unless the asset is carried at a revalued amount in accordance with another Standard (eg in accordance with the revaluation model in AASB 116: Property, Plant and Equipment). Any impairment loss of a revalued asset is treated as a revaluation decrease in accordance with that other Standard.

Where it is not possible to estimate the recoverable amount of an individual asset, the entity estimates the recoverable amount of the cash-generating unit to which the asset belongs.

(g) Comparative Figures

When required by Accounting Standards, comparative figures have been adjusted to conform to changes in presentation for the current financial year.

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 December 2017



	2017 \$	2016 \$
2. OPERATING SURPLUS		
The operating surplus for the year has been arrived at after charging the following items:		
Operating lease expense – property rentals	41,250	56,405
Operating lease expense – equipment rentals	53,235	52,206
Bad and doubtful debts expense	6,783	16,548
Interest paid on loans	23,765	32,062
Interest paid on finance leases	576	9,741

3. AUDITOR'S REMUNERATION

Audit services	32,500	33,000
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	2017 \$	2016 \$
4. CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS		
Cash on hand	5,500	5,800
Cash at bank	531,810	460,551
Cash on deposit	3,990,746	2,854,641
	4,528,056	3,320,992

Cash and cash equivalents in the Statement of Financial Position comprise cash at banks and on hand and short-term deposits with a maturity of three months or less, which are subject to an insignificant risk of changes in value.

For the purposes of the Statement of Cash Flows, cash includes cash at banks and on hand and investment in money market instruments, net of outstanding bank overdrafts. Cash at the end of the year as shown in the Statement of Cash Flows is reconciled to the related items in the balance sheet above.

5. TRADE AND OTHER RECEIVABLES

Current

Trade accounts receivable	181,441	174,067
Provision for doubtful debts	(7,500)	(7,500)
	173,941	166,567

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 December 2017



	2017 \$	2016 \$
6. PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT		
Land at fair value	4,135,035	4,135,035
<i>Buildings</i>		
Buildings at fair value	4,259,465	4,259,465
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(512,141)	(367,055)
	3,747,324	3,892,410
Property improvements at cost	359,806	71,662
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(7,660)	(403)
	352,146	71,259
Leasehold improvements at cost	1,180,448	1,180,449
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(139,731)	(97,812)
	1,040,717	1,082,637
Total written down value of buildings	5,140,187	5,046,306
Motor vehicles at cost	875,827	924,237
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(856,703)	(882,341)
Total written down value of motor vehicles	19,124	41,896
Furniture and equipment at cost	2,357,588	2,322,709
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(2,084,256)	(2,028,928)
Total written down value of furniture and equipment	273,332	293,781
Work in progress at cost	175,648	187,143
Total Property, plant and equipment	9,743,326	9,704,161

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 December 2017

6. PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT (CONTINUED)

Reconciliations

Reconciliations of the written down values at the beginning and end of the financial year are set out below:

	Land	Buildings	Motor Vehicles	Furniture and Equipment	Work in progress	Total
Balance at 31 December 2016	4,135,035	5,046,306	41,896	293,781	187,143	9,704,161
Additions	-	67,260	-	122,311	209,389	398,960
Depreciation	-	(194,263)	(22,772)	(142,760)	-	(359,795)
Transfers	-	220,884	-	-	(220,884)	-
Balance at 31 December 2017	4,135,035	5,140,187	19,124	273,332	175,648	9,743,326

Freehold land and buildings are measured on a fair value basis. At each reporting date, the carrying value of each asset in these classes is reviewed to ensure that it does not differ materially from the asset's value at that date. Where necessary, the asset is revalued to reflect its fair value. Any surplus on revaluation is credited directly to the asset revaluation reserve. All other items of property, plant and equipment are measured at cost less accumulated depreciation and impairment losses.

The valuation basis of land, buildings and property improvements is fair value being the amounts for which the assets could be exchanged between willing parties in an arm's length transaction, based on current prices in an active market for similar properties in the same location and condition. The company has assessed the carrying value at balance date to still be appropriate.

Assets held by the Company under leases which transfer substantially all the risks and rewards of ownership are classified as finance leases. On initial recognition, the leased asset is measured at an amount equal to the lower of its fair value and the present value of the minimum lease payments. Subsequent to initial recognition, the asset is accounted for in accordance with the accounting policy applicable to that asset.

