



2015

ANNUAL REPORT

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



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

Our Strategic Direction

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

Key Drivers



CHANGING PERCEPTIONS



ENHANCING CHOICE



CREATING OPPORTUNITY

Patron

His Excellency the Honourable Paul de Jersey AC, Governor of Queensland

Chairman

Barry Dennien

Directors

Paul Stokes

Roslyn Dick

Wendy McTainsh

Michael Glover

Christopher Miers

Chief Executive Officer

Rod Cameron

Company Secretary

John Lubach

Life Members

Ian Anderson

Helen McBride

Bruce Fay AM

Prof Robert van Barneveld

John Lee

Paul Burton

Margaret Outridge

Auditor

BDO Audit Pty Ltd

Solicitor

McCullough Robertson

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Chairman's Report

I was delighted to be nominated and accepted in the role of Chair of the Board of Directors of Autism Queensland Limited in August 2015.

It was with great pleasure that one of my first official engagements was to address delegates at the Opening Ceremony of the 2015 Asia Pacific Autism Conference (APAC15) on behalf of Autism Queensland as the hosting body.

Since that memorable occasion, the Board has been focused on preparing for the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). A major milestone in the process was the recent signing of the bilateral agreement between State and Federal governments underpinning the introduction of the NDIS in Queensland.

Leading up to this, the Board was actively engaged in strategic planning to ensure Autism Queensland is prepared for this change in the sector. Our Strategic Plan 2016 – 2020 was largely finalised by late 2015 and has now been approved and is being implemented throughout the organisation.

The rollout of the NDIS began in Townsville, west to Mount Isa and up to the gulf at the beginning of 2016, and will shortly progress to Mackay and out to Whitsundays, in Toowoomba and areas west. This means Autism Queensland's first exposure will be at our centre in Mackay. We are already well advanced with the NDIS registration process to ensure we can provide services when the NDIS is implemented in Mackay.



Chairman Barry Dennien welcoming delegates at the 2015 Asia Pacific Autism Conference.



As former Chair Michael Klug AM wrote last year in his report, Autism Queensland will experience challenges in the initial years of the implementation. An integral part of coping with these will be the implementation of our five-year strategy aimed to guide us through to 2020.

I congratulate the Board members, current and former, and the Executive, for all their hard work in pulling together this vital document.

2015 saw a refresh of our Board lineup with the retirements of Jim Hunter and Annie Kenny. Annie served on the Board for seven years and Jim since 2013. I thank both for their contributions to Autism Queensland.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge at the time of publication the three new directors who have recently joined the team as of the March Board meeting – Michael Glover, Chris Miers and Wendy McTainsh. All three have a very strong background in either accounting, legal or risk management and will be able to contribute significantly to the ongoing sustainability of Autism Queensland.

As you can see from the financial statements at the end of this report, Autism Queensland finished the year financially sound as a result of various strategic cost initiatives and the generation of extra revenues across the year, despite the decision to close down the registered training organisation during this period. During the year a new Enterprise Bargaining Agreement was also introduced to improve equity and work practices. Thank you and congratulations to everyone who helped contribute to this pleasing result.

Whilst we are making good progress we cannot stand still. The introduction of the NDIS has attracted large private companies who will compete to deliver many of the services we offer. We continue to look for ways to lower our cost of delivery and redesign our services to meet the changing needs of our clients whilst maintaining the quality we are known for. Credit must go to the Executive and their teams for their contribution to the future growth of Autism Queensland and its services.

CEO's Reflection

It was a great honour to accept the role as CEO of Autism Queensland in mid-2015, following the decision of Penny Beeston to step down from the role she had held for 10 years.

This infusion of new skills, experiences and expertise also continued on our Board when Mr Barry Dennien, who has a wealth of commercial, public sector and social welfare experience, took on the role as Chair from Michael Klug. We would like to thank Michael for his significant contribution over the last two years.

After just over 11 months with Autism Queensland, it is pleasing to report that my expectations have been greatly exceeded on many levels. It is a real privilege to lead an organisation of this calibre in terms of staff, clients and other stakeholders.

This positions us well for the challenges associated with the introduction of the NDIS. We are meeting these challenges in a positive and proactive way, and while there is still a long way to go, I am confident we will be successful in the transition process.

Reflecting on 2015, it was a year of significant milestones. In particular, Autism Queensland hosted APAC15 at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre from September 9-11.

Held every two years, this conference welcomed 1100 plus delegates and presenters from Australia and 16 other countries. I would like to acknowledge the three major sponsors – Epic Assist, the Department of Social Services (DSS) and the Queensland Government's Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services for their support of the event, along with the assistance provided by other organisations.



With Autism Queensland Patron, His Excellency the Honourable Paul de Jersey AC (centre), host of the 2015 Autism Queensland Creative Futures Recognition Awards, Autism Queensland Chair Barry Dennien and the Award winners.



Some key preparatory milestones for the NDIS were also achieved during 2015.

Our finance team successfully implemented a new financial accounting system that will bring with it greater flexibility and adaptability that is critical under the NDIS. We also finalised arrangements to enable us to charge clients under the Medicare billing arrangements for select therapy services. Not directly related to the NDIS, but no less significant, our two schools at Brighton and Sunnybank Hills had their service agreement extended for a further three years.

As a service provider under the NDIS operating framework, we will be challenged to enable participation, create opportunity and enhance choice for those people we support as the social welfare service delivery model is transformed into a person-centred, consumer-focused market service delivery model.

Autism Queensland will need to consider transforming geographically to remain competitive and sustainable under the NDIS. Our traditional state-wide business model with centres in Brisbane, Gladstone, Rockhampton, Mackay and Cairns, and our outreach program that reaches across the State, is a solid base from which to venture further afield.

The disability sector will see new market entrants and significant consolidation as evidenced by similar processes in the UK. Growth and sustainability will be our mantra in the coming year.

As you may well surmise, we are well advanced in our strategic thinking to deal with the changing corporate environment. Under the Board's sage stewardship, we have recently developed and started to implement a new Strategic Plan to take the organisation through to 2020. This bodes well for Autism Queensland to continue to support people living with ASD through responsive, evidence-informed practice and advocacy.

We are looking forward with great enthusiasm to the many challenges on the horizon during 2016.

Services Overview

Autism Queensland Limited is Queensland's longest serving and most experienced provider of specialised services and supports for children and adults with ASD and their families throughout Queensland.

We are committed to ensuring best practice across the disability sector and to achieve this we engage with a range of stakeholders in government and non-government agencies to share this knowledge and improve understanding.

Accommodation 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 individuals' needs and interests including an Adult Recreation Group to enhance social skills and improve social life, and a Computer Club for adolescents and adults to further their interests in computers and establish friendships.



Accredited, Independent, ASD-Specific Schools

Autism Queensland's schools are located at Brighton and Sunnybank Hills in Brisbane and provide placement for school-aged children with ASD. Students from prep to year 12 attend an Autism Queensland School part time, generally two or three days a week, alongside attendance at their local school. Our students are grouped according to age, ability and needs with a maximum of six students per group. They are supported by a multi-disciplinary team including teachers, teacher aides, social workers, psychologists, speech pathologists and occupational therapists. Autism Queensland's schools deliver ASD-specific curriculum linked to the Australian Curriculum.

Autism Advisors

The Autism Advisor Program is funded by the Department of Social Services (DSS). Autism Advisors assess eligibility for the Helping Children with Autism (HCWA) Early Intervention funding package. They provide advice and information to families about early intervention services and other related community and support services for young children with ASD and their families.

Customised Services

Autism Queensland provides services and supports that are individually designed to meet a diverse range of client needs. They are available to individuals and families, as well as to community organisations, schools and early childhood services. They may involve therapy and support delivered in a client's home, work place or community, as well as training of staff to support the inclusion of the client in those settings.

Early Intervention Services

Autism Queensland delivers a range of flexible and individualised early intervention services for children under seven years. Our programs are developed and delivered by a team of therapy and education professionals and focus on key elements including behaviour, developmental and social skills, and family based interventions to meet the needs of children

with ASD and their families. These services are delivered from our centres in Brisbane, Gladstone, Rockhampton, Mackay and Cairns. Outreach services are also available to families living in other regions.

Early Intervention Indigenous Liaison Program

This program is a national project hosted by Autism Queensland that aims to raise awareness of ASD in indigenous communities. It is funded by the DSS as part of the HCWA program. The three liaison officers based at Autism Queensland in Brisbane have a national role and work throughout Australia.

Outreach Services

Teachers and therapists from the Outreach Services Team visit schools and other education settings throughout Queensland to provide information, advice, support, and individualised strategies to parents, staff and other key professionals. Autism Queensland also provides customised programs for school-aged children at home or in their school.

This team also monitors an Information and Help Line answering phone calls and emails from families, individuals with ASD, carers and professionals. They provide information about ASD, discuss specific issues or concerns, and provide information about services, supports and resources.

Professional Learning and Development

Our trainers have many years of 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.

Post School Transition Program

Studio G is a group program supported by a case management framework that aims to support individuals in the development of social, job and life skills. It is for young people aged 16-24 years with a diagnosis of High Functioning Autism or Asperger's Syndrome. Studio G runs two afternoons a week at The Edge, State Library of Queensland in 10-week blocks to coincide with Queensland school terms.

Research

The Research and 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).

Respite and Holiday Programs

Autism Queensland runs two centre-based respite programs. Weekend respite is offered at Sunnybank for children aged 5-18 years who have a diagnosis of AD. Weekday and weekend respite is offered at Greenbank for children and adults who have ASD with challenging behaviour and complex needs. School Holiday Programs are offered twice a year in the June/July and December school holiday periods at the Sunnybank and Brighton campuses.



Children's Services

General Manager Children's Services & ASD Strategy: Pam Macrossan

Manager Children's Services: Frances Scodellaro

The newly created position of General Manager Children's Services (GM SC) was introduced in January 2015 and then expanded to include ASD Strategy in June 2015.

A significant focus for the year was preparing for the transition to the NDIS which rolls out in Queensland in 2016.

Disability services will transition from a block-funded social welfare model of service delivery, to a user-pays, business model. This requires a significant change in thinking for the disability sector as a whole and Autism Queensland is no exception.

Our Children's Services teams however, have been very successful in embracing the challenges presented, whilst keeping families and clients at the centre and forefront of our planning.

Building financial sustainability; expanding our early intervention services to individuals beyond seven years to provide therapy and supports across the life span; strengthening our relationships with the education sector; and introducing a number of evidence-informed intervention packages and models will all ensure that Autism Queensland continues to be a leader in the provision of interventions and supports for people with ASD and their families.

Two new programs introduced to Autism Queensland in 2015 were the Early Start Denver Model (ESDM) of early intervention for children from birth to six years; and Secret Agent Society (SAS) Social Skills program for children 8-12 years.

Early Start Denver Model (ESDM)

The ESDM is an intensive early intervention program which is delivered through relationship-focused routines and specific teaching strategies within a play-based curriculum. It is supported by principles of developmental psychology and the pivotal response treatment component of Applied Behaviour

Analysis. It draws upon several different but complementary approaches, including the Denver model (Rogers et al 1986), Rogers and Pennington's model of autism as a disorder of social motivation (1991), and Dawson and colleagues' model of autism as a disorder of social motivation (2004).

