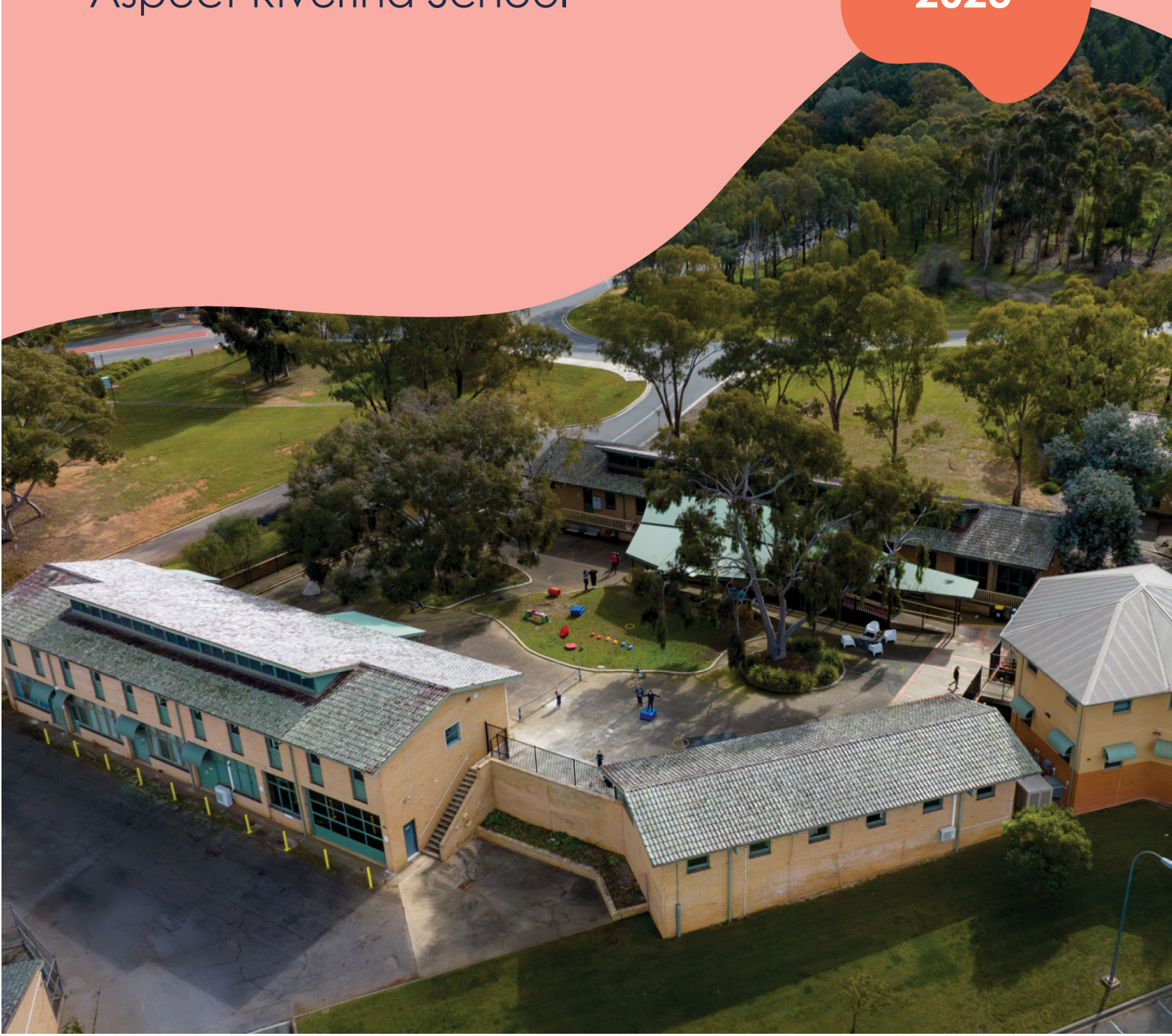




# Annual School Report

Aspect Riverina School

2023



## INSIDE THE REPORT

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## our vision

The best opportunities for people on the autism spectrum.

## our values

We are passionate about people, about being positive, and about what's possible.

## our mission

We work with people of all ages on the autism spectrum, delivering evidence-informed solutions that are person-centred, family focused and customer driven.

