



AUTISM ASPERGER ACT

Annual Report & Accounts

- From the President
- From the Treasurer
 - Financials

From the President

As I write this report I reflect proudly on another busy twelve month period for Autism Asperger ACT. Our premises at the Chifley Health and Well-Being Community Hub are a constant hive of activity as members come in for groups, information sessions, to use the library or to meet with a member of staff.

Over the last year we have continued to liaise with the ACT Government both by direct lobbying to Minister Burch and also by our membership of the Disability Education Reference Group and more recently the Therapy Assistant Pilot Project Reference Group. Our Political Action Group has raised the long-term viability of AAAC with Minister Burch and the urgent need for on-going government support to fund the day to day operations. We have been successful in obtaining funding for a Family Support Officer and our lobbying for adolescent after school and holiday care services has resulted in a government review of this area and commitment for further provision in 2012.

Bob Buckley, vice-president, is our representative on the Autism Advisory Board on ASDs. He meets regularly, by phone and in person, with the representatives from other parts of Australia. Bob also heads up our Political Action Group.

“Doing a great job!
Thanks for being there,
you provide a valuable
resource for our families
all the time”

We were delighted with the response to our Satisfaction Survey sent out to members earlier this year with over 8% of members returning the survey. Responses received have helped us focus our energies into activities most valued by members and we were encouraged by the number of kind comments written by members. Some of these comments are included here.

Our major staffing development in the last year has been the employment of Julia Bowden as our Family Support Officer. The ACT government has allocated funding for four years for this position though we currently only have a three year contract. Already we cannot imagine life without Julia. The number of groups we are now offering has expanded significantly:

- General Monthly Meeting
- Women's Group with Jeanette Purkis
- Asperger Support Group
- Primary School Age Parents' Coffee Morning
- High School Age Parents' Coffee Morning
- Jewellery Craft Group
- Games sessions
- Grandparents' Group
- Girls' Group in the holidays
- A Group for Teenage Boys is currently being established, and
- Fathers' Group is run in association with two fathers.
- Bobbi Cook continues to run our Sibs Group every month for us. This group meets a very important and sometimes overlooked need in families with a

“I am happy to write that we are starting to feel not so isolated now that we have been involved with the AAA Support Groups and various activities For many years we felt so alone and now we're enjoying meeting like-minded parents and families who understand our 'journey'. Thanks for the invaluable work you do.”

Julia also writes our weekly E-Bulletin and oversees our bi-monthly newsletter, Autism Awareness, which you can find on the web. Many families have benefitted from her help over the phone or at a more formal appointment.

Polly McIntyre, our business manager, and Vicki Wood, administrative assistant, continue to efficiently run the office. They have been developing new data bases, organising the education ses-

sions for families and professionals, overseeing the library and all the general financial tasks of running the association, including administering grants received. We are in the process of bedding down a new online booking system which has helped enormously with workshop and Gala Dinner registrations.

Have enjoyed the seminars you have run. Great presenters, all very useful, would love more.

Over the last twelve months we have had the pleasure of hosting **Brenda Smith Myles** the USA who spoke persuasively about the Hidden Curriculum. **Katharine Annear** from South Australia has also recently presented for us in a hands-on 'Transition' workshop. Their presentations were well received and well attended. AACT has also run workshops for employers and community organisations to help these groups in their relationships with individuals on the spectrum.

We continue to provide the Autism Advisory Program for the ACT which is part of the federal government's Helping Children with Autism Package. This year Heidi Zajac has joined the Advisory Team. She and Kathy Blair-Lewis support families through the registration procedures for access to federal government's the Helping Children with Autism package. As part of the same package we continue to run the Early Days Workshops, for families who have a newly diagnosed child, throughout the year.

Autism Asperger ACT's Early Intervention Consortium which provides psychology, occupational therapy, educational services and ABA to families who have eligible children under 7 years of age, has been extremely busy.

A new venture has been the provision of events for children and their families. We aim to have these in the holidays but it is not always possible to organise this. We held a **Christmas Party** at HMAS Harman thanks to the generosity of Chris Carroll which was great fun. In the Term 1 school holidays we had a **Farm Day at the Mugga Lane Farmyard**, complete with Sausage Sizzle, - the weather was inclement but the children attending enjoyed themselves. A swimming afternoon was held at **Aquatots** at the beginning of this year and **Skate in the City** in July gave members the opportunity to let their hair down! We also had our first Sensory Friendly Cinema show at **Dendy**. Other events, e.g. the Fun Factory and a bus wash trip are in the pipe line for the current year.