The ESDM was first introduced to Australia from the UC Davis MIND Institute by KU Children's Services in New South Wales and the Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre at La Trobe University in Melbourne as part of the Australian Government's Autism Specific Early Learning and Care Centre (ASELCC) initiative.

Autism Queensland is proud to have brought this program to Queensland and trained the first team of therapy staff during 2015. The parent training component will be available in 2016, making this therapy available to families living in remote and very remote areas of Queensland.

Secret Agent Society (SAS)

Raising a child with an ASD can be very rewarding, but it can also be extremely challenging. Children with autism often find it difficult to understand their own emotions and those of others, to express their feelings in appropriate ways, and have trouble making friends.

The SAS social skills program creates a fun, non-threatening environment in which children can learn the skills they need to become happy, well-adjusted and valued members of our society.

The Children's Services team, with advice and direction from our Research and Development Department, will continue at the forefront in providing evidence-informed programs and supports for young people with ASD and their families in a financially sustainable model.



Autism Advisor Program

Team Leader: Maryann Kerr

The AAP is a national program which is part of the HCWA package funded by the DSS. Five Autism Advisors, based in Autism Queensland's centres in Brisbane at Sunnybank Hills and Brighton, Rockhampton and Cairns, deliver services across Queensland.

The role of the Autism Advisor is to provide families who have a child under the age of six years with a diagnosis of ASD with information on autism, available funding, workshops and local support services that they may access for their child and family.

The Advisors travel throughout Queensland to promote the HCWA package, meeting with families, developing networks with local community support services, medical and health professionals and so on. By doing so the Program increases awareness of ASD and the importance of an early diagnosis and linking families with intervention services in a timely manner.

In 2015 the Advisors travelled to the Gold Coast, Ipswich, Sunshine Coast, Warwick, Woorabinda, the Whitsunday region, Atherton Tablelands, Mackay, Gympie, Caboolture, Gladstone, Biloela, Nambour, Toowoomba, Townsville, Moura, and Hervey Bay.

Over 1900 families attended initial consultations with the AAP, an increase of approximately 19 percent from 2014. The AAP continued to work closely with the Indigenous Liaison Officers and Early Days workshops presenters to ensure information reached families and communities where it was needed. Participation in national teleconferences with the DSS and providers of the AAP in other states provided the opportunity to share information about the programs in each state, clarify any policy and operational issues impacting on the implementation of the HCWA package, and to receive information about the introduction of the NDIS.

A major focus for the Autism Advisors during 2015 was to gain a better understanding of the NDIS through attendance at information sessions and forums, meetings and regular review of information provided by the agency, National Disability Services and other sources, to ensure families were provided with accurate and useful information about the Scheme.

Early Days

National Coordinator: Kris Jennings

Early Days workshops are for parents, grandparents and families of young children (0-6 years) who have ASD or are going through the assessment and diagnostic process. The workshop program is funded by the DSS as part of the HCWA package.

The program is coordinated nationally by EDCASP (the Early Days Consortium of Autism Specialist Providers). As lead agency of the consortium, Autism Queensland hosts the National Coordinator who ensures consistency of content and delivery, and assists the states and territories to reach their delivery quotas.

Early Days workshops are delivered in each state and territory by peak Autism Associations and include foundation workshops such as "My Autism and Me", skills workshops such as "Transition to School" and specialist workshops for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) families.

In 2015, 367 workshops were delivered across Australia to 3612 participants. Two workshops were rewritten to include information relating to the NDIS and a new website was launched (www.earlydays.com.au).



Children's Services (continued)

Early Intervention

Manager Early Intervention and Regional Services: Valerie Preston

Autism Queensland's services for children with ASD under the age of seven years are primarily provided through early intervention teams located at centres in Brisbane at Sunnybank Hills and Brighton, Gladstone, Rockhampton, Mackay and Cairns (Edmonton).

They include two and three days per week programs, individual therapy and education programs (on-site and off-site), and short programs such as "Fun, Friends & Feelings". The focus of each is to work directly with children whilst also providing information and support to parents and others working with the child such as school staff, private therapists etc.

During 2015 Autism Queensland staff in the early intervention teams worked with over 400 children and their families and/or educational staff.

In preparation for the implementation of the NDIS in Queensland, the teams have been implementing variations to

existing services as well as offering new programs. Of particular note is that the regional teams commenced delivering services to individuals over the age of seven years.

While numbers were small, as funding is not yet available to these families, this has been an important start to the growth of these services and the improvements for people of all ages as a result of the NDIS.

All staff have been involved in regular in-house activities relating to the NDIS and managers have attended a number of external workshops on the topic of understanding and preparing for the roll-out.

Additionally, all allied health professional working within these teams registered with Medicare, allowing families to access Medicare rebates, where eligible, for some of the services offered.

BRISBANE & STATEWIDE

In 2015 the Brisbane-based team ran three centre-based group programs, one at Autism Queensland's Brighton centre and two at Sunnybank Hills, including a new one specifically for Prep-aged children (4½-5½ years) who were not attending Prep for various reasons. This group commenced at the beginning of Term 3 and the six children enrolled all concluded in that program at the end of the school year.

The purpose of the new program was to intensively target all skills needed by these children to ensure the most successful transition into Prep or Year 1 in 2016, as well as to support the receiving schools so they were able to provide the most appropriate environment for these children.

Many other programs and services were delivered by the Brisbane-based team, including "Fun, Friends and Feelings" programs each school holidays, and individual programs in Roma. There continued to be high demand for the staff to support children by conducting sessions in their early childhood and/or home settings.

Brisbane-based staff were all able to attend APAC15 and three members of the team presented. Staff also attended ESDM Introductory Training. One member also participated in the Advanced Training for this model which will allow her to become a certified ESDM practitioner.

GLADSTONE

Team Leaders: Katrina O'Brien/Bonita Chard

The start of 2015 was challenging for the Gladstone-based team as they spent the first six weeks without premises due to delays in the finalisation of the move from the small,



Children's Services (continued)

office-only environment to the new site. They had vacated the old premises at the end of 2014 but were not able to move into new premises at 2 Joyner Close, Glen Eden until mid-February. During this period they conducted all services as Outreach programs.

When the move finally occurred, it was a wonderful improvement. The building was previously a child care centre and the Autism Queensland team share equally with the Endeavour Foundation who owns the building.

Some renovations were required, but these were completed promptly with the end result being a setting that can cater for small group and individual therapy and education sessions, as well staff office space and storage. A grant enabled us to install a playground suitable for young children.

The team has remained small, but a significant change was the establishment of a Team Leader role which had previously been combined with the Rockhampton Team Leader position. Katrina O'Brien took on this role mid-year and when she went on maternity leave in November was replaced by Bonita Chard.

Various on-site group programs were held across the year including two half-day centre-based programs and an after-school literacy program. The team continued to deliver weekly services to Biloela, as well as conduct individual outreach programs throughout Gladstone and the surrounding area. Overall, the Gladstone team provided services to 50 children in 2015.



Staff from this team also accessed professional development in the form of the ESDM Introductory Training, attendance at APAC15 and PECS.

ROCKHAMPTON

Team Leader:
Mary Wilson

The Rockhampton team delivers services to Central Queensland families from The John Villiers Centre of Excellence at Frenchville. In 2015, two centre-based group programs were delivered, along with numerous short programs including "Fun, Friends and Feelings", and "Play and Learn".

The Rockhampton team also delivered Outreach programs throughout the region as well as in Emerald and Alpha.

The team continued to provide information and advice by phone and during visits to our centre; they lent resources and books to parents and professionals; and team members attended community events throughout the year. Data collection, needs assessment and trialling of programs for children over the age of six continued in 2015, including services that ran after school and during the school holiday period.

Professional development for Central Queensland staff included attendance at APAC15, Circle of Security, DIR Floortime and participation in the ESDM Introductory Training.



Children's Services (continued)

MACKAY-WHITSUNDAY

Team Leader:

Ann-Marie Watson

Mackay-Whitsunday services are delivered from The John Villiers Centre of Excellence Mackay-Whitsunday.

The beginning of 2015 saw a slow start to the early intervention group programs. We did however, have an influx of very young clients and so were able to begin Autism Queensland's first toddler group program after Easter. The learning curve was steep for everyone involved, but the outcomes were remarkable and many of those children have continued with the group program in 2016.

In September and October we lost our speech pathologist and occupational therapist to other service areas and had difficulty filling those positions. We were however able to contract the services of trusted private therapists to fulfil the input needs of the group programs so that children and families were still fully supported. The remainder of the staff rallied as well and continued to achieve positive outcomes, picking up the challenge of therapy input and extending their knowledge of the transdisciplinary model.

The Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre (CRCC) again partnered with the Autism Queensland Mackay-Whitsunday, the Autism Queensland Professional Learning and Development Team and the Mackay Autism Support Group to present an Autism Information Evening in November. Excellent feedback was received from parents and professionals. This year adults with autism formed part of the Q & A panel, including multi-award winning artist Nekea Blagoev who has since donated a design for a t-shirt to be printed for Mackay staff to use for fundraising during Go Blue for Autism in 2016.

Some Mackay-Whitsunday staff also undertook the ESDM training with the view to introducing this early intervention model to regional Queensland. The centre will be the first in

Queensland offering this program and hopes to transfer its principles into our group programs in 2016.

With the impending rollout of the NDIS in 2016, Mackay staff and families began to prepare for its implementation in the region. Meanwhile, children with autism and their families remained at the forefront of our minds, planning and programs. Services continued, outcomes were achieved, and passionate and dedicated staff continued to learn, grow, and educate themselves, as well as others.

FAR NORTH QUEENSLAND

Team Leader:

Tanya Kunzler

The Far North Queensland Service is based at Edmonton, near Cairns. In 2015, three centre-based group programs, as well as individual therapy sessions, operated from the centre. Outreach programs were conducted in early childhood settings and children's homes throughout the Far North including the Cape, Tablelands and Johnstone regions. A range of other programs were delivered including an eight-week social skills group program.

Staff have undertaken a wide range of professional development opportunities including attendance at APAC15, Hanen More Than Words, PECS, SOS Feeding Therapy and ESDM training.

Network building continued to be a priority for 2015 with strong relationships maintained with the Child Development Service of Queensland Health, Cairns Early Years Centre, Education Queensland, the Early Childhood Development Program and ARC Disability Services.

The Far North Queensland service has continued to receive donations from Piccone's IGA and the Masonic Lodge, Ravenshoe. Both organisations have supported the Far North Queensland team for many years, and in 2015, new equipment and toys were purchased with these donations.



Early Intervention Indigenous Liaison Officer (EI ILO) Program

Team Leader:
Kris Jennings

EI ILOs:
Florence Williams, Yvonne O'Neill

The Aboriginal Liaison Officer Program was developed in 2013 in response to an independent evaluation of the HCWA package that found the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities had very limited access to diagnostic and early intervention services. In July 2015, the program was expanded to include Better Start and NDIS clients aged 0-6 years, and therefore children with all disabilities. To reflect this change, the program was renamed Early Intervention Indigenous Liaison Officer (EI ILO) Program.