## our purpose a different brilliant®

Understanding, engaging and celebrating the strengths, interests and aspirations of people on the autism spectrum.

## our work

We focus on the strengths and interests of people on the autism spectrum

We work in partnership with people on the spectrum, their families and their communities

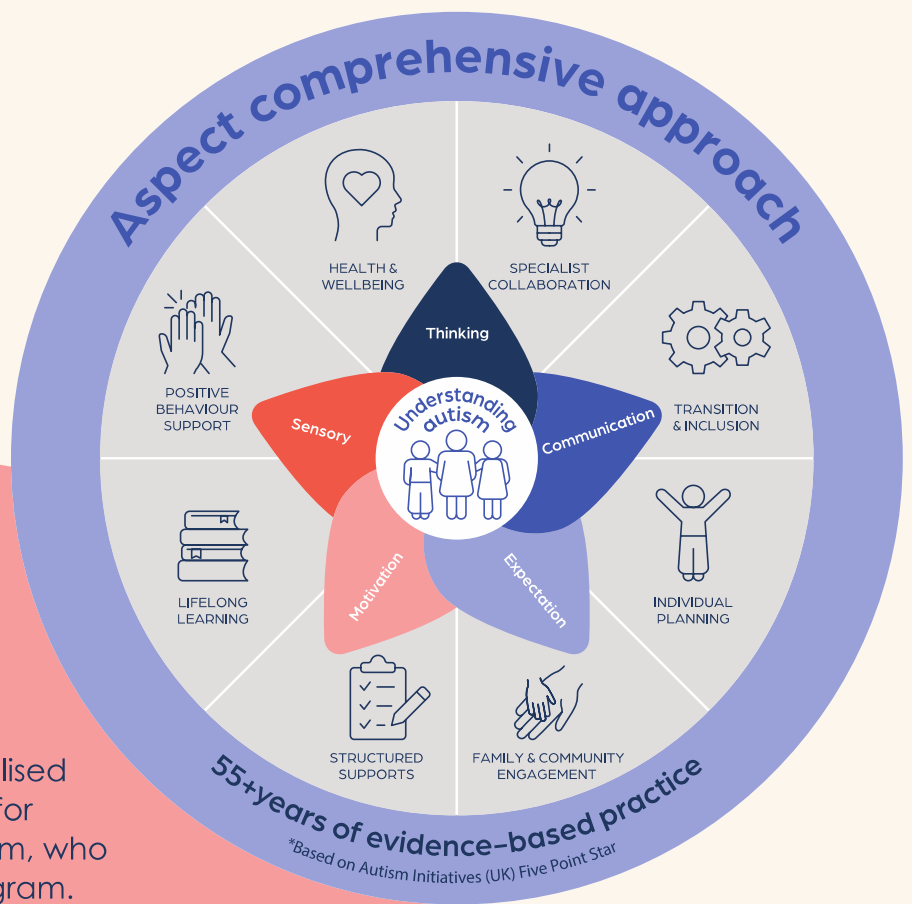
We work to understand people on the spectrum from their perspective

Our approach is autism-specific

Our research focuses on best practice

We expect positive change and progress

Together we can achieve positive outcomes.



Aspect schools provide specialised evidence-informed programs for children on the autism spectrum, who require an autism specific program.

The primary focus of the schools is to equip students with the skills to become as independent as possible and enable them to transition into more inclusive settings. This is achieved through the application of the Aspect Comprehensive Approach. At the centre of the approach is the Autism Initiatives' (UK) Five Point Star to support autism-specific person-centred planning and respectful and positive relationships between the educator and student. It also focuses on the following elements: Individual Planning; Family & Community Engagement; Learning & Participation; Positive Behaviour Support; Structured Supports; Transition & Inclusion; Specialist Collaboration; and Health & Wellbeing.

# Message from the principal

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In presenting the 2023 annual report I would like to acknowledge the Wiradjuri people who are the traditional custodians of the lands on which our campuses are located. Aspect Schools all share Aspect's vision to offer the best opportunities for individuals on the autism spectrum, through the delivery of evidence-informed programs which are person centred and family focused.

In 2023 Aspect Riverina School provided education for 101 students, 87 boys and 14 girls. The school offers a K to 12 Life Skills program across our four sites which includes our Albury main campus, Wagga Campus at Charles Sturt University, our high school satellite class based at Xavier College and a Kindergarten site in North Albury.