Assets held under other leases are classified as operating leases and are not recognised in the Company's Statement of Financial Position.

The depreciable amount of all fixed assets is depreciated over the useful lives of the assets to the company commencing from the time the asset is held ready for use. The assets are depreciated at the following rates:

- Buildings 40 years
- Motor vehicles 4 years
- Furniture and equipment 3-10 years
- Leasehold improvements Shorter of the lease term or useful life

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 December 2017



	2017 \$	2016 \$
8. TRADE AND OTHER PAYABLES		
<i>Current</i>		
Trade creditors	316,384	188,256
Other creditors and accruals	1,129,168	1,040,756
Subsidies in advance and unexpended funds	389,324	478,182
	1,834,876	1,707,194
9. FINANCIAL LIABILITIES		
<i>Current</i>		
Bank Loans	110,195	104,427
Finance leases	-	42,372
	110,195	146,799
<i>NonCurrent</i>		
Bank Loans	228,008	337,307
	228,008	337,307

The bank loans are secured by Bill of Mortgages over the company's freehold property located at:

- 1st Mortgage 121 Jackson Road, Sunnybank Hills
- 1st Mortgage 331 Jackson Road, Sunnybank Hills
- 1st Mortgage 136 North Road, Brighton
- 2nd Mortgage 437 Hellawell Road, Sunnybank Hills

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 December 2017

	2017 \$	2016 \$
10. PROVISIONS		
<i>Current</i>		
Employee entitlements	1,416,954	1,376,344
<i>NonCurrent</i>		
Employee Entitlements	303,895	223,922
<p>Liabilities for employee benefits for salaries, wages and annual leave expected to be settled within 12 months of the year end are recognised, and are measured, as the amount unpaid at the reporting date in respect of employees' services up to that date calculated at their nominal amounts based on remuneration salary and wage rates that the Company expects to pay, including related on-costs.</p> <p>A liability for long service leave is recognised, and is measured, as the present value of expected future payments to be made in respect of services provided by employees up to the reporting date. Consideration is given to expected future salary and wage levels and related on-costs, experience of employee departures, periods of service and employment policies. Expected future payments are discounted using nation corporate bond rates, as at the reporting date, with terms to maturity that match, as closely as possible, the estimated future cash outflows. The unwinding of the discount is treated as long service leave expense.</p>		
11. TOTAL EQUITY		
Reconciliation of movement in total equity:		
<i>Revaluation Reserves</i>		
<i>Asset Revaluation Reserve</i>		
Bought forward at beginning of year	4,001,995	4,001,995
Revaluation (decrements)/increments	-	-
Carried forward at end of the year	4,001,995	4,001,995
<i>Accumulated Funds</i>		
Brought forward at beginning of year	5,565,456	4,638,899
Surplus for year	1,123,692	926,557
Carried forward at end of the year	6,689,148	5,565,456
Total Equity	10,691,143	9,567,451

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 December 2017

12. KEY MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL DISCLOSURES

Key management personnel comprise directors and other persons having authority and responsibility for planning, directing and controlling the activities of the company.

The Company's key management personnel comprise the directors and a team of three (2016 – five) executive managers, comprising the Chief Executive Officer and two General Managers.

All directors perform their duties in a voluntary capacity, and as such, no remuneration was payable nor was any paid to them.

Other key management personnel compensation comprises:

	2017 \$	2016 \$
Total key management personnel compensation	664,956	835,928

13. CONTINGENT LIABILITIES

In accordance with various funding agreements, the State and Commonwealth Governments may continue to have interests in particular land, buildings and equipment held by the Company for which they have made capital grants to assist in their acquisition. If the facilities are not used solely for the purpose set out in the various agreements for a minimum period, repayment of some of the grants may be required. There are no plans to cease using the facilities for their designated purposes. The directors do not foresee any time or circumstances which may result in the repayment of any capital grants.

Contingent liabilities may exist to restore presently leased land and/or premises to their original condition. The directors are of the opinion that no provision is currently required.

14. COMMITMENTS

Operating lease commitments

The Company has entered into operating leases on certain properties and equipment with varying lease terms. The Company has the option, under some of its leases, to lease the assets for additional terms.