The program aims to raise awareness of childhood disability within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and to build relationships between these communities, service providers and disability organisations. The program employs three liaison officers who are based at Autism Queensland but are responsible for the program nationally, providing information and assistance relevant to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities that relates to:

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

Working in close consultation with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Australia, the EI ILOs maintain strong relationships with the Early Days program and support services in all of the states and territories including the peak State and Territory Autism Associations, Carers Australia, service providers, aboriginal health and medical services, child care and other early childhood services.

During 2015, the EI ILOs provided individual support to 39 families and liaised with 73 stakeholders in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and services. They delivered, or assisted the State Autism Associations to deliver, 34 workshops; presented at 13 conferences and forums; participated in a number of community events; and assisted in the presentation of three, two-day forums for Early Childhood professionals working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children with ASD.

Funding from the DSS enabled the production of a film to assist with diagnosis and identification of ASD within Indigenous communities. It was launched at APAC15. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FOqP3jsJaUg>



Outreach Services and Family Support

Southeast Queensland Team Leader:
Cathy McNeill

Central and West Queensland Team Leader:
Petro van Loggerenberg

North Queensland Team Leader:
Jennifer Catts

Autism Queensland's Outreach Team provides a range of funded and non-funded services primarily to school age children throughout Queensland. In 2015 the team consisted of speech pathologists, occupational therapists, teachers, a counsellor and administration support.

Non School Organisations Department of Education and Training continued its support of Autism Queensland, providing a financial contribution to support students with ASD in Queensland schools in the State, Independent and Catholic Education sector.

The team visited 1040 students in 448 schools and kindergartens across Queensland including two visits each to the Mackay, Townsville, Rockhampton, Cairns, Bundaberg, Gladstone and Emerald areas. A third trip was scheduled to the Maryborough and Hervey Bay area when the initial trip was interrupted by a cyclone, and also to the Chinchilla region due to high demand for support.

The team also made single visits to the Gympie, Kingaroy, Mount Isa, Charleville, Roma, St George, Goondiwindi and Weipa areas. Many of these regional trips included visits to

Children's Services (continued)

small and remote towns and to the homes of students participating in School of Distance Education.

Visits to schools in the South East Queensland region, including Greater Brisbane, Ipswich, Toowoomba, Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast, occurred on an ongoing and daily basis throughout the school year.

A number of regions experienced a higher than usual demand, particularly Far North Queensland, Mackay and Rockhampton. In most regions demand for support exceeded the team's capacity. In order to provide the best possible assistance Outreach staff liaised closely with schools to prioritise support.

A review of processes was undertaken in 2015 to increase the efficiency of administrative and report writing processes to ensure maximum time was spent supporting students and staff. Through ongoing review and development, a number of information papers were developed and provided in conjunction with written reports. An annual evaluation of the service indicated a high level of satisfaction with 91 percent of respondents rating it as effective or highly effective and no respondents rating the service as ineffective.

The Outreach and Family Support Team operated a week day Information and Helpline service (telephone and e-mail). This

service provided valuable and immediate information, supports, and links for parents and carers, educators, other professionals and members of the wider community. Encouraging parents and educators to access the Autism Queensland Outreach Service via phone and email enables the team to maintain contact with clients and those who support them in between visits, especially in regional and remote areas of Queensland.

During 2015 the team responded to 2820 telephone and 2526 e-mail requests for information and support in addition to providing ongoing contact with families and schools regarding school visits and programs.

In addition to the provision of individual face-to-face appointments and telephone support, the counsellor facilitated a number of Family Support Programs. Two Mothers' Camps were held at the Sunshine Coast Recreation Centre at Currumbundi and attended by 42 mothers. Both were fully booked well in advance and feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Sibling Programs were held in each of the school holiday periods with each group catering to different age groups; two eight-week Resilient Parent Group Programs ran at Sunnybank Hills and Brighton; and Family BBQs were held on four occasions at New Farm park in Brisbane.

Autism Queensland continued its partnership with Brisbane Catholic Education North, providing an extended consultation and support service to children with ASD attending schools in the region. Support included assessment and recommendations, consultation and a group program for students.

Services provided by the team on a fee-for-service basis included therapy and behaviour support programs for children in school and at home, and therapy support for adults with ASD. Some Outreach staff undertook SAS training and subsequently delivered programs for three groups of children, two at Autism Queensland Sunnybank Hills Centre and one in a Brisbane school.

In addition to the SAS training, staff had the opportunity to attend a range of professional development activities in 2015, the highlight of which was APAC15. Other significant professional development included the ESDM, Functional Assessment and Positive Behaviour Intervention and Team Teach.



Professional Learning and Development Services

Senior Professional Learning Facilitators:
Lynda Melville, Cathy Drummond

Autism Queensland's Professional Learning and Development Services (PLDS) provide a range of learning opportunities for parents and other family members, professionals, and others working with or supporting people with ASD.

The team have extensive experience in this field and in the facilitation of effective professional development and parent education. They 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 are based on sound research and aim to be practical and easy to understand.

In 2015, the team delivered 74 customised workshops for staff working for disability organisations, State, Catholic and Independent schools, Disability Employment Agencies, employers of people with ASD, government disability and family support providers, and other organisations across the state.

The team also delivered 26 scheduled workshops throughout the year in locations including Brisbane, Caboolture, Townsville, Mackay, Mount Isa and Cairns. Highly subscribed topics included "Understanding Individuals with ASD", "Clues to Managing Behaviour", "Motivating and Engaging Individuals with ASD" and "Transition to Employment". Many participants booked customised training for their staff or accessed other Autism Queensland services as a result of their attendance at these workshops.

Autism Queensland is the Queensland provider of the HCWA Early Days Workshops for parents and carers of young children with ASD. During 2015, the training team facilitated 51 workshops with 571 participants throughout regional and metropolitan areas of Queensland. Topics included "My Child and Autism", "Understanding Behaviour", "Encouraging Early Interaction" and "Helping My Child Cope with Change".

In addition to these general workshops, further funding from the DSS enabled the delivery of 21 targeted workshops specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families or communities and a further 153 to CALD participants.

Autism Queensland also continued its involvement with the Positive Partnerships program as a member of the Partnership between Education and the Autism Community (PEAC) Consortium, led by ASPECT. This program provides information and education for parents and carers of school aged children with ASD as well as a professional development program for teachers and educators who support students with ASD.

Autism Queensland's Professional Learning Facilitators participated in the delivery of a number of these workshops together with facilitators from the education sector and ASPECT.

Autism Queensland also partnered with DET, Early Childhood Australia (ECA) and the Crèche and Kindergarten Association (C&K) to deliver a professional development package, Early Years Connect, designed to support Early Childhood Education and Care educators working with children with complex additional needs. This includes children with disability, significant development delay and complex social, emotional and behavioural needs.

Together, content and resources for a series of 52 workshops were developed for the package and following approval by DET. Of these, 26 workshops were delivered between October and December across Queensland. The remainder will be delivered in 2016. All workshops were co-facilitated by Autism Queensland and C&K presenters. The Early Years Connect package will also include online modules, webinars, resource links, blogs and information sheets.

In 2015, the PLDS team were also successful in obtaining a Family Support Funding Grant from the Defence Community Organisation to develop and deliver workshops for Defence Force parents and carers in the Gallipoli and Lavarack Barracks in 2016, as well as to the school staff who teach their children. This pilot program aims to assist serving Defence members who have dependants with ASD develop strategies to manage transitions and deployment changes within their family. An Advisory Group was formed in 2015 and workshop content developed.

The PLDS team, in collaboration with the Autism Queensland management team, developed and delivered 12 workshops specifically for Autism Queensland staff to provide autism-specific professional education across the organisation.

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 services available through Autism Queensland.

Children's Services (continued)

Schools

Brighton School Principal:
Amra Bazdar

Sunnybank School Principal:
Jandee Laidlaw

Autism Queensland runs two Education and Therapy Centres in Brisbane at Brighton and Sunnybank Hills that operate as accredited Independent Schools. Both campuses provide a range of group placement options for children diagnosed with ASD from Prep to Year 12. In 2015, 150 students attended part-time placements across the period of the school year.

Autism Queensland's educational approach is based on the organisation's commitment to individuals with ASD, and their families. Our approach is based on the needs of the individual child and focuses on goals identified in the student's individualised plan.

A multi-disciplinary team consisting of teachers, occupational therapists, psychologists, speech pathologists, social workers, teacher aides, parents and other professionals and care givers develop appropriate individualised plans for the students. This wide involvement with goal setting and strategies means that our programs are owned by the whole school and all elements of the student's human network.

This approach ensures generalisation of knowledge to other settings such as home, local school setting, and the community. Close collaboration with home school staff ensures that the

skills focused on during placement are pertinent issues and required skills for the student when attending their setting.

2015 highlights for Autism Queensland Schools included:

Ongoing participation in Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ) Self Improving Schools program with a focus on collaborative practice

This flagship ISQ program, researched through a significant literature review, identified that schools committed to continuous improvement direct their energy and resources towards seeking to make a difference to the lives of students by maximising their achievement and potential. They focus relentlessly on improving student performance and engage in ongoing self-assessment, evidence-informed practice and strategic planning.

The focus areas were:

1. Leadership and Management – staff performance and well being

The committee agreed to investigate deeper well-being provision for staff in a demanding school environment, focusing on building a positive and supportive mentoring culture including relevant professional development and formalising collaborative practices.

2. Teaching & Learning – collaborative culture project

The committee agreed to lead the teams in the process of clearly defining roles, pedagogic/therapy framework and linking these to the above plans for a positive and supportive mentoring culture.



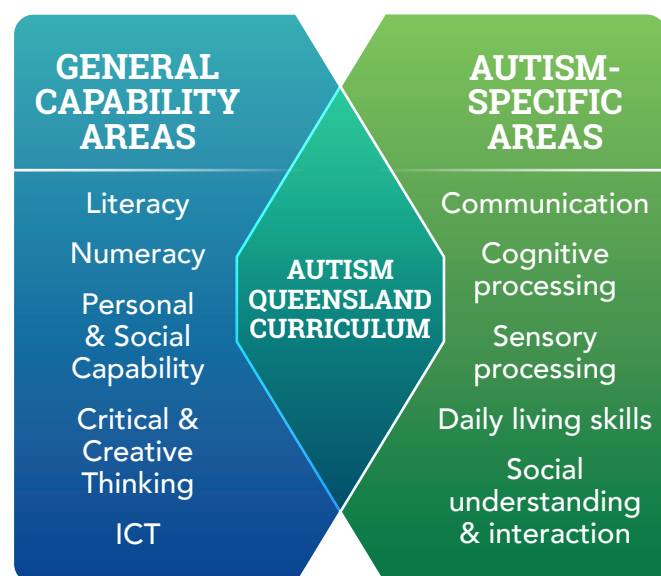
Children's Services (continued)

Review of Autism Queensland Schools Methodology with Autism Queensland's Research & Development Team

Following collaboration with Dr Jill Ashburner and her team on the review of the schools' methodology, plans were made to ensure that annual updates for all staff would be scheduled, commencing January 2016, to ensure consistency in application of evidence informed practices across each and every classroom in the schools.