Our focus for students is to equip them with skills to be as independent as possible, and engage with a rich range of meaningful learning experiences. As a transition setting we aim to help students develop the tools they need in their next education or post school placement.

## Exciting changes in 2023

Aspect Riverina School has seen some exciting upgrades to our physical spaces in the last few years. The classrooms at our Albury Campus have been upgraded and the newly set up Wagga Campus is flourishing.

This has been matched with investment in staff development and training. In 2023 Aspect started a new program of work with Dr Lyn Sharratt which all Aspect schools participated in. Lyn has successfully implemented a learning framework in mainstream school settings across the world and her work with Aspect in an autism-specific setting will be the first of its kind. The focus of Lyn's work is on being explicit about precision in teaching practice, working side by side to improve outcomes for all students. Our focus is on increasing and measuring student growth and achievement. This is all part of our culture of high expectations that all our students can learn and reach their own unique potential. Through this work will be shining a light on measures we use to demonstrate student success.

Our staff have also all taken part in Berry Street training which puts a trauma-informed lens over existing practice. This compliments Aspect's approach of positive behaviour strategies, building strong relationships with students and focusing on students' strengths and interests. Both these training programs will continue in 2024 and it is exciting to see staff energised and applying the strategies they have learned in their classrooms.

I had the pleasure of joining the Aspect Riverina team for a short time in 2023 when I came down as Acting Principal on a secondment from my role at the Aspect Central Coast School where I have worked for 25 years. The Aspect Riverina community is such a special community to be part of that when a longer-term opportunity arose I moved with my family to Albury and am delighted to be continuing with the school. I would like thank all our students, staff and families for making me feel so welcome. I am looking forward to seeing our school go from strength to strength – we have exciting plans to upgrade our playgrounds at Albury, to further extend our services at Wagga and to continue to provide rich opportunities for our students to learn by connecting to the curriculum and to their community. I

**Amanda Yates**  
**Acting Principal**

# The School SRC

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In 2023 the Aspect Riverina School SRC senior committee was led by Alex our school captain and Fraser our year ten representative. The committee met regularly and had some great ideas and initiatives to better support their friends in the playground and to feel included at school. The committee helped create amazing resources which were used across Aspect Schools to talk about the importance of listening to students' perspectives.

The junior school had their own SRC committee who all contributed ideas to improve our playgrounds. They even organised a petition to encourage Aspect to let students use a particular game on school computers.

The 2024 SRC (pictured below) had big shoes to fill but are already doing an amazing job representing the student body. They have created a survey to ask students how they feel about school. Everyone at Aspect Riverina is looking forward to getting this valuable feedback.

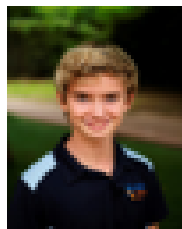
## The students on the Aspect Riverina SRC are



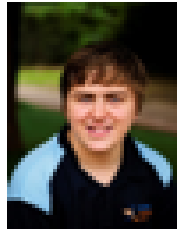
Aiden



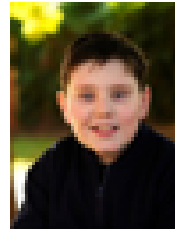
Ayden



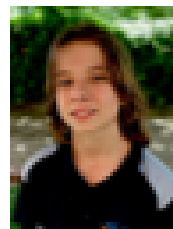
Fraser



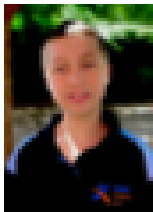
Sam



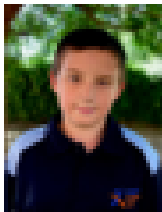
Owen



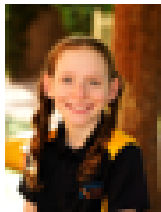
Declan



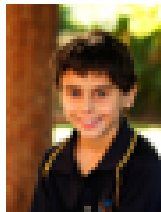
Tyler



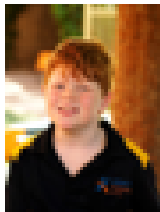
Brodie



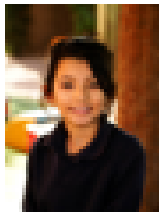
Annabelle



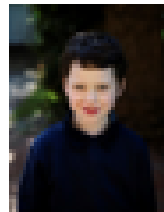
Daniel



Wilbur



Selina



Finn

# Student outcomes

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## Student outcomes in standardised national literacy and numeracy testing

Each student has an individual profile of characteristics that outlines strengths and interests, current levels of functioning and areas for development in the autism-specific areas of learning: social communication, social interaction, behaviours and sensory processing which are integrated into the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) 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.