AACT's presence at community groups is increasing. We had stalls at the Multi-Cultural Festival and the Seniors Expo as well as going to Post School Options.

Our fund raising sub-committee continues to work tirelessly for our cause. In May, during Autism Awareness Month, they raised awareness of ASD through **Bubble Day** in schools and preschools across Canberra. The **Gala Dinner** in September last year was a great success and this year's dinner, with its Italian theme, provided the 330 attendees with a fantastic evening. At the 2010 Gala Dinner our major sponsor, Bendigo Bank nominated Margaret Froggatt as their Hero for 2010 and this year Jianfei Gong was an equally worthy recipient. In addition to the Gala Dinner this sub-group have organised, a wonderful **Fashion Show** and several Fashion evenings with Blue Illusion and Diana Ferrari as well as a sausage sizzle during the Christmas holidays. Many thanks are due to our fund raising group, headed up by Hilary Huggan, who work tirelessly to support our cause.

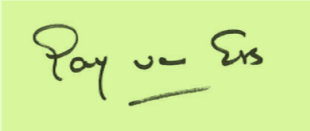
We were fortunate enough to be one of the charities selected by the Canberra Theatre to raise funds at the **Music for Midday** Concert series; we drew January so the year was off to an excellent start. In June the **Canberra Mandolin Orchestra** held a concert for AACT. We are grateful to the CMO for their interest in and support for AACT.

A major venture for the committee this year has been the development of our Strategic Plan 2011-2015. Clive Huggan, from **The Strategists**, has guided us through this process and for this we

are extremely grateful. Clive has provided his services free of charge and I know the time he has devoted to this task has been enormous. Thank you, thank you Clive! We are currently drawing up the implementation plan for 2011-2012.

Before I finish I would like to thank all our benefactors large and small without whom the association would not be able to function.

We are delighted to report that we have received an annual sponsorship from the Bendigo Bank, Calwell and Wanniasa Branches. As a consequence we have named our group room “**The Bendigo Room**”. Other significant sponsors this year have been The Home Loan Centre, The Canberra Southern Cross Club, Centric Wealth who provided fantastic support to us during our Gala Dinner this year, and as ever Canberra Snap Printing—we couldn’t do without you!

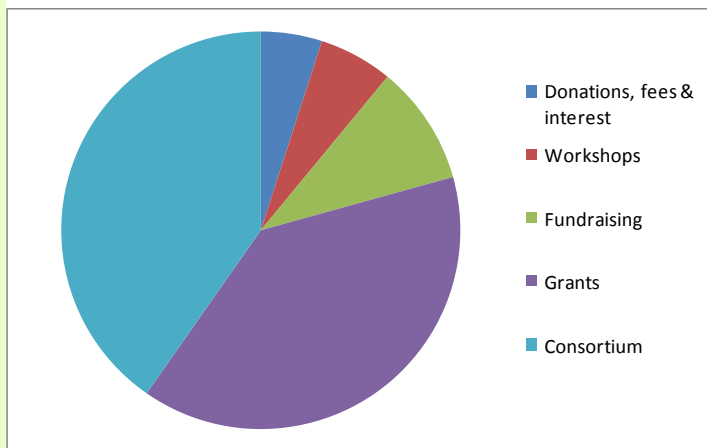


President

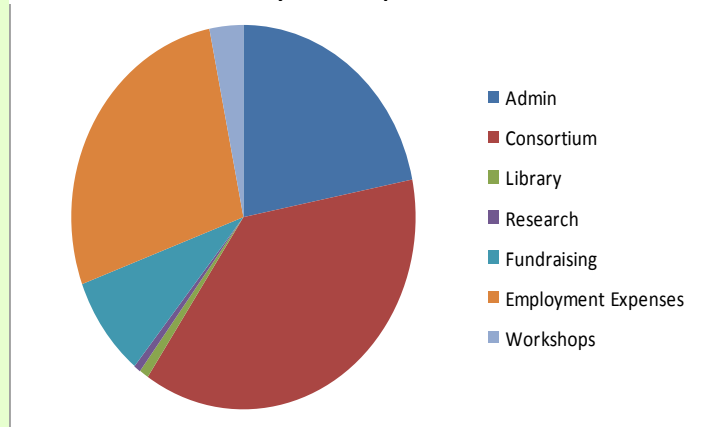
14th September 2011

Financials at a glance

Sources of income 2010/2011



Where the money was spent 2010/2011



From the Treasurer

Statement to Members for Year Ended 30 June 2011

The following statement is provided to members, as required under Section 73 of the *Associations Incorporation Act 1991*.

