



## **South Coast School for Children with Autism 2005 Annual Report**

Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) operates six schools located in the Sydney Metropolitan area, the Hunter region, the Central Coast and the South Coast. These schools cater for children with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) who require specialised education programs.

The primary focus of the schools is to equip students with the skills to enable them to integrate into the wider community and to become as independent as is possible. In recognition of the special needs of students with ASDs, the ratio of staff to students is low. Aspect schools provide educational services for children aged 4 to 16 years. Aspect has a policy of transitioning students with ASDs into more inclusive settings. These settings include mainstream, support classes or special schools. The decision to transition a student is based on the student's ability to cope in a less specialised setting and is made by both families/carers and staff as part of the Individual Education Plan.

All Aspect schools comprise a base school/administrative centre and a range of satellite classes. A satellite class is an autism specific support class operated by an Aspect base school, but which is located in either a NSW Department of Education & Training or Catholic Education Office mainstream school. Satellite classes are an important step in the transition of students with ASDs into wider educational settings.

The South Coast School for Children with Autism caters for students from a wide geographical area covering Illawarra, Shoalhaven and the Bega Valley.

Illawarra — Helensburgh in the north to Kiama in the south and Appin to the west. The base school at Corrimal has early childhood and primary classes. There are four satellites in the Wollongong area. These are located at Towradgi Public School, Hayes Park Public School, Para Meadows School for Specific Purposes and Warilla North Public School. These satellite classes offer placement for students in the kindergarten to high school range within Department of Education & Training schools.

Shoalhaven —Gerringong in the north to St Georges Basin area in the south and Kangaroo Valley in the west. The classes are located on the infants' site of Nowra Public School.

Bega Valley Shire – an infants' class is located at Pambula Public School.

The school provides a specialised curriculum and community integration programs, supported by a multi-disciplinary team comprising an occupational therapist, family support worker and school counsellor.

## 1. SCHOOL PERFORMANCE IN STATEWIDE TESTS AND EXAMINATIONS

Every student has an individual program developed in consultation with families, after careful assessment of their strengths and needs in all environments. The schools' curriculum is based on the core competencies of autism including social, communication, sensory and behavioural needs which are integrated into the NSW Board of Studies mainstream curriculum — the Key Learning Areas (KLAs). The school uses a multi-disciplinary team approach, working collaboratively with families to develop the best possible outcomes for the students. The school provides information and training workshops to families to help them support their child.

No year 3, year 5 or year 7 students participated in the Basic Skills Test (BST), i.e. Primary Writing Assessment (PWA) or English Language & Literacy Assessment (ELLA). In 2005, 2 students of year 3 age, 1 student of year 5 age and 1 student of year 7 age attended the South Coast School. To protect these students' identities the area of Individual Student Achievement has not been reported.

## 2. TEACHER STANDARDS

The school employs fifteen teachers in permanent and part time positions. All teachers have teaching qualifications awarded from a higher education institution within Australia.

## 3. RETENTION RATES IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Years compared	Year 7 total enrolment on census date 2002	Year 10 enrolment on census date 2005	Year 7 enrolment at census date 2002 remaining in Year 10 on census date 2005	Apparent retention rate	Actual retention rate
2002/2005	1	1	1	100%	100%

As for all of Aspect's schools, the South Coast School for Children with Autism has a policy of transitioning students with autism spectrum disorders into more inclusive settings. The decision to transition a student is based on the student's ability to cope in a less specialised setting and is made by families/carers and staff as part of the student's Individual Education Plan. The success of the schools' transition programs is reflected in the small number of students in years 7–10 who continue their education at Aspect Schools.

## 4. ENROLMENT POLICIES AND PROFILES

### STANDARD 1: SERVICE ACCESS 1.1: SERVICE ENTRY

#### 1.1.2: Service Entry: Schools

Children with an autism spectrum disorder who require specialised educational placement in an Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) school and who meet the criteria for enrolment can access the enrolment process based on relative need and subject to the availability of a suitable placement.

Aspect recognises that children with an autism spectrum disorder have the right to access and equity of services regardless of their gender, race or ethnicity, religion, or language. As a service provider Aspect will respond appropriately and sensitively to the needs of the entire community, including people from indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds within the limit of available resources.

### **When to use**

When parents or carers are seeking placement for a child with an autism spectrum disorder in an Aspect school.

### **Guidelines**

Eligibility for enrolment in an Aspect school requires a diagnosis of an autism spectrum disorder by either a paediatrician or psychiatrist and a recent cognitive assessment by a psychologist.

### **Procedures**

#### **Application Process**

An application for school placement can be made for a child from 3.9 years to 15 years of age by parents or carers. Application forms are available from the office of the Director, Education & Research and each Aspect school.

As part of the application process the parents or carers agree, in writing, to the release of information from other agencies where appropriate (note: such information is only sought in order to assist the Eligibility Committee to establish eligibility for services in consultation with the family).