### Literacy and Numeracy Assessments

For NAPLAN results, please refer to My School website [www.myschool.edu.au](http://www.myschool.edu.au)

Aspect Riverina uses both Initial Lit and Macq Lit programs to assess the students and target literacy at the level the students are working at. This data and programs us to focus on areas that the students need extra support with and celebrate achievements and strengths of all students.

Pat-R and Pat-M testing was completed in 2023 across the school. This data was used to inform teaching practice and track student progression.

## Senior secondary outcomes

Record of School Achievement

8

Higher School Certificate

6

In 2023 six students graduated from Year 12 (100%). The school offered six Stage 6 Life Skills NESA-Developed courses. Five students attended TAFE NSW to complete a TVET Course, four students in year 12 and one in year 11. Two students achieved a CERT 1 in their chosen course and three students achieved their Cert II.

Four year 12 students (67%) completed 40 hours of work experience in 2023.

# Teacher professional learning, accreditation, qualifications and workforce composition

The following professional learning activities were undertaken by staff throughout 2023:

Description of professional learning activity	No. of staff participating
Aspect Learning Improvement Collaborative: introduction to Dr Lyn Sharratt's 14 Parameters	All
Aspect Code of Conduct Full Course or Refresher	All
Berry Street Training: trauma informed approaches to improve student and staff wellbeing	All
Child Protection – responsibilities related to child protection based on state/territory legislation, federal legislation and Aspect policy and procedures	All
Supporting people on the autism spectrum using the 5-point star	16
Incident response and reporting	12
Workplace bullying prevention for staff	11
ACA Structured Supports	7
Girls on the spectrum/anxiety	5
Asthma First Aid for school staff	4
CLARITY: What matters most in learning, teaching, and leading. Presented by Dr Lyn Sharratt	4
ASCIA Anaphylaxis Training	2
Fire Warden Responsibilities	1
Positive Partnerships' Introduction to autism	6
Feedback and Complaints Handling	4

## Teacher accreditation

Level of accreditation	No. of teachers
Conditional	1
Provisional	4
Proficient Teacher	24
Highly Accomplished Teacher or Lead Teacher (voluntary accreditation)	0
Total number of teachers	29

## Teacher qualifications

All teachers have teacher education qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised within the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (AEI-NOOSR) guidelines.

## Workforce composition

Composition of Aspect Riverina School is documented on the My School website [www.myschool.edu.au](http://www.myschool.edu.au)



# Student attendance, retention rates and post-school destinations in secondary schools



## Student attendance rates

Kinder	93%	Year 7	80%
Year 1	87%	Year 8	87%
Year 2	86%	Year 9	80%
Year 3	86%	Year 10	77%
Year 4	87%	Year 11	86%
Year 5	85%	Year 12	81%
Year 6	80%	Whole School	84%

## Management of non-attendance

Aspect Education has a work instruction to ensure compliance of the Aspect schools with school attendance requirements for compulsory school-aged students as outlined by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA).

Unexplained absence will be followed up by the school administration team with the parent/guardian. Repeated unexplained absence or absence of concern may need to be reported to Family and Community Services.

Where unsatisfactory attendance is identified, a student attendance improvement plan is formulated in collaboration with the student and their parent/guardian. The plan is monitored and reviewed on a regular basis.

Retention of Year 10 to Year 12

**75%**

# Enrolment policy

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Aspect provides autism-specific educational services for eligible school-aged children on the autism spectrum, to prepare them for transition to environments that are not autism specific.

Aspect recognises that children on the autism spectrum have the right to access and equity of services regardless of their gender, race or ethnicity, religion or language.

An application is made for an Aspect school rather than a specific class. Our school's professional staff decide in consultation with the family which class is best suited to the educational needs of the student. Each school is responsible for managing its own application, intake and waiting lists process, which is managed by the school principal.