Review of Autism Queensland's ASD-specific curriculum aligned to the Australian Curriculum

This review explored the value of Autism Queensland Schools' curriculum focusing on the Australian Curriculum general capabilities, alongside autism-specific curriculum areas to best meet the needs of students with ASD. These general capabilities encompass knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions which will assist students to live and work successfully in the 21st century.



Service Agreement negotiated and signed with Department of Education & Training for further three years

The pilot initiative of the Transition Teachers role has been successfully implemented and resulted in the permanent inclusion of this role within the service agreement. In addition, the introduction of a second psychologist across schools has been welcomed by all stakeholders and is already providing more comprehensive support for students, home schools and families.

Attendance by all teachers and therapists at the APAC15 in Brisbane

Dr Roxana Pearson, Autism Queensland Schools Psychologist presented at the conference in the Transforming Schooling stream. Her presentation covered the structure, curriculum and features of the Autism Queensland Education and Therapy Centres, along with outcome data supporting the ability of this innovative schooling program to confer meaningful benefits to children and teenagers with ASD.

Introduction of a mentoring culture using funding through Great Teachers Great Results

This funding was aimed at professional development and recognition of excellence in teaching, allowing schools to self-determine the use of the funding for their staff.

Within the Autism Queensland Schools, a decision was made to focus on mentoring and coaching. This initiative, originally led by the Self Improving Schools project, built nicely upon processes already in place for support and orientation of new staff. It is expected that every teacher and therapist will participate and share knowledge and expertise across the teams.

Smart Boards installed across classrooms at both sites using additional funding for students with disabilities.



Post School Services Studio G

Manager Post School Services: David McCartney

Studio G is an interactive workshop that supports young people aged 16-24 years with High Functioning Autism in the transition to employment, training or further education. Participants in the program can include students enrolled in Years 11 and 12 at school.

It is a facilitated group activity program led by content experts and supported by a case management structure that aims to support individuals in the development of social, job and life skills.

When Studio G commenced in the middle of 2014 it had nine participants, increasing to 15 for the final 10 week term of 2014. In 2015, its first full year of operation, Studio G ran across four 10 week terms with 24 participants enrolled in each term. They attended two afternoons each week for three hour blocks.

The nurturing and supportive environment of Studio G assists participants to develop skills to help with social interaction, independent living and self-confidence.

A ratio of one mentor for each four participants provides a dynamic environment that enables these young people to build relationships of trust with these professionals.

They grow at their own pace and, with the assistance of their mentors, develop and complete their own projects in accordance with goals they themselves have set.

In 2015 Studio G continued its partnership with The Edge at Southbank, an Arts and Technology hub run by the State Library of Queensland. This relationship has proven to be a critical aspect of the work being done as in Studio G, as our participants have access to a digital media lab, 3D printing, laser cutting and a sound recording studio.



This facility has proven crucial to our program as the majority have a keen interest in technology, therefore the access to this space has encouraged them to attend Studio G and through their attendance, to reengage with the world in a creative and positive fashion.

In late 2014 Autism Queensland was notified that Studio G was the recipient of a grant of USD\$54,000 from the UPS Foundation, the charitable arm of UPS (NYSE:UPS) to help establish the program in Brisbane. This donation was another key element in the program's success. There are now plans to pilot Studio G in Mackay in July 2016 with a view to rolling out the program further north the following year.



Disability Services

General Manager Adult Services & Facilities: Glenda Watkins

The Disability Services team provides accommodation, respite and social support services to young people and adults with ASD living in the Brisbane area.

In 2015 Autism Queensland supported 20 adults living in seven accommodation houses located throughout Brisbane. Trained lifestyle support workers provide 24 hour support to these individuals.

We also provided respite services for 80 families at Sunnybank Hills and Greenbank.

This support was made possible through ongoing partnerships with a number of organisations and government departments including the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services.

Birralee at Sunnybank provided respite for 40 families with children aged from five to 18 years with ASD. Greenbank caters for children and adults with a disability who have complex needs and behaviours of concern.

Disability Services continued to run two regular social groups for adults and adolescents with ASD. The Adult Recreation Group met 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. The group is open to people aged 18 years and over who are independent and continued to be a very positive experience for all those who participated.

The young people who are part of the Computer Club come together each week to enjoy movie and bowling nights along with internet café time. As well as meeting the social needs of its members, the Club provides these adolescents and adults with the opportunity to practise their social, communication and independent living skills.

Recurrent funding secured by Autism Queensland in 2011 continued to enable Disability Services to again offer school holiday programs at the Brighton and Sunnybank School campuses during the June and Christmas school holidays.

In 2015, students from 60 families participated in the program which featured a range of activities and entertainment that were both centre-based and in the community.

Clients from the Adult Accommodation Services enjoyed a



number of holidays this year including visits to the Stockman's Hall of Fame at Longreach and an artist's camp. They also enjoyed numerous trips to the rugby league and soccer as well as nights out at the local clubs listening to their favourite bands.

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, Child Safety and Disability Services.

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 receive. It is also a key part of preparing Queensland for the NDIS.

In July 2015, Disability Services underwent its annual quality audit by the Department of Communities during which our services are audited against the Human Services Quality Framework (HSQF). This year we were audited against standards 1 Governance and Management, Standard 3 Responding to Individual Need, Standard 4 Safety, Wellbeing and Rights, and Standard 5 Feedback Complaints and Appeals. The auditors visit a cross section of the sites and speak with client's families and staff and observe some of the day to day operations.

We are happy to report that we received no non-conformances from the independent auditor as has been the case for the last five years.

Research & Development

Manager Research and Development: Dr Jill Ashburner

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 conducting research on Autism Spectrum Disorder

Involvement in the Autism CRC

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

- **Overcoming the difficulties of students with ASD in written expression through the use of assistive technology and writing strategy instruction.** Students with ASD frequently have difficulties with handwriting and the conceptual aspects of written composition, both of which can impact negatively on their academic success. The PhD candidate for this project, Anne Ozdowska based at QUT, is currently developing and evaluating a web-based training program to teach students to use assistive technology and strategies to help them to structure their persuasive writing.
- **Helping students with ASD stay on-task and transition between tasks.** Students with ASD often have difficulty attending to tasks, and transitioning from one educational task to another. Griffith University PhD candidate for this project, Elizabeth McDonald, is currently evaluating the efficacy of structured teaching approaches in mainstream classrooms. This approach provides explicit cues about 'what to do', 'how long for', 'when the task is finished', and 'what happens next'. Preliminary results suggest that the approach can be successfully implemented in mainstream classrooms.

Autism CRC projects completed in 2015:

- **Enhancing social, confidence and pre-vocational skills through the Studio G Multimedia Program for young adults with ASD.** Autism Queensland's Studio G Program aims to support transition to post-school education and/or vocational opportunities. An evaluation of the program in 2015 found that it contributed to positive outcomes including enhanced motivation, enjoyment, social participation, emotional wellbeing, skill development,

awareness of future options and access to further training. The project was led by Dr Ashburner. Autism Queensland Research Assistant, Natasha Bobir, had primary responsibility for gathering and analysing the data. An executive summary of the results is to be published on the Autism CRC website.

- **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. It was completed by 248 educators, 179 specialists, 107 students with ASD and 934 parents. The educator, specialist and parent participants were unanimous in rating social emotional needs of students with ASD as having the most impact, followed by the behavioural, communication, sensory needs, and academic and learning needs. An executive summary of the results is available on the Autism CRC website.

The Research and Development Department 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 have been found to have difficulties in processing of speech in noisy environments such as classrooms. In this project the effectiveness of Sound Field Amplification systems with students with ASD will be evaluated. A PhD student and two research assistants based at the University of Queensland have recently commenced work on the project.
- **Early Years Behaviour Support Project:** This study will evaluate the application of tele-classroom consultation practices to support classroom teachers to meet the challenging and complex needs of students with ASD aged 5-8 years. Autism Queensland professional staff will participate in a multidisciplinary team that will deliver consultation on management of complex behaviours in schools in 2016 and 2017.
- **Transition Models of Practice in Primary School and Secondary School:** Models of practice and related



multimedia resource packages to support students with ASD in transitioning into primary school and secondary schools will be evaluated. Autism Queensland professional staff will participate in this project by acting as coaches for in-class and online coaching in Queensland schools.

Ongoing Autism Queensland research projects

A project on *The Sensory Experiences of People with ASD* is continuing. The *Sensory Processing Interview*, a tool with picture cues to enable young people with ASD to describe their sensory experiences was trialed in 2015 by occupational therapists (OTs), parents and children with ASD. A revised version of this tool: *My Sensory Experiences* has been designed to be administered at home by parents or family members, rather than OTs. An evaluation of *My Sensory Experiences* will be conducted in 2016.

Supporting local Autism researchers

The Research and Development Team has continued to support research that promises to enhance the outcomes of individuals with ASD by advertising projects to potential participants. People with ASD or their families interested in participating in research should consult the Autism Queensland website for details.

Sharing research findings through publications

Dr Ashburner was the lead author on journal articles published in 2015 concerning the use of remote technology to deliver early intervention services and a mentoring program for occupational therapists working with children with ASD.

She was also a co-author on an article on the post-school needs of young people with ASD and a revised chapter: *Occupation centred intervention in the school setting* in *Occupation Centred Practice with Children: A practical guide for occupational therapists, Second Edition* edited by Sylvia Rodger and Anne Kennedy-Behr. Autism Queensland Senior Occupational Therapist (OT) Judy Jones, wrote a book chapter, *The Family Goal Setting Tool: Who Holds the Cards* published in *Goal Setting and Motivation in Therapy, Engaging Children and Parents* edited by Anne Poulsen, Jenny Ziviani and Monica Cuskelly.

Sharing research findings through conference and workshop presentations

Dr Ashburner presented at the Autism Centre of Excellence *Success at School Seminar* at Griffith University on the sensory issues of students with ASD, and presented a symposium session at the *APAC15* on the use of a universal design framework to adapt general education classrooms for students with ASD. She was also invited to contribute her expertise on the impact of sensory processing issues of students with ASD in the classroom at a workshop on *Inclusive Design for Children and Young People*. Other sessions presented at APAC15 included a session by Dr Ashburner and Natasha Bobir on an evaluation of Autism Queensland's Studio G Program for young adults with ASD, and a session by Dr Ashburner and Valerie Preston (Manager Early Intervention and Regional Services) on the delivery of services to families of children with ASD via remote technology. Judy Jones presented at *National Occupational Therapy Conference* in Melbourne on the findings of the research exploring efficacy of Family Goal Setting Tool: ASD Version (Jones, 2013).

Research & Development (continued)



Supporting undergraduate and post-graduate education

Autism Queensland continues to support the education of undergraduate therapy students about ASD. In 2015, two OT students completed clinical placements at our Rockhampton and Cairns centres, two first year speech pathology (SP) students observed a series of therapy sessions, and two second year SP students completed clinical placements at our Sunnybank Centre. Therapists supervising students are offered increased support from their senior therapist. Autism Queensland's Senior SP, Jen Catts delivered a lecture on ASD to SP students at the University of Queensland. She and Judy Jones also updated the Autism Queensland student placement manual. Dr Ashburner is currently co-supervising PhD students at QUT and the University of Queensland.