A current psychological assessment (no more than 12 months old) and a report from a paediatrician or psychiatrist diagnosing an autism spectrum disorder must accompany the application.

An application processing fee is to be paid at the time of the application.

#### **Approval Process**

Eligibility is determined by Aspect's Eligibility Committee which meets once a term.

#### **Applicants deemed **eligible for services:****

If deemed eligible the child may either be offered services or placed on a waitlist for services, depending on availability. After the Eligibility Committee meeting, the referral information is sent to the relevant Aspect school principal. A letter stating the outcome of the school application is forwarded to families or carers by the Director, Education & Research. An offer of placement in an Aspect school, and the type of class offered (base or satellite class) is subject to the availability of an appropriate place and is based upon the learning and developmental needs of the child as determined by the Principal.

#### **Applicants **not eligible for services:****

If deemed not eligible for services then the Director, Education & Research will write to the family, carer or guardian providing reasons and where possible make recommendations to other services that may be more appropriate.

### **Student Population**

All students enrolled at the South Coast School for Children with Autism have been approved for enrolment by the Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) Eligibility Committee, which determined they had a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder.

The South Coast School enrolment for 2005 was 57 students (8 girls and 49 boys). Five students were in a secondary class.

## 5. POLICIES

Policies tabled below cover:

- A. Student welfare
- B. Discipline
- C. Reporting complaints and resolving grievances

Parents/caregivers may request a copy of policies by contacting the school office.

The school seeks to provide a safe and supportive environment which:

- Minimises risk of harm and ensures students feel secure
- Supports the physical, social, academic and emotional development of students
- Provides students welfare policies and programs that develop a sense of self-worth and foster personal development

### A. Student welfare

To ensure that all aspects of the school's mission for providing for a student's welfare are implemented, the following policies and procedures were in place (or being developed) during 2005.

Policy	Changes in 2005	Access to full text
<b>Child Care and Protection</b> encompassing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legislation requirements</li> <li>• Definitions</li> <li>• Guidelines</li> <li>• Procedures</li> <li>• Responding to allegations against employees</li> <li>• Investigation processes</li> <li>• Documentation</li> </ul>	No changes	Issued to all staff  <i>Our Management — Policies, Guidelines &amp; Procedures</i> policy folder in administrative office
<b>Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers</b> encompassing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work and personal behaviour</li> <li>• Confidentiality and privacy</li> <li>• Conflict of interest</li> <li>• Copyright</li> <li>• Acceptance of gifts or benefits</li> <li>• Personal presentation</li> <li>• Public statements</li> <li>• Complaints handling</li> <li>• Legislation</li> </ul>	No changes	Issued to all staff on commencement of employment  <i>Our Management — Policies, Guidelines &amp; Procedures</i> policy folder in administrative office

Policy	Changes in 2005	Access to full text
<p><b>Community Access</b> encompassing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidelines</li> <li>• Procedures — staff requirements</li> <li>• Supervision</li> <li>• Risk assessment</li> <li>• Documentation</li> </ul>	No changes	<p>Abbreviated text in Parent IEP Handbook</p> <p><i>Our Management — Policies, Guidelines &amp; Procedures</i> policy folder in administrative office</p>
<p><b>Communication — Protocol</b> encompassing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal and informal mechanisms in place for facilitating communication between the school and those with an interest in the student's education and well-being</li> <li>• Guidelines for all communication in Aspect</li> <li>• Access to decision making within Aspect</li> </ul>	No changes	<p>Text of class communication in Parent IEP Handbook</p> <p><i>Our Management — Policies, Guidelines &amp; Procedures</i> policy folder in administrative office</p>
<p><b>Duty of Care and Dignity of Risk</b> encompassing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principles</li> <li>• Definitions</li> <li>• Guidelines</li> </ul>	No changes	<p><i>Our Management — Policies, Guidelines &amp; Procedures</i> policy folder in administrative office</p>
<p><b>Comprehensive Education Approach</b> encompassing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning characteristics of people with ASD</li> <li>• Assessment</li> <li>• Features of educational programs for people with autism</li> <li>• Transition</li> <li>• Training and consultancy</li> </ul>	Reviewed June 05	<p>Full text in Parent IEP Handbook</p> <p><i>Our Management — Policies, Guidelines &amp; Procedures</i> policy folder in administrative office</p>
<p><b>Emergency Procedures</b> encompassing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidelines</li> <li>• Procedures and Contingency Planning</li> <li>• Legislation</li> </ul>	Reviewed June 05	<p>Full text in <i>Our People — Policies, Guidelines &amp; Procedures</i> policy folder in administrative office</p>
<p><b>Working with Families</b> encompassing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidelines</li> <li>• Process</li> </ul>	Revised August 05	<p>Full text in Parent IEP Handbook</p> <p><i>Our Management — Policies, Guidelines &amp; Procedures</i> policy folder in administrative office</p>