When vacancies arise in the school, the decision about how to fill them is made based on whether the type of vacancy available would be appropriate for the child. Factors taken into consideration include the type of vacancy available, the child's age, the length of time a child has been on the waiting list, the availability of alternative placements and the family situation.

## Entry criteria

Aspect schools are funded in part by the Commonwealth and state governments, which have specific criteria for placement. To be eligible for placement in one of Aspect's schools, prospective students must satisfy the following criteria:

Citizenship and visa status – a child must:

- be an Australian citizen or permanent resident of Australia or holds an eligible visa (refer to guide to checking citizenship and visa status for enrolment).
- be aged between 4 and 17 years.

## Diagnosis – a child must:

- in both NSW and South Australia, have a current diagnosis which is not more than twelve (12) months old as being on the autism spectrum from a specialist medical practitioner, child psychiatrist or clinical psychologist with the necessary training and experience to be able to undertake a diagnostic assessment;
- in South Australia, a second report from a psychologist or speech pathologist that confirms the diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder that is not more than two (2) years old; and
- in both NSW and South Australia, have a current standardised cognitive or developmental assessment (e.g. IQ testing, Griffiths, WISC-IV, WPPSI-111, Stanford Binet V) which is not more than two (2) years old.

## Registration to school waitlist

Expression of interest in Aspect schools may be made in the following ways:

- direct enquiry to the Aspect school by telephone or email;
- telephone or email to Aspect Customer Service, who will direct the enquiry to the school;
- general enquiry via the Contact Us page on the Aspect website, which will be directed to the school.

The registration form can be obtained from the following processes:

- families who are interested in enrolling their child to an Aspect school are asked to attend a School Information Session. Aspect principals or their delegate are responsible for organising a school information session once per school term, in line with the School Information Session work instruction, for prospective parents or guardians who would like to enrol their child. This information session outlines the Aspect education program and the registration and enrolment process. The school registration form is obtained after attending this session.
- families who are unable to attend a School Information Session can obtain a registration form directly from an Aspect school. A School Enrolment Committee representative will provide them with information about the Aspect education program and the registration and enrolment process, before sending them the registration form.

A non-refundable processing fee is required for each application submitted.



## Application to more than one Aspect School

When a family wants to place their child on the waitlist of more than one Aspect school, they first apply to their preferred Aspect school and indicate which other Aspect schools they will consider enrolment. The preferred Aspect school is responsible for processing the application, inform the other Aspect school/s to place the student on their school's active waitlist and share the application documents.

## Aspect School Enrolment Committee

School principals are responsible for convening the Aspect School Enrolment Committee (comprised of school principal, psychologist and selected school coordinators) which meets once per school term, following the information session, to review registrations received. This committee determines if a child is eligible for placement in an Aspect school.

## Eligible/Not Eligible for service

### *Citizenship and age criteria*

If the citizenship or age criteria is not met, a school representative will inform the parents or guardians that their child is not eligible for enrolment due to citizenship or age criteria not being met. If the parents or guardians are not satisfied with the result, they can make a complaint to Aspect (refer to Aspect's Complaints Management procedure).

### *Diagnosis criteria*

If the child has been deemed eligible by the Aspect School Enrolment Committee, the principal will inform the parents or guardians that, based on the diagnostic information provided, their child has been deemed eligible for the program (Letter – Confirmation of diagnosis) and their child's name has been placed on the school waitlist.

The principal is responsible for referring the application to the Aspect Eligibility Committee if the diagnosis needs clarification. Parents/Carers will be informed, in writing (Letter – Application sent to full eligibility committee), that their case has been sent to the Committee for review.

If further information is required by the Committee, the principal is responsible for writing to the parents requesting updated information (Letter – Request for updated Psychological reports).

## Aspect Eligibility Committee

The National Director, Aspect Education is responsible for:

- convening the Aspect Eligibility Committee once per school term to review any registrations that require clarification, and
- reporting to Aspect principals the results of the Aspect Eligibility Committee, so that they can inform the parents of the outcomes.

The principal will inform the parents or guardians (Letter – Confirmation of diagnosis) that based on the diagnostic information provided their child has been deemed eligible for the program or not and, if confirmed, the child's name is placed on the school's waitlist.