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

- The Research and Development department updated the Principles and Practice documents of Autism Queensland's schools and Children's Services Departments with current research.
- During 2015, Research and Development staff conducted literature searches on 178 different topics to support Autism Queensland programs. Four new detailed research updates were provided to professional staff, including updates on alternative and augmentative communication systems, literacy in children with ASD, the ESDM and Universal Design for Learning.
- **Our Senior OT and Senior SP have supported Autism Queensland therapy staff to provide high quality evidence-informed services in the following ways:**
 - Provision of regular individual professional supervision sessions for all therapists (16 SPs and 13 OTs) in which the therapists reflect on practice and explore relevant intervention options
 - Coordination of therapy mentoring meetings, including six OT meetings, five SP meetings and some combined OT/SP meetings. Topics discussed in 2015 included parent coaching, toileting, managing abnormal muscle tone, feedback from APAC15, handwriting, narrative language development, sharing of practices and resources through case discussion, Social Thinking, and feedback on a research project on the development of literacy by Dr Marleen Westerveld from Griffith University
 - Orientation of new therapy staff
 - Provision of additional support to regional therapists

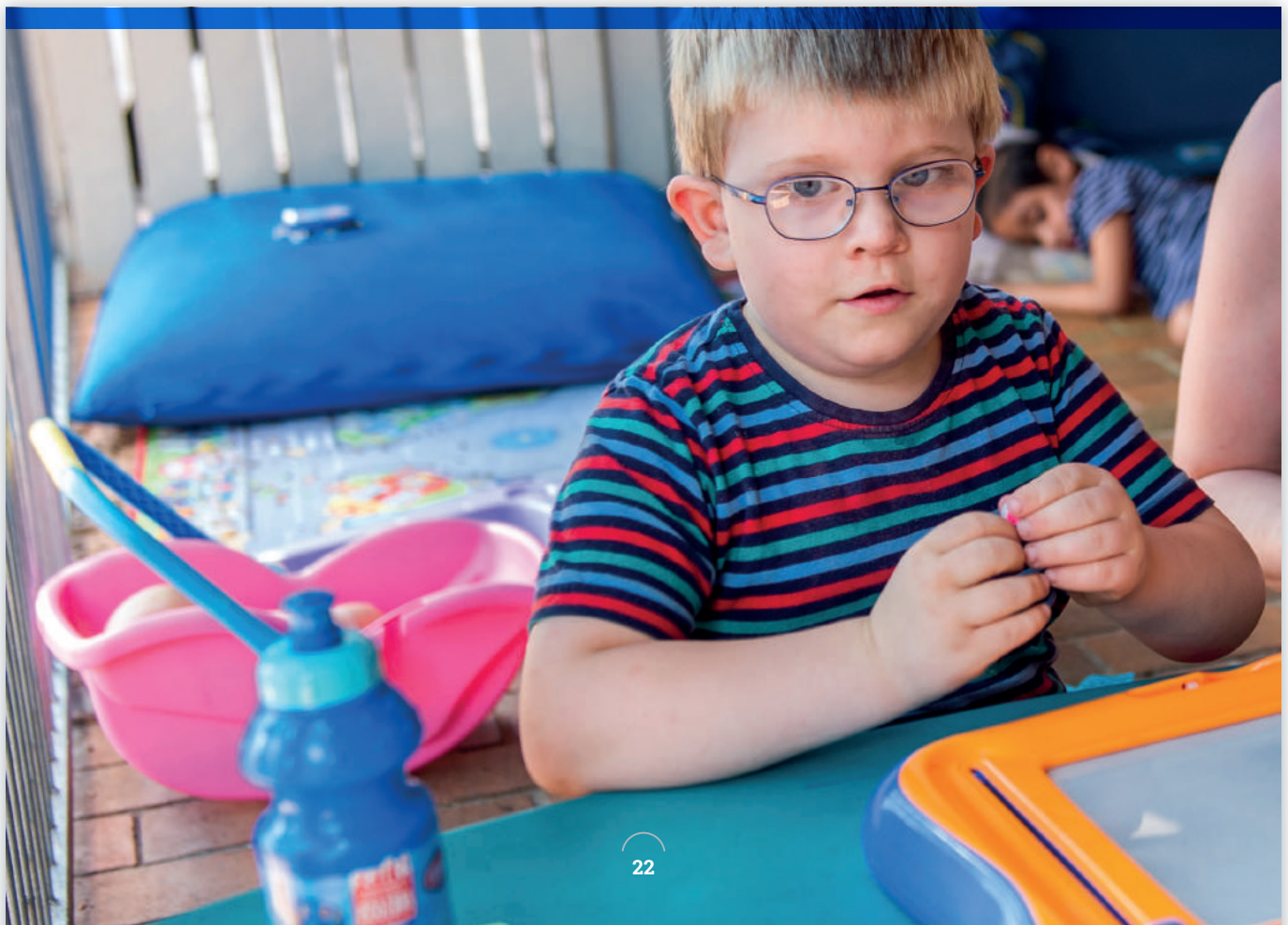
Research & Development (continued)

in order to manage issues unique to their role and issues related to their geographic isolation. In 2015, this included three teleconferences with regional OT, and Senior OT and SP visits to regional centers to provide support and feedback on their practice

- Provision of work-shadowing of some therapists to support evidence informed practice
- Participation in recruitment panels for therapy positions in order to provide discipline-specific expertise
- Dissemination of information on professional development opportunities to Autism Queensland's therapists
- Liaison with Team Leaders as required, in order to support the therapists
- Trial of online ways of sharing clinical information and resources (using the Yammer platform) with the support of Autism Queensland's IT services.

○ **Our Senior OT, Judy Jones, and Senior SP, Jen Catts, have also contributed to high quality practice at Autism Queensland through:**

- Review of documentation procedures for early intervention services to ensure relevance and efficiency
- Preparation of facilities/resources to enable efficient use of clinic spaces
- Provision of guidance on assessment and intervention options for clients outside of Autism Queensland traditional scope
- Establishment of a central online location for electronic OT and SP resources
- Attendance of professional development on the ESDM with the aim of supporting adoption of model within Autism Queensland. Introductory training was attended by Judy and intensive accredited training by Jen
- Attendance at APAC15 with the aim of sharing information on new programs and research with therapists
- Contributions to formal discussion regarding service delivery models for provision of therapy services within Autism Queensland Schools
- Interagency professional networking through attendance at the Cross Government Agency Annual Paediatric Speech Pathology Forum and four interagency meetings.



2015 Asia Pacific Autism Conference

Autism Queensland was proud to host APAC15 at the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre (BCEC) on 9–11 September 2015 with the Australian Advisory Board on Autism Spectrum Disorders, the national peak body providing advice to the Australian Government on issues affecting people with ASD and their families.

The conference theme of “Transforming Futures” was chosen to reflect the ways in which research, education and specialist early intervention are generating successful and increasingly positive outcomes for individuals and families living with ASD. Brisbane-based LOUD Events were contracted as the official Professional Conference Organiser.

APAC15 engaged over 1100 attendees from across Australia and 16 other countries, and from a variety of professions and backgrounds. The program included a diverse range of Australian and international speakers presenting on topics ranging from current research findings to personal accounts of living with ASD.

In addition to the opening and closing sessions, and a closing Q&A Panel Session, the three day program included six plenary presentations, 12 Symposium Sessions (four each day) comprising three to four keynote speakers, 45 afternoon concurrent sessions featuring presentations of two to four speakers (selected from 323 submissions) and 61 posters.

A Mentoring Program also ran concurrently with APAC15 and was designed to link successful adults with autism to young people also on the spectrum who were transitioning into further employment, education and adulthood. A total of 14 mentors and mentees from New Zealand, Adelaide, Canberra, Sydney, Cairns, Sunshine Coast and Brisbane participated in the program.

Hon Coralee O’Rourke, Queensland Minister for Disability Services, opened the conference and Senator The Honourable Mitch Fifield, at the time Assistant Minister for Social Services, sent a video message that was played during this session. The Welcome to Country was delivered by Songwoman Maroochy of the Turrbal People.

APAC15 keynote speakers included:

- Dr Yuan Gao - China, and an Honorary Fellow, Olga Tennison Research Centre, La Trobe University, Melbourne.



Dr Joe Piven

- Ms Michelle Garcia Winner – Social Thinking, California, USA
- Dr Iliana Magiati – National University of Singapore, Singapore
- Dr Liz Pellicano – University of London, United Kingdom
- Dr Joseph Piven – Carolina Institute for Developmental Disabilities, USA (Opening keynote)
- Prof Sylvia Rodger – Autism CRC, Australia
- Mr Peter Vermeulen – Autisme Centraal, Belgium.

Acknowledgement must go to the members of the Conference Organising and Scientific and Program Committees for their expert assistance and guidance in devising the final conference program.

The Conference would also not have been possible without the financial support of the sponsors, most especially Epic Assist, DSS and Queensland Government’s Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services.



Participants in the Autism Mentoring Program.



Professor Tony Atwood



APAC15 delegates attended from 17 countries.



Rod Cameron presents Professor Sylvia Rodger with the Asia Pacific Award for services to autism at the APAC15 Cocktail Party.



Dr Yuan Gao



Dr Liz Pellicano

Community Support

As a not-for-profit organisation, Autism Queensland is reliant upon support from many sectors of the community.

In 2015 we were again touched by the generosity and goodwill of many organisations and individuals who raised funds for Autism Queensland through donations to our annual appeals, workplace giving, community events, charity runs, sausage sizzles and proceeds from raffles to name a few.

An increasing number of organisations continued to show their support by holding team building volunteers days. This assistance was offered to all our centres, with Sunnybank Hills claiming the majority because of its size and ability to host larger groups.

Go Blue for Autism, which was launched in 2012, returned for its fourth year bigger and bluer than ever with 130 events registered to take place across April. It is now our primary fundraising campaign and each year we see increasing numbers of schools, child care centres, businesses, city councils and government departments joining in the campaign.

Queensland Rail once again opened Roma Street and Central Stations to Autism Queensland and our fundraising volunteers on April 2, World Autism Awareness Day, where we collected donations from patrons and sold merchandise.

Radio 96.5FM also returned as the official radio partner for the campaign, helping spread the word by providing public service announcements leading up to and during April. Govia recognised World Autism Awareness Day on the electronic signage on the Gateway Motorway and both the Gateway and Story Bridges turned their lights blue on April 2.

The popular Go Blue for Autism Twilight Walk was held again in the Roma Street Parkland in May and attended by more than 300 families.

Autism Queensland continued to work with the Queensland Museum and Sciencentre for the second year of their popular Sciensensory afternoons, and with the Queensland Performing Arts Centre and the Out of the Box Children's Festival who identified further opportunities for sensory friendly performances across the year. These partnerships have long term benefits for the families who access our services, and the wider community of people living with ASD.

Major supporters in 2015

Autism Queensland sincerely thanks all our donors, sponsors and volunteers for their commitment and belief in this organisation. Together we make a vital contribution the lives of Queenslanders of all ages with autism and their families.