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Changes in 2005</b>	<b>Access to full text</b>
<b>Individual Educational Plan</b> encompassing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidelines</li> <li>• Process</li> <li>• Structure</li> </ul>	No changes	Full text in Parent IEP Handbook  <i>Our Management — Policies, Guidelines &amp; Procedures</i> policy folder in administrative office
<b>Incidents/Critical Incidents</b> encompassing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Definition</li> <li>• Guidelines</li> <li>• Investigation guidelines</li> <li>• Procedures</li> <li>• Documentation</li> </ul>	Approved Feb 05	<i>Our Management — Policies, Guidelines &amp; Procedures</i> policy folder in administrative office
<b>Medication and Illness</b> encompassing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management of the unwell person</li> <li>• Procedure</li> <li>• Administering children's medication</li> <li>• Asthma plan</li> <li>• Epilepsy management</li> <li>• Documentation</li> </ul>	No changes	Abbreviated text in Parent IEP Handbook  <i>Our Management — Policies, Guidelines &amp; Procedures</i> policy folder in administrative office
<b>Missing Client</b> encompassing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Background</li> <li>• Protocol</li> <li>• Prevention</li> <li>• Documentation</li> </ul>	Approved June 05	<i>Our Management — Policies, Guidelines &amp; Procedures</i> policy folder in administrative office
<b>Positive Behaviour Support for Challenging Behaviour</b> encompassing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Definition</li> <li>• Legislation</li> <li>• Individual planning and support</li> <li>• Assessment</li> <li>• Prohibited/restricted practices</li> <li>• Crisis intervention</li> </ul>	No changes	Full text in Parent IEP Handbook  <i>Our Management — Policies, Guidelines &amp; Procedures</i> policy folder in administrative office
<b>OH&amp;S</b> encompassing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legislation OH&amp;S Act 2000 and OH&amp;S Regulations 2001</li> <li>• Consultation</li> <li>• Induction and training</li> <li>• Incident and accident reporting</li> <li>• Personal protective equipment</li> </ul>	No changes	Full text in <i>Our People — Policies, Guidelines &amp; Procedures</i> policy folder in administrative office

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Changes in 2005</b>	<b>Access to full text</b>
<b>PRN Medication</b> encompassing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidelines</li> <li>• Procedures</li> </ul>	Approved June 05	<i>Our Management — Policies, Guidelines &amp; Procedures</i> policy folder in administrative office
<b>Safe and Supportive Environment</b> encompassing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child protection</li> <li>• Support</li> <li>• Security</li> <li>• Supervision</li> <li>• Conduct</li> <li>• Complaints</li> <li>• Pastoral care</li> <li>• Communication</li> </ul>	Approved Sept 05	<i>Our Management — Policies, Guidelines &amp; Procedures</i> policy folder in administrative office
<b>Student Attendance</b> encompassing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidelines</li> <li>• Procedures</li> </ul>	Approved June 05	<i>Our Management — Policies, Guidelines &amp; Procedures</i> policy folder in administrative office
<b>Sun Smart</b> encompassing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidelines</li> <li>• Procedures</li> </ul>	No changes	<i>Our Management — Policies, Guidelines &amp; Procedures</i> policy folder in administrative office
<b>Swimming</b> encompassing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidelines</li> <li>• Procedures</li> </ul>	No changes	<i>Our Management — Policies, Guidelines &amp; Procedures</i> policy folder in administrative office
<b>Visual Support</b> encompassing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principles</li> <li>• Guidelines</li> </ul>	No changes	Full text in Parent IEP Handbook  <i>Our Management — Policies, Guidelines &amp; Procedures</i> policy folder in administrative office

## **B. Discipline**

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Changes in 2005</b>	<b>Access to full text</b>
<b>Positive Behaviour Support for Challenging Behaviour</b> encompassing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Definition</li> <li>• Legislation</li> <li>• Individual planning and support</li> <li>• Assessment</li> <li>• Prohibited/restricted practices</li> <li>• Crisis intervention</li> </ul>	No changes	Full text in Parent IEP Handbook  <i>Our Management — Policies, Guidelines &amp; Procedures</i> policy folder in administrative office

Policy	Changes in 2005	Access to full text
<b>Discipline</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Guidelines</li> </ul>	No changes	<i>Our Management — Policies, Guidelines &amp; Procedures</i> policy folder in administrative office

### C. Reporting complaints and resolving grievances

The school's policy for dealing with complaints and grievances includes processes for raising and responding to matters of concern identified by parents, students and staff. These processes incorporate, as appropriate, principles of procedural fairness.