## Vacancy Management

If a vacancy arises, students on the waitlist who can potentially fill the vacancy will be considered. The principal or delegate interviews families whose child might fill the vacancy regarding accommodations/adjustments for their child following the interview pro forma.

If a student being considered for enrolment is not an Australian citizen, the principal or their delegate must check that the visa is still valid and eligible for enrolment.

Following completion of the interview, the principal, or their delegate will complete the Risk Management Plan pro forma, to assist with decision making.

Following the interview process, the school will inform the family if a child has been offered a placement (Letter – Enrolment Contract/Acceptance of Offer) or (Letter – Placement to Satellite Class) or will be retained on the school's waitlist.

Principals are responsible for forwarding parents the relevant enrolment package and liaising with them throughout the process.

## Enrolment Package

When a family is offered a placement, in addition to the enrolment contract, they will be sent documents based on the enrolment acceptance checklist.

A family can decline an enrolment offer and inform Aspect school if they want to be placed in the school's active waitlist.

To secure enrolment, the family must pay a non-refundable enrolment fee as published in the Aspect School fees schedule (NSW or SA).

When a family informs the Aspect school of their decision to withdraw their child from enrolment before commencing, they must also inform the Aspect school if they wish to be placed in the school's active waitlist

# Other school policies

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## Summary of policy

## Changes in 2023

## Access to full text

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### Student welfare

The school seeks to provide a safe and supportive environment to support the mental, physical and emotional wellbeing of students through the following policies:

Customer Experience and Service Innovation Policy – defines the way Aspect works in collaboration with students and families to achieve their goals.

Strategy and Risk Management – identifies risks and defines criteria for the assessment of consequence of those risks

Duty of Care and Dignity of Risk - ensures that staff understand and recognise the rights of the people we support to make informed choices and take calculated risks. Aspect facilitates each student's meaningful choice and control to maximise their independence; and minimises the risk to the individual or others wherever possible.

Safeguarding the People We Support - Aspect is committed to appropriately responding to and preventing incidents of abuse, injury, neglect and exploitation of the people we support, in both participation with Aspect, and as a partner of the broader community

Strategy and Risk Management was reviewed & updated in 2023.

Safeguarding the People we Support was reviewed and updated in 2023 to update language and match legislation.

The following policies can be accessed from Aspect's website [www.aspect.org.au/about-aspect/policies](http://www.aspect.org.au/about-aspect/policies)

Customer

Strategy and Risk Management

Duty of Care and Dignity of Risk

Safeguarding the People we support

### Pastoral Care and Bullying Prevention in Aspect Schools

The Aspect Comprehensive Approach (ACA), including the use of the Five Point Star, drives aspect's guiding principles for pastoral care.

Aspect is required and seeks to exercise due diligence in all of its duty of care responsibilities towards students, staff and the school community. Leaders of the school endorse activities and plan for the safety and maintenance of good mental and physical health and well-being of the students, staff and parents involved. Schools seek to accommodate and make provision for particular needs of individuals who require special arrangements to secure safety and avoid discomfort or threat to their health and wellbeing.

Bullying or harassment is not tolerated in any form. All members of our community are committed to ensuring a safe and supportive environment which promotes personal growth and fosters positive self-esteem for all. Aspect Schools aim to maintain a setting in which everyone feels valued and respected and where individual differences are appreciated, understood and accepted and encourages the reporting of complaints and feedback.

Nil aside from changes listed above.

The full text of the Pastoral Care and Bullying Prevention in Aspect Schools procedure can be accessed by request from the school principal.

The following related policies can be accessed from Aspect's website [www.aspect.org.au/about-aspect/policies](http://www.aspect.org.au/about-aspect/policies)

Aspect Comprehensive Approach (ACA)

Duty of Care and Dignity of Risk

Embracing Diversity

Feedback, Complaints and Incidents

Safeguarding the People We Support

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## Discipline

Aspect adopts a positive behaviour support (PBS) approach when working with children on the autism spectrum ranging from strategies for all students through to more intensive strategies for students who may exhibit more challenging behaviours as outlined in the Positive Behaviour Support policy.

Aspect follows a PBS approach but when behaviours occur that put the safety of any stakeholder at risk, the school will be required to implement appropriate procedures to safeguard all stakeholders' safety. All staff have responsibilities in relation to implementing discipline in Aspect Schools.