The Committee of the Association for the year ended 30 June 2011 was as follows:

Full Name	Position
Gay von Ess	President
Bob Buckley	Vice President
Margaret Froggatt	Secretary
Christopher Oppert	Minutes Secretary
Paul Jackson	Treasurer
Erosha Bakmiwewa	Public Officer
Sarah Myers	Librarian
Trish O'Neil	SHOUT Representative
Hilary Huggan	Convenor fundraising Committee
Liz Mellor	Committee Member
Steve Bittinger	Committee Member
Robin Tobler	Committee Member
Corinne Follett	Committee Member
Kathy Blair-Lewis	Committee Member
Adrienne Gault	Committee Member
Fiona Brammall	Committee Member
Suzanne Muir	Committee Member
Sandra Blaik	Committee Member

There were no changes to the Committee for the period covered by this report.

The principal activities of the Association for the period were to progress the objectives of the Association, concentrating on raising community awareness and to undertake the strategic planning for the year ahead. Based on this plan, the Association set out to facilitate member activities; raise awareness in the community through participation in presentation and community expos, aimed at creating a positive profile of the group across the ACT and district. The Association continues to offer presentations to community organisations aimed at educating them about the difficulties faced by individuals with conditions covered by the Autism Spectrum, as well as discussing their strengths and abilities.

The Association is currently achieving its aims by:

- Holding regular meetings;
- Holding social functions;
- Providing relevant up-to-date information;
- Sponsoring seminars by professionals in the field of Autism.
- Raising community awareness and fundraising;
- Liaising with respective agencies and interested groups in fields which are related to the objectives of the Association;
- Assisting Autism and Asperger individuals and families to develop self-confidence and self-esteem;
- Providing Book-Boxes to schools and a comprehensive library;
- Employing 2 Autism Advisers (FaHCSIA Grant) to provide practical help and advice to eligible families.
- Co-ordinating payments for Therapy Services provided by a Consortium of local providers

and paid for by the Federal Government.

A continuing Federal Government Grant from the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) for \$145,000, continues to be put to excellent use. This Grant is on-going, amounting to \$145,000 for 11/12. This grant has and will be used for employing 1.3 full time equivalent Autism Advisers to provide help and advice to families accessing federal government funds via the Helping Children with Autism Package.

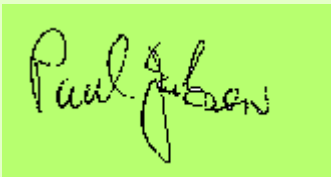
The ACT Government has provided a Support Grant of \$101,000 to the Association. This Grant employs 1 Full-time Family Support Officer to prepare, distribute and publicise information about Autism Asperger ACT, Autism/ASD and related matters for up to 600 families per month and provide appropriate Group and individual support.

Autism Asperger Act administers funding provided by the Federal Government to enable families to access professional therapy services, eg. Occupational Therapy and Behavioural Therapy. These services are provided by a Consortium of local providers whose claims for payments are processed via AACT who charge a 10% administration fee.

The Association employs two part-time staff, a Business Manager and Administration & Education Officer to relieve the Committee of some of the burden of the day to day running of the Association and to help with fundraising.

Overall, a Surplus of \$9452.02 was achieved for the year. Our turnover this year was \$778,770, with a budgeted turnover of \$792,000 for next financial year, 2011/12.

There were no other significant changes in the nature of the activities during the year. The Association continues to focus on providing support and information. It liaises with government, educational, community, other respective agencies and interested groups in fields which are related to the objects of the Association.

A handwritten signature in black ink on a white background, reading "Paul Jackson". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Paul Jackson

Treasurer
7 September 2011