- A & J Pavlou
- ADFAS Brisbane River
- Aurizon Community Giving Fund
- Australian Government – Department of Social Services
- Award Carpets
- Bracken Ridge Lions Club
- Brisbane City Council
- Cooktown Crusaders
- Community Benefit Fund
- Tahlia & Jessica de Felicis
- Decmil
- Don Brosnan Tyres
- East Coast Lubes Pty Ltd
- Footprint Books
- Fund-A-Dream
- GG-SWF Foundation Charities Committee
- govia Network
- Index Group of Companies
- Iwasaki Foundation
- Jackson Road Shopping Village vendors
- Kettle Bells for Autism & Michael Miller
- Land Partners Limited
- Lone Star Tavern
- Lone Star Tavern Fishing Club
- JJ Richards & Sons Pty Ltd
- Mackay Autism Support Group

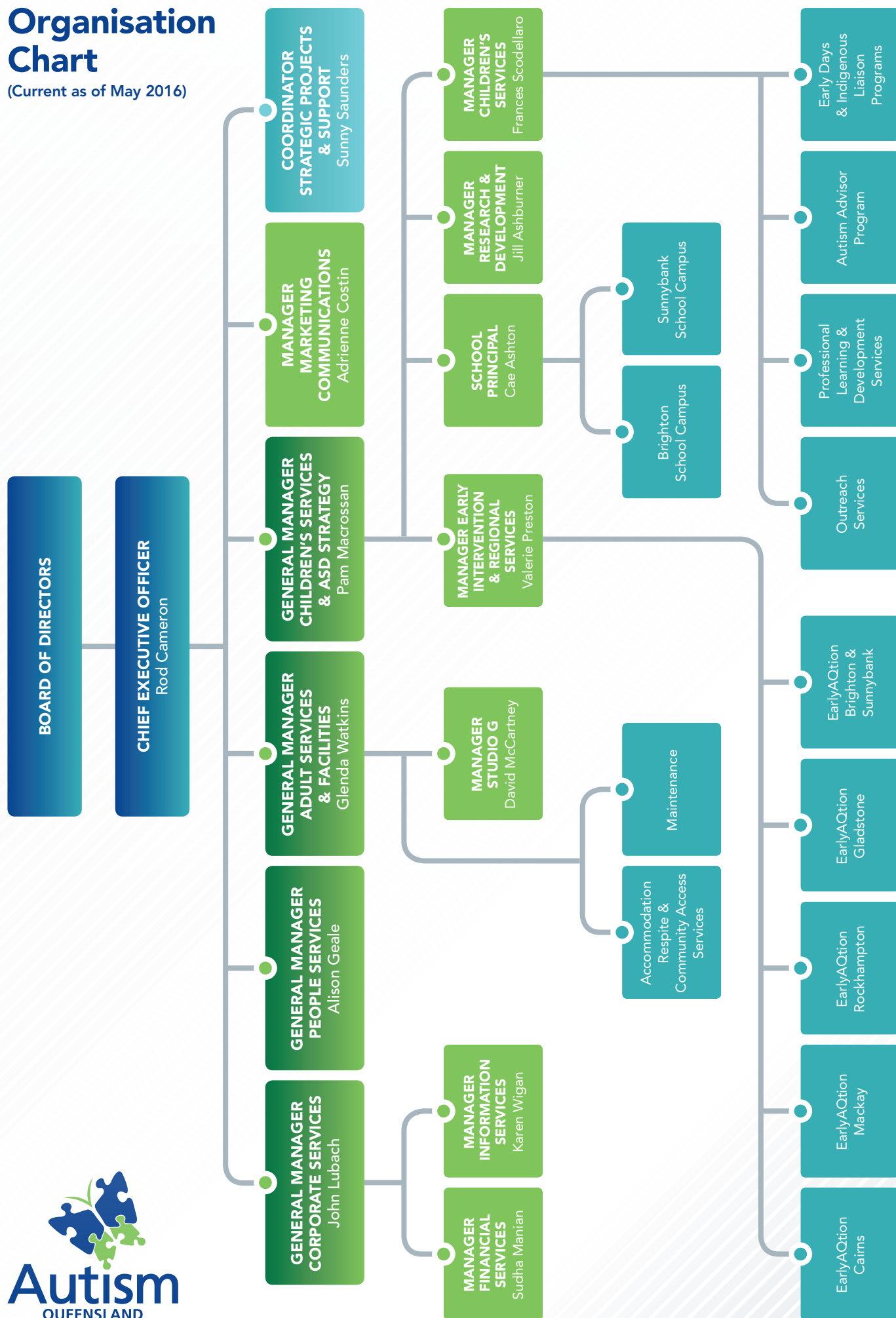


- Martin Edge
- Masonic Lodge, Ravenshoe
- Master Engraving
- Maxa Constructions
- Merlo Coffee
- Nekea Blagoev
- Non School Organisations
- Piccone's IGA
- Queensland Government
- Queensland Rail
- QUT Staff Community Welfare Fund
- Rockhampton Lions Club
- Roma Street Parkland
- Radio 96.5FM
- Savills Australia
- Sentis
- Sci-Fleet Toyota
- Selleys
- Stanwell Corporation
- Suncorp Group Brighter Futures Community Giving Program
- Suncorp Financial Planning
- Sunnybank Community and Sports Club
- Telstra
- The Edge, State Library of Queensland
- The John Villiers Trust
- The Hart Family Trust
- The Royal Antidiluvian Order of Buffaloes
- UPS



Organisation Chart

(Current as of May 2016)





Directors' Report

31 December 2015

The directors present their report, together with the financial statements, on the company for the year ended 31 December 2015.

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
- Michael Klug (Resigned 27 July 2015)
- Roslyn Dick
- Paul Stokes
- Jim Hunter (Resigned 21 September 2015)
- Annie Kenny (Resigned 31 December 2015)
- Amanda Pafumi (Appointed to casual vacancy 24 August 2015, resigned 17 April 2016)
- Wendy McTainsh (Appointed to casual vacancy 22 March 2016)
- Michael Glover (Appointed to casual vacancy 22 March 2016)
- Christopher Miers (Appointed to casual vacancy 22 March 2016)

Review of Operations

The operating result for 2015 was a surplus of \$7,169 (2014: \$924,173).

Government subsidies continued to provide the major operational income for Autism Queensland Limited. Income from programs, workshops and levies on a fee for service basis charged to clients has shown steady growth. The current year results were not impacted by donations and subsidies for capital items (2014: \$1,410,449) or loss on disposal of fixed assets (2014: \$382,579).

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)

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 two independent schools for children with ASD delivered by an expert team of teachers, therapists, social workers and psychologists
- Early intervention and programs for older children from our centres in Brisbane, Gladstone, Rockhampton, Mackay and Cairns
- Individual therapy and assessments provided by Autism Queensland Limited's qualified allied health professionals throughout Queensland
- Outreach programs delivered by multi-disciplinary teams with expertise in the education of children with ASD across State, Catholic and Independent schools in Queensland
- Respite services, holiday programs and community access
- Autism Queensland Limited hosts the Autism Advisor Program for parents of children newly diagnosed with ASD in Queensland
- Autism Queensland Limited hosts the National Co-ordinator of the Early Days Workshops program for parents of children newly diagnosed with ASD and delivers the Queensland Early Days workshops
- 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
- Post School programs including Studio G, Computer Club and Recreation Group
- 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 an Essential Participant in the Autism CRC. Research and Development at Autism Queensland Limited is led by Dr Jill Ashburner.

Directors' Report (continued)

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 2015

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:
Roslyn Dick	Non-Executive Director	BDS
Experience and expertise:	Roslyn is a Principal Dentist in a group private practice. She has 10 years experience on the Board of Autism Queensland Limited. Roslyn also has over 20 years' lived experience with ASD.	
Special responsibilities:	Chair People and Safety Committee	

Name:	Title:	Qualifications:
Annie Kenny	Non-Executive Director	Dip Teach (Early Childhood) MAICD LEADR – Practitioner Member
Experience and expertise:	Annie is a pre-school teacher who has worked in both Queensland and New South Wales. She has 26 years experience as HR Manager in her family's law practice as well as 12 years' experience as HR Consultant to CMS (Queensland & Northern NSW). In addition, Annie has a lived experience with ASD of approximately 16 years.	
Special responsibilities:	Member People and Safety Committee	

Name:	Title:	Qualifications:
Paul Stokes	Non-Executive Director	BPhy BHMS GAICD FAIM
Experience and expertise:	Paul is an Associate Professor and qualified physiotherapist with extensive leadership experience in the Australian Health, Disability and Employment industries spanning more than 20 years. He is also a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Management.	
Special responsibilities:	Chair Audit and Risk Committee	

Name:	Title:	Qualifications:
Amanda Pafumi	Non-Executive Director (casual vacancy)	BCom GAICP FCPA
Experience and expertise:	Amanda is an experienced, Non-Executive Director in the Not for Profit Sector. She is a qualified accountant and a fellow member of CPA Australia, holds a Bachelor of Commerce degree majoring in Accounting and Finance and is a graduate member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.	
Special responsibilities:	None	

Directors' Report (continued)

	Full Board		Audit & Risk Committee		People & Safety Committee	
	Attended	Held	Attended	Held	Attended	Held
Michael Klug	6	6	3	3	-	3
Barry Dennien	11	11	2	2	4	5
Roslyn Dick	8	11	-	-	4	5
Jim Hunter	6	8	3	4	-	-
Annie Kenny	10	11	-	-	1	2
Paul Stokes	11	11	5	5	-	-
Amanda Pafumi	5	5	-	-	-	-

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 \$83, based on 83 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 April 2016

Financial Statements

Autism Queensland Limited Directors' Declaration

The Directors declare that in the Directors opinion:

1. The financial statements, comprising the Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income, Statement of Financial Position, Statement of Cash Flows, Statement of Changes in Equity, 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 entity's financial position as at 31 December 2015 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 subsection 60.15(2) of the ACNC Regulation 2013 on behalf of the directors by:



Barry Dennien
Chairman – Director
Brisbane, 26 April 2016

Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2015

	Notes	2015 \$	2014 \$
INCOME			
Subsidies received		13,700,556	13,680,988
Donations & subsidies - capital items		–	1,410,449
Program fees		1,289,126	1,107,680
Interest received		44,919	64,986
Dividends received		1,022	2,668
Fundraising activities		1,516,822	219,634
Membership fees		5,868	12,332
Levies		891,925	572,620
Professional workshops		116,048	196,206
Sundry income		75,317	125,696
		17,641,603	17,393,259
EXPENDITURE			
Adult services		2,940,518	2,765,477
Children's services		9,140,656	9,001,905
Fundraising - general		223,779	111,135
Membership		198,100	80,850
Outreach services		359,783	329,917
Administration		4,197,895	3,226,526
Depreciation and amortisation	3	528,097	513,025
Loss/(gain) on disposal of fixed assets		–	382,579
Finance costs		45,606	57,672
	3	17,634,434	16,469,086
Surplus before income tax expense		7,169	924,173
Income tax benefit/(expense)	1	–	–
Surplus after income tax expense		7,169	924,173
OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME			
<i>Items that may be reclassified to profit and loss</i>		–	–
<i>Items that will not be reclassified to profit and loss</i>			
Net gain/(loss) on revaluation of land and buildings	6	–	526,726
Net gain/(loss) on revaluation of financial assets		3,345	(7,728)
Other comprehensive income for the year, net of tax		3,345	518,998
Total comprehensive income for the year attributable to members of Autism Queensland Limited		10,514	1,443,171

The above Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income should be read in conjunction with the attached notes.