Nil

The full text of the Discipline in Schools work instruction can be accessed by request from the school principal.

The Positive Behaviour Support policy (PBS) can be accessed from Aspect's website

[www.aspect.org.au/about-aspect/policies](http://www.aspect.org.au/about-aspect/policies)

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## Complaints and grievances resolution

Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) values complaints about the quality of its service and communications to support the continuous improvement of services and management.

Aspect's complaints management process provides a transparent framework for promptly and sensitively addressing and resolving complaints and disputes that may arise from complaints having regard to procedural fairness, confidentiality and privacy.

Nil

The full text of the Complaints Management Process can be accessed by request from Aspect's website

[www.aspect.org.au/feedback-and-complaints](http://www.aspect.org.au/feedback-and-complaints)

The Feedback and Complaints brochure can be downloaded from our website

[www.aspect.org.au/uploads/documents/Governance/Aspect-Feedback-and-Complaints-Brochure.pdf](http://www.aspect.org.au/uploads/documents/Governance/Aspect-Feedback-and-Complaints-Brochure.pdf)

The Feedback, Complaints and Incidents policy can be accessed on Aspect's website

[www.aspect.org.au/about-aspect/policies](http://www.aspect.org.au/about-aspect/policies)

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## School determined priority areas for improvement

Area	Priorities	Achievements
Teaching and learning	To embed the use of data in teacher practices across the school.	All staff took part in Clarity work with Lyn Sharratt to begin the process of using learning data to inform teaching.
	To improve reading comprehension and numeracy abilities across the school.	Improvements seen in PATR and PATM testing across two years. Additional small group and one on one support was targeted through the COVID intensive learning support program based on the use of this data.
Wellbeing	To increase staff and student voice across the school in decision making.	The school SRC committee provided a very effective forum to give student voice in decision making. This initiative was well supported by students and will continue in 2024. Staff and parents were also surveyed at the end of 2023 to inform planning in 2024.
Leadership	To strengthen coordinators understanding of instructional leadership.	Coordinators had the opportunity to explore instructional leadership through a variety of development opportunities including the Aspect Learning Collaborative work with Lyn Sharratt and the Coordinator Networks.
	Strengthen connections between the parent body and the leadership team.	The new Acting Principal Amanda Yates as met individually with almost all families and received a warm welcome from the community. Parents had the opportunity to connect with leadership from the school and across Aspect at a parent workshop session in term 4.
Capital Works	To investigate the possibility of expanding the Aspect Kinder site.	At the end of 2023 Aspect was able to secure an additional building within the Albury site and commenced a program of renovation to provide a new kinder class as well as a library for the whole school use.

# Initiatives promoting respect and responsibility

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Aspect Riverina School wants all students to recognise that they are a valued part of the school community, with parents and staff providing care and support that promotes self-esteem, mutual respect and responsibility.

Students have the opportunity to participate in cultural activities such as Harmony Day, National Reconciliation week and NAIDOC week.

Aspect's Purpose of "understanding, engaging & celebrating the strengths, interests & aspirations of people on the autism spectrum" and Aspect's Value of "we are passionate about people, about being positive and about what's possible" mirror the nine recommended values of the National Framework for Values in Education.

Aspect has a commitment to ensuring all team members know and embrace our core values to ensure they are reflected in interactions and relationships with stakeholders. Aspect recognises that in order to achieve this it is important to share information with staff and the community so that Aspect is known not only for the work that we do but also for the values we uphold.

School values and belonging has been a big focus for our Student Representative Council (SRC) who are focusing on working together to promote respect and harmony at school.

## Parent, student and teacher satisfaction

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### Student Individual Plans

Every student at Aspect Riverina has an Individual Plan (IP). The IP is developed in collaboration with each student and their family. It incorporates a student's strengths, interests, goals and aspirations. Students, parents and teachers work as a team to achieve the goals.

### Family & Student Feedback

There are many formal and informal opportunities to provide feedback to the school. Informal feedback from families is received by email, in person and by letter throughout the year. In addition, net promoter surveys have been conducted as well as a bespoke survey conducted at the end of 2023 to provide data for the school improvement plan in 2024.

### Employee Survey