The full text of the school's policy and processes for complaints, "*Complaints by People with ASD and/or their families*" (revised Sept 05), is provided in the *Our Management —Policies, Guidelines & Procedures* policy folder in the administration office.

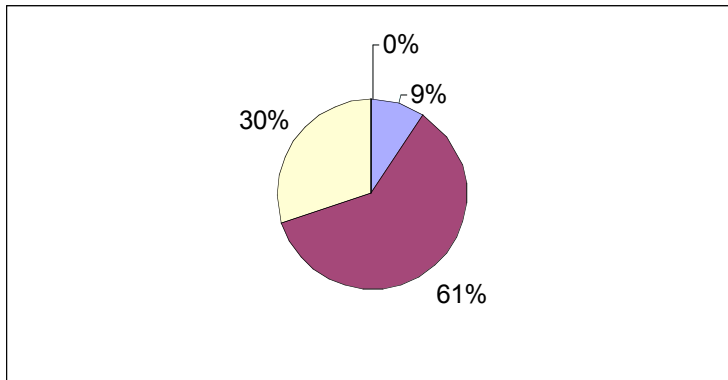
## 6. SCHOOL DETERMINED IMPROVEMENT TARGETS

Area	Priorities	Achievements
Teaching and learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programming — linked to IEP goals</li> <li>Promoting expression through visual communication</li> <li>Use of PECS in working with students with ASD</li> <li>Creative and visual arts</li> </ul> <p><i>New staff, volunteers and casual staff:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thinking and learning characteristics in autism spectrum disorders</li> <li>Communication in autism spectrum disorders</li> <li>Positive behaviour support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Class programs provided for individual students' needs</li> <li>All classrooms support expressive needs of students</li> <li>Behavioural support plans are supported by PECS to reduce the incidents of challenging behaviours</li> <li>Developing the processes of art with students with autism</li> <li>Musical instruments to support student's sensory needs and motivation</li> <li>Staff recognise the complexity of the thinking and learning styles of students with ASD</li> <li>Staff are able to consider students' comprehension and expressive abilities including understanding and using verbal and nonverbal communication</li> <li>Students are provided with supports to enable them to engage in classroom activities</li> </ul>

Area	Priorities	Achievements
Family support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide support to families</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 parent information workshops held</li> <li>• 10 “Coffee Morning” parent support group meetings held</li> <li>• Grandparent network meetings held in Shoalhaven</li> <li>• “Just for Sibs” program held</li> </ul>
OH&S compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2-day retraining of Non-Violent Crisis Intervention strategies</li> <li>• 4 day safety representative training</li> </ul> <p><i>New Staff:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training in risk assessment</li> <li>• Hazard and risk identification</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All teachers and aides and some casual teaching personnel trained</li> <li>• Second staff member trained</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All staff trained</li> <li>• All teachers trained</li> </ul>
Continuous Improvement Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Autism Program Quality Indicators</li> <li>• Transition survey to parents and receiving schools for those students who left in 2003</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey completed — the survey has enabled the school to identify areas for improvement in 2006</li> <li>• Survey completed — 90% of students still in same setting</li> </ul>
Student achievements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transition students with ASD to more inclusive setting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 36.8% of student population transitioned in 2005 as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 6 students transitioned to a mainstream setting</li> <li>- 4 students transitioned to a support setting</li> <li>- 10 students transitioned to a school for specific purposes</li> <li>- 1 student moved into a post-schools option program</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Extend services to reach more students with autism spectrum disorders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment of regional satellite classes in Riverina area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sites determined</li> <li>• Students placements approved by Eligibility Committee</li> </ul>

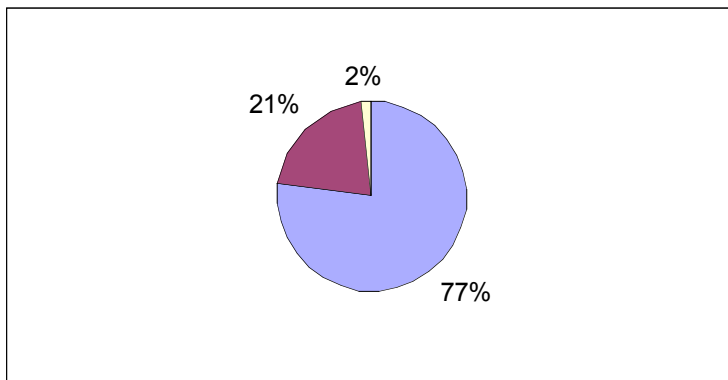
## 7. SUMMARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION

### 1) Recurrent/Capital Income represented by a pie chart



0%	Commonwealth capital grants
9%	Fees and private income
30%	Commonwealth recurrent grants
61%	State recurrent grants

### 2) Recurrent/Capital expenditure represented by a pie chart



2%	Capital expenditure
21%	Non-salary expenses
77%	Salaries, allowances and related expenses