Statement of Financial Position

AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2015

	Notes	2015 \$	2014 \$
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash and cash equivalents	4	2,766,665	2,474,703
Trade and other receivables	5	105,374	53,799
Other assets and prepayments		121,849	156,723
Total Current Assets		2,993,888	2,685,225
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			
Property, plant and equipment	6	9,935,961	10,243,408
Financial assets	7	10	104,293
Total Non-Current Assets		9,935,971	10,347,701
Total Assets		12,929,859	13,032,926
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Trade and other payables	8	1,819,116	1,741,712
Financial liabilities	9	442,726	144,568
Provisions	10	1,338,809	1,247,380
Total Current Liabilities		3,600,651	3,133,660
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Financial liabilities	9	486,394	1,043,430
Provisions	10	201,920	225,456
Total Non-Current Liabilities		688,314	1,268,886
Total Liabilities		4,288,965	4,402,546
NET ASSETS		8,640,894	8,630,380
EQUITY			
Accumulated funds	11	4,638,899	4,631,730
Revaluation Reserves	11	4,001,995	3,998,650
TOTAL EQUITY		8,640,894	8,630,380

The above Statement of Financial Position should be read in conjunction with the attached notes.

Statement of Changes in Equity

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2015

	Accumulated Funds	Revaluation Reserves	Total
Balance at 1 January 2014	3,707,557	3,479,652	7,187,209
Surplus after income tax expense for the year	924,173	–	924,173
Other comprehensive income for the year, net of tax	–	518,998	518,998
Total comprehensive income for the year	924,173	518,998	1,443,171
Balance at 31 December 2014	4,631,730	3,998,650	8,630,380
Balance at 1 January 2015	4,631,730	3,998,650	8,630,380
Surplus after income tax expense for the year	7,169	–	7,169
Other comprehensive income for the year, net of tax	–	3,345	3,345
Total comprehensive income for the year	7,169	3,345	10,514
Balance at 31 December 2015	4,638,899	4,001,995	8,640,894

The above Statement of Changes in Equity should be read in conjunction with the attached notes.

Statement of Cash Flows

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2015

	Notes	2015 \$	2014 \$
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES			
Subsidies received		17,531,761	16,210,472
Payments to suppliers and employees		(16,760,606)	(15,135,436)
Interest received		44,919	64,986
Dividends received		1,022	2,668
Interest paid		(45,606)	(57,672)
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities		771,490	1,085,018
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES			
Proceeds from capital grants for purchase of fixed assets		–	447,650
Payments for fixed assets		(220,650)	(486,437)
Proceeds from sale of fixed assets		–	527,243
Repayments of capital grants from sale of fixed assets		–	(462,010)
Net cash provided by/(used in) investing activities		(220,650)	26,446
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES			
Finance lease payments		(177,755)	(103,368)
Repayments of borrowings		(81,123)	(75,948)
Net cash provided by/(used in) financing activities		(258,878)	(179,316)
Net increase/(decrease) in cash held		291,962	932,148
Cash at the beginning of the financial year		2,474,703	1,542,555
CASH AT THE END OF THE FINANCIAL YEAR	16	2,766,665	2,474,703

The above Statement of Cash Flows should be read in conjunction with the attached notes.

Notes to the Financial Statements

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2015

NOTE 1. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Significant accounting policies

The principal accounting policies adopted in the preparation of the financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all the years presented, unless otherwise stated.

New, revised or amending Accounting Standards and Interpretations adopted

The company has adopted all of the new, revised or amending Accounting Standards and Interpretations issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board ('AASB') that are mandatory for the current reporting period.

Any new, revised or amending Accounting Standards or Interpretations that are not yet mandatory have not been early adopted.

Any significant impact on the accounting policies of the company from the adoption of these Accounting Standards and Interpretations are disclosed below. The adoption of these Accounting Standards and Interpretations did not have any significant impact on the financial performance or position of the company.

The following Accounting Standards and Interpretations are most relevant to the company:

AASB 1053 Application of Tiers of Australian Accounting Standards

The company has applied AASB 1053 from 1 January 2014. This standard establishes a differential financial reporting framework consisting of two Tiers of reporting requirements for preparing general purpose financial statements, being Tier 1 Australian Accounting Standards and Tier 2 Australian Accounting Standards - Reduced Disclosure Requirements. The company being classed as Tier 2 continues to apply the full recognition and measurements requirements of Australian Accounting Standards with substantially reduced disclosure in accordance with AASB 2010-2 and later amending Standards, as relevant.

AASB 2010-2 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards arising from Reduced Disclosure Requirements

The company has applied AASB 2010-2 from 1 January 2014. These amendments make numerous modifications to a range of Australian Accounting Standards and Interpretations, to introduce reduced disclosure requirements to the pronouncements for application by certain types of entities in preparing general purpose financial statements. The adoption of these amendments has significantly reduced the company's disclosure requirements.

AASB 2011-2 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards arising from the Trans-Tasman Convergence Project - Reduced Disclosure Requirements, AASB 2012-7 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards arising from Reduced Disclosure Requirements and AASB 2012-11 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards - Reduced Disclosure Requirements and Other Amendments

The company has applied AASB 2011-2, AASB 2012-7 and 2012-11 amendments from 1 January 2014, to the extent that they related to other standards already adopted by the company. These amendments make numerous modifications to a range of Australian Accounting Standards and Interpretations to significantly reduce the company's disclosure requirements.

AASB 2013-3 Amendments to AASB 136 - Recoverable Amount Disclosures for Non-Financial Assets

The company has applied AASB 2013-3 from 1 January 2014. The disclosure requirements of AASB 136 have been enhanced to require additional information about the fair value measurement when the recoverable amount of impaired assets is based on fair value less costs of disposals. Additionally, if measured using a present value technique, the discount rate is required to be disclosed.

Notes to the Financial Statements

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2015

NOTE 1. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (CONTINUED)

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 (ACNC Act 2012). The company is a not for profit entity for the purpose of preparing these financial statements. The concept of accruals accounting has been adopted in preparation of the financial statements. The accounting policies have been consistently applied, unless otherwise stated. Autism Queensland Limited is an entity incorporated and domiciled in Australia.

Historical cost convention

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, except for, when applicable, certain classes of property, plant and equipment.

Currency and rounding of amounts

The financial statements are presented in Australian dollars, which is the company's functional and presentation currency. All values are rounded to the nearest dollar unless otherwise stated.

Critical accounting estimates

The preparation of the financial statements requires the use of certain critical accounting estimates. It also requires management to exercise its judgement in the process of applying the company's accounting policies. The areas involving a higher degree of judgement or complexity, or areas where assumptions and estimates are significant to the financial statements, are disclosed in Note 2.

The following material accounting policies which are consistent with the previous year unless otherwise stated have been adopted in the preparation of this financial report:

Revenue recognition

Revenue is recognised when it is probable that the economic benefit will flow to the company and the revenue can be reliably measured. Revenue is measured at the fair value of the consideration received or receivable.

Fees, levies and grants

Client levies for services, respite and accommodation, school tuition fees, program fees, workshop fees and grants are recognised in the accounting period to which they relate.

Donations, fundraising and bequests

Donations, third party fundraising proceeds and bequests are recognised when it is received or when the right to receive payment is established.

Other revenue

Other revenue is recognised when it is received or when the right to receive payment is established.

Income Tax

The company is exempt from the payment of Income Tax under the provision of Division 50 of the Income Tax Act.

Government Subsidies

Subsidies are received from both the Commonwealth and State Government. Subsidies received for specific capital items are disclosed separately in the Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income. Other subsidies being for operating expenses are treated as revenue and included in the operating result for the year to which they relate.

Notes to the Financial Statements

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2015

NOTE 1. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (CONTINUED)

Fixed Assets

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 direct to the asset revaluation reserve.

The depreciable amount of all fixed assets are 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 straight line basis
Motor vehicles	4 years straight line basis
Furniture and equipment	3 - 10 years straight line basis

Leased Assets

Leases are classified at their inception as either operating or finance leases based on the economic substance of the agreement so as to reflect the risks and benefits incidental to ownership.

Operating Leases

The minimum lease payments of operating leases, where the lessor effectively retains substantially all of the risks and benefits of ownership of the leased item, are recognised as an expense on a straight line basis.

Finance Leases

Leases which effectively transfer substantially all risks and benefits incidental to ownership of the leased item are capitalised at the present value of the minimum lease payments and disclosed as property, plant and equipment. A lease liability of equal value is also recognised.

Capitalised leased assets are depreciated over the shorter of the estimated useful life of the assets and the lease term. Minimum lease payments are allocated between the principal component of the lease liability and the finance costs, so as to achieve a constant rate of interest on the remaining balance of the liability.

Cash and Cash Equivalents

For the purposes of the Statement of Cash Flows, cash includes cash on hand and in banks, and term deposits which could be readily converted to cash.

Employee Entitlements

Provision is made for employee entitlement benefits accumulated as a result of employees rendering services up to the reporting date. These benefits include wages and salaries, annual leave and long service leave.

Liabilities arising in respect of wages and salaries, annual leave and other employee entitlements expected to be settled within twelve months of the reporting date are measured at their nominal amounts. All other employee entitlements are measured at their present value of the estimated future cash outflow to be made in respect of services provided by employees up to the reporting date.

Financial instruments

Initial recognition and measurement

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

Notes to the Financial Statements

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2015

NOTE 1. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (CONTINUED)

Financial instruments (continued)

Initial recognition and measurement (continued)

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. Fair value represents the amount for which an asset could be exchanged or a liability settled, between knowledgeable, willing parties. Where available, quoted prices in an active market are used to determine fair value. In other circumstances, valuation techniques are adopted.

Available-for-sale financial assets

Available-for-sale financial assets are non-derivative financial assets that are either not capable of being classified into other categories of financial assets due to their nature, or they are designated as such by management. They comprise investments in the equity of other entities where there is neither a fixed maturity nor fixed or determinable payments.

Available-for-sale financial assets are included in non-current assets, except for those which are expected to be disposed of within 12 months after the end of the reporting period, which will be classified as current assets.

Fair value

When an asset or liability, financial or non-financial, is measured at fair value for recognition or disclosure purposes, the fair value is based on 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; and 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.

Impairment

At the end of each reporting period, the company assesses whether there is objective evidence that a financial instrument has been impaired. In the case of available-for-sale financial instruments, a prolonged decline in the value of the instrument is considered to determine whether an impairment has arisen. Impairment losses are recognised in the Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income.

Comparative Figures

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

Where the company has retrospectively applied an accounting policy, made a retrospective restatement or reclassified items in its financial statements, an additional statement of financial position as at the beginning of the earliest comparative period will be disclosed.

Goods and Services Tax (GST)

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of GST, except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office. 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. Receivables and payables in the statement of financial position are shown inclusive of GST.

Notes to the Financial Statements

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2015

NOTE 1. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (CONTINUED)

Goods and Services Tax (GST) (continued)

Cash flows are presented in the Statement of Cash Flows on a gross basis, except for the GST components of investing and financing activities, which are disclosed as operating cash flows.