	2017 \$	2016 \$
Future minimum rentals payable under non-cancellable operating leases as at 31 December are:		
Within one year	48,118	56,291
After one year but not more than five years	3,913	50,565
	52,031	106,856

Payments made under operating leases are recognised in the Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income on a straight-line basis over the term of the lease. Lease incentives received are recognised as an integral part of the total lease expense, over the term of the lease.

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 December 2016

15. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

There were no transactions with key management personnel other than as disclosed in Note 12.

No related party has entered into a material contact with the Company since the end of the previous financial year and there were no material contracts involving Directors' interests subsisting at year end. Directors may have family members or relatives that access the services that Autism Queensland Limited provides. Such transactions are conducted at arm's length.

16. FINANCIAL RISK MANAGEMENT

Interest rate risk

Interest rate risk arises from the use of interest bearing financial instruments. It is the risk that future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in interest rates. At reporting date, the Company has access to the following undrawn borrowing facilities that charge interest at a floating rate:

	2017 \$	2016 \$
Expiring within one year (bank overdraft and bill facility)	1,000,000	1,000,000
Expiring beyond one year (bank loans)	11,974	11,962
	1,011,974	1,011,962

17. SUBSEQUENT EVENTS

The Directors are not aware of any material events occurring in the interval between the end of the financial year and the date of this report that would require further disclosures in these financial statements.

18. ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE

The Company is dependent on the continued receipt of government grants for a significant proportion of the revenue used to operate its business. The Australia wide roll-out of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) scheduled for completion by 30 June 2019 will result in a significant decrease in the level of government grants received for disability services. This grant income will be replaced by revenue from fee for service activities provided under the NDIS arrangements. At the date of this report, the Company has no reason to believe the income from grants or substituted revenue under NDIS will not continue.

Directors' Declaration

For the year ended 31 December 2017

The Directors declare that in the Directors opinion:

1. The financial statements, comprising the Statement of Financial Position, Statement of Comprehensive Income, Statement of Changes in Equity, Statement of Cash Flows, and accompanying notes, are in accordance with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 and:
 - a. Comply with Australian Accounting Standards – Reduced Disclosure Requirements and the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013 (ACNC Regulation 2013); and
 - b. Give a true and fair view of the Company's financial position as at 31 December 2017 and of its performance for the year ended on that date.
2. There are reasonable grounds to believe that the entity will be able to pay all of its debts, as and when they become due and payable.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the directors by:



Barry Dennien

Chairman – Director
Brisbane, 26 March 2018



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INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the members of Autism Queensland Limited

Report on the Audit of the Financial Report

Opinion

We have audited the financial report of Autism Queensland Limited, which comprises the statement of financial position as at 31 December 2017, the statement of comprehensive income, the statement of changes in equity and the statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial report, including a summary of significant accounting policies, and the directors' declaration.

In our opinion the accompanying financial report of Autism Queensland Limited, is in accordance with Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*, including:

- (i) Giving a true and fair view of Autism Queensland Limited's financial position as at 31 December 2017 and of its financial performance for the year then ended; and
- (ii) Complying with Australian Accounting Standards and Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013*.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the Financial Report* section of our report. We are independent of Autism Queensland Limited in accordance with the auditor independence requirements of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* (ACNC Act) and the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's *APES 110 Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants* (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

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

Other information

The directors are responsible for the other information. The other information obtained at the date of this auditor's report is information included in the directors' report, but does not include the financial report and our auditor's report thereon.

Our opinion on the financial report does not cover the other information and accordingly we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial report, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial report or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.



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If, based on the work we have performed on the other information obtained prior to the date of this auditor's report, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Responsibilities of the directors for the Financial Report

The directors are responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards - Reduced Disclosure Requirements and the ACNC Act and the needs of members, and for such internal control as the directors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view and is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the directors are responsible for assessing Autism Queensland Limited's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the directors either intend to liquidate Autism Queensland Limited or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

The directors are responsible for overseeing Autism Queensland Limited's financial reporting process.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the Financial Report

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial report is located at the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board website (<http://www.auasb.gov.au/Home.aspx>) at:

http://www.auasb.gov.au/auditors_responsibilities/ar4.pdf

This description forms part of our auditor's report.

BDO Audit Pty Ltd

M Cutri

Director

Brisbane, 26 March 2018





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