Going Concern

The financial report has been prepared on the going concern basis, which assumes continuity of normal business activities and the realisation of assets and the settlement of liabilities in the ordinary course of business.

At 31 December 2015 the company had a net current asset deficiency of \$606,763 (2014: deficit \$448,435). The company is reliant on the ongoing support of both State and Commonwealth in the form of funding. The company also has approximately \$1 million in available undrawn funds with Westpac Banking Corporation at 31 December 2015. The Board of 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 are satisfied that the going concern basis of preparation is appropriate.

NOTE 2. CRITICAL ACCOUNTING JUDGEMENTS, ESTIMATES AND ASSUMPTIONS

The preparation of the financial statements requires management to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts in the financial statements. Management continually evaluates its judgements and estimates in relation to assets, liabilities, contingent liabilities, revenue and expenses. Management bases its judgements, estimates and assumptions on historical experience and on other various factors, including expectations of future events, which management believes to be reasonable under the circumstances. The resulting accounting judgements and estimates will seldom equal the related actual results. The judgements, estimates and assumptions that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year are discussed below.

Estimation of useful lives of assets

The company determines the estimated useful lives and related depreciation and amortisation charges for its property, plant and equipment and finite life intangible assets. The useful lives could change significantly as a result of technical innovations or some other event. The depreciation and amortisation charge will increase where the useful lives are less than previously estimated lives, or technically obsolete or non strategic assets that have been abandoned or sold will be written off or written down.

Impairment of non financial assets other than goodwill and other indefinite life intangible assets

The company assesses impairment of non financial assets other than goodwill and other indefinite life intangible assets at each reporting date by evaluating conditions specific to the company and to the particular asset that may lead to impairment. If an impairment trigger exists, the recoverable amount of the asset is determined. This involves fair value less costs to sell or value in use calculations, which incorporate a number of key estimates and assumptions.

Long service leave provision

As discussed in Note 1, the liability for long service leave is recognised and measured at the present value of the estimated future cash flows to be made in respect of all employees at the reporting date. In determining the present value of the liability, estimates of attrition rates and pay increases through promotion and inflation have been taken into account.

Revaluation of property, plant and equipment

The company has assessed the carrying value of its properties in the light of current economic and associated conditions and is satisfied that the carrying values are still appropriate and reflective of the fair values at balance date.

Notes to the Financial Statements

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2015

	2015 \$	2014 \$
3. OPERATING SURPLUS		
DEPRECIATION OF NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Buildings	153,224	111,496
Property improvements	–	3,497
Furniture and equipment	165,779	191,014
Motor vehicles	209,094	207,018
	528,097	513,025
EMPLOYEE BENEFITS EXPENSE		
Wages and salaries	11,852,954	10,991,925
Superannuation costs	1,023,108	974,800
	12,876,062	11,966,725
IMPAIRMENT OF ASSETS		
Bad and doubtful debts expense	12,723	20,522
	12,723	20,522
Audit fee	31,000	31,000
4. CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS		
Cash on hand	4,800	5,100
Cash at bank	410,239	1,204,801
Cash on deposit	2,351,626	1,264,802
	2,766,665	2,474,703
5. TRADE AND OTHER RECEIVABLES		
CURRENT		
Trade accounts receivable	112,874	66,163
Provision for doubtful debts	(7,500)	(12,364)
	105,374	53,799

Notes to the Financial Statements

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2015

	2015 \$	2014 \$
6. PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT		
Land at fair value	4,135,035	4,135,035
Buildings		
Buildings at fair value	4,259,465	4,259,465
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(184,785)	(77,589)
	4,074,680	4,181,876
Leasehold improvements at cost	1,180,449	1,180,449
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(55,892)	(9,864)
	1,124,557	1,170,585
Total written down value of buildings	5,199,237	5,352,461
Motor vehicles at cost	890,242	946,921
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(713,888)	(561,473)
Total written down value of motor vehicles	176,354	385,448
Furniture and equipment at cost	2,212,702	2,146,621
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(1,941,936)	(1,776,157)
Total written down value of furniture and equipment	270,766	370,464
Work in progress at cost	154,569	–
Less: Accumulated depreciation	–	–
Total written down value of work in progress	154,569	–
TOTAL PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT	9,935,961	10,243,408

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 1 January 2015	4,135,035	5,352,461	385,448	370,464	–	10,243,408
Additions	–	–	–	66,081	154,569	220,650
Depreciation	–	(153,224)	(209,094)	(165,779)	–	(528,097)
Balance at 31 December 2015	4,135,035	5,199,237	176,354	270,766	154,569	9,935,961

Valuation of land, buildings and property improvements

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.

Notes to the Financial Statements

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2015

	2015 \$	2014 \$
7. FINANCIAL ASSETS		
Non-current		
Available-for-sale financial assets – Equity securities	–	104,283
Investment in subsidiary company	10	10
	10	104,293

Autism Queensland Limited controls 100% of the share capital of a company incorporated in Australia, being AQCOM Pty Ltd. This company did not trade during the year and has not been consolidated into the Autism Queensland Limited accounts due to the immaterial nature of its transactions.

8. TRADE AND OTHER PAYABLES		
Current		
Trade Creditors	–	187,150
Other creditors and accruals	1,179,724	867,970
Subsidies in advance and unexpended funds	639,392	686,592
	1,819,116	1,741,712

9. FINANCIAL LIABILITIES		
Current		
Bank Loans - Westpac	237,369	74,279
Hire purchase liability	205,357	70,289
	442,726	144,568
Non-Current		
Bank Loans - Westpac	448,735	692,948
Hire purchase liability	37,659	350,482
	486,394	1,043,430

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

- **1st Mortgage (121 Jackson Rd):** Crisis Care - 121 Jackson Road, Sunnybank Hills
- **1st Mortgage (Rockhampton):** Respite Residence - 331 Jackson Road, Sunnybank Hills
- **1st Mortgage (136 North Rd):** Therapy Centre - 136 North Road, Brighton
- **2nd Mortgage (Rockhampton):** Therapy Centre - 437 Hellowell Road, Sunnybank Hills

10. PROVISIONS		
Current		
Employee entitlements	1,338,809	1,247,380
Non-Current		
Employee Entitlements	201,920	225,456

Notes to the Financial Statements

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2015

	2015 \$	2014 \$
11. ACCUMULATED FUNDS AND RESERVES		
ACCUMULATED FUNDS		
Brought forward at beginning of year	4,631,730	3,707,557
Surplus for year	7,169	924,173
Carried forward at end of the year	4,638,899	4,631,730
ASSET REVALUATION RESERVE		
Brought forward at beginning of year	4,010,440	3,483,714
Revaluation (decrements) / increments	(8,445)	526,726
Carried forward at end of the year	4,001,995	4,010,440
AVAILABLE-FOR-SALE REVALUATION RESERVE		
Brought forward at beginning of year	(11,790)	(4,062)
Revaluation (decrements) / increments	11,790	(7,728)
Carried forward at end of the year	–	(11,790)
TOTAL REVALUATION RESERVE	4,001,995	3,998,650

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.		
Key management personnel compensation	915,701	464,629
Effective 1 January 2015, there was a senior management restructure with the creation of General Manager roles, which are now identified as key management personnel for the year ended 31 December 2015.		

13. CONTINGENT LIABILITIES		
Government Capital Assistance		
Federal and State Governments retain equity in capital projects that are partly funded under their respective capital assistance programmes for a prescribed period of 20 years from the date of practical completion or useable life of equipment, whichever is the shorter (the minimum period). If the facilities are not used solely for the purpose set out in the various agreements for the minimum period, repayment of some of the capital assistance may be required.		
There are no plans to cease the provision of support and services to provide relief to persons living with ASD and their families or to cease using the current facilities for their designated purpose.		
The Board does not foresee any time or circumstances which may result in the repayment of any capital assistance funding.		

Notes to the Financial Statements

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2015

	2015 \$	2014 \$
14. COMMITMENTS		
Non-cancellable operating leases		
The entity leases various offices and properties under non-cancellable operating leases. The leases have varying terms and on renewal, the terms of the leases are renegotiated.		
Operating lease commitments are payable:		
Within one year	65,704	61,371
Later than one year but not later than five years	9,320	75,024
	75,024	136,395
Finance leases		
The entity leases vehicles under finance leases.		
Finance lease commitments are payable:		
Within one year	215,020	306,237
Later than one year but not later than five years	38,228	249,101
	253,248	555,338
15. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS		
Key management personnel		
Disclosures relating to key management personnel are set out in Note 13.		
Transactions with related parties		
There were no transactions with related parties during the financial year.		
Receivable from and payable to related parties		
There were no trade receivables from or trade payables to related parties at the reporting date.		
Loans to/from related parties		
There were no loans to or from related parties at the reporting date.		
16. CASH FLOW STATEMENT		
For the purposes of the Statement of Cash Flows, cash includes cash on hand and in banks and investments 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 as follows:		
Cash and cash equivalents (note 4)	2,766,665	2,474,703
	2,766,665	2,474,703

Notes to the Financial Statements

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2015

	2015 \$	2014 \$
17. FINANCIAL RISK MANAGEMENT		
The group had access to the following undrawn borrowing facilities at the end of the reporting period:		
Floating rate		
Expiring within one year (bank overdraft and bill facility)	1,000,000	1,000,000
Expiring beyond one year (bank loans)	11,371	11,099
	1,011,371	1,011,099
18. SUBSEQUENT EVENTS		
No matter or circumstance has arisen since 31 December 2015 that has significantly affected, or may significantly affect the company's operations, the results of those operations, or the company's state of affairs in future financial years.		
19. ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE		
Autism Queensland Limited is dependent on the continued receipt of government grants for a significant proportion of the revenue used to operate its business. At the date of this report, the company has no reason to believe the income from grants will not continue.		



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INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the members of Autism Queensland Limited

Report on the Financial Report

We have audited the accompanying financial report of Autism Queensland Limited, which comprises the statement of financial position as at 31 December 2015, the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, notes comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information, and the directors' declaration.

Directors' Responsibility for the Financial Report

The directors of the company 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 Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 (ACNC Act) 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.

Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Those standards require that we comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial report. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgement, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the company's preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the company's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the directors, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial report.

Independence

In conducting our audit, we have complied with the independence requirements of the Professional Accounting Bodies. We confirm that the independence declaration which has been given to the Directors of Autism Queensland Limited, would be in the same terms if given to the Directors as at the time of this auditor's report.

Opinion

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

- a) giving a true and fair view of the Company's financial position as at 31 December 2015 and of its financial performance and cash flows for the year ended on that date; and
- b) complying with Australian Accounting Standards - Reduced Disclosure Requirements and Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013.

BDO Audit Pty Ltd

C J Skelton
Director

Brisbane, 26 April 2016

**AUTISM QUEENSLAND LIMITED
DIRECTORS' REPORT
31 DECEMBER 2015
AUDITOR'S DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE**

**DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE BY C J SKELTON TO THE DIRECTORS
OF AUTISM QUEENSLAND LIMITED**

As lead auditor of Autism Queensland Limited for the year ended 31 December 2015, I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, there have been no contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.



C J Skelton
Director

BDO Audit Pty Ltd

Brisbane, 26 April 2016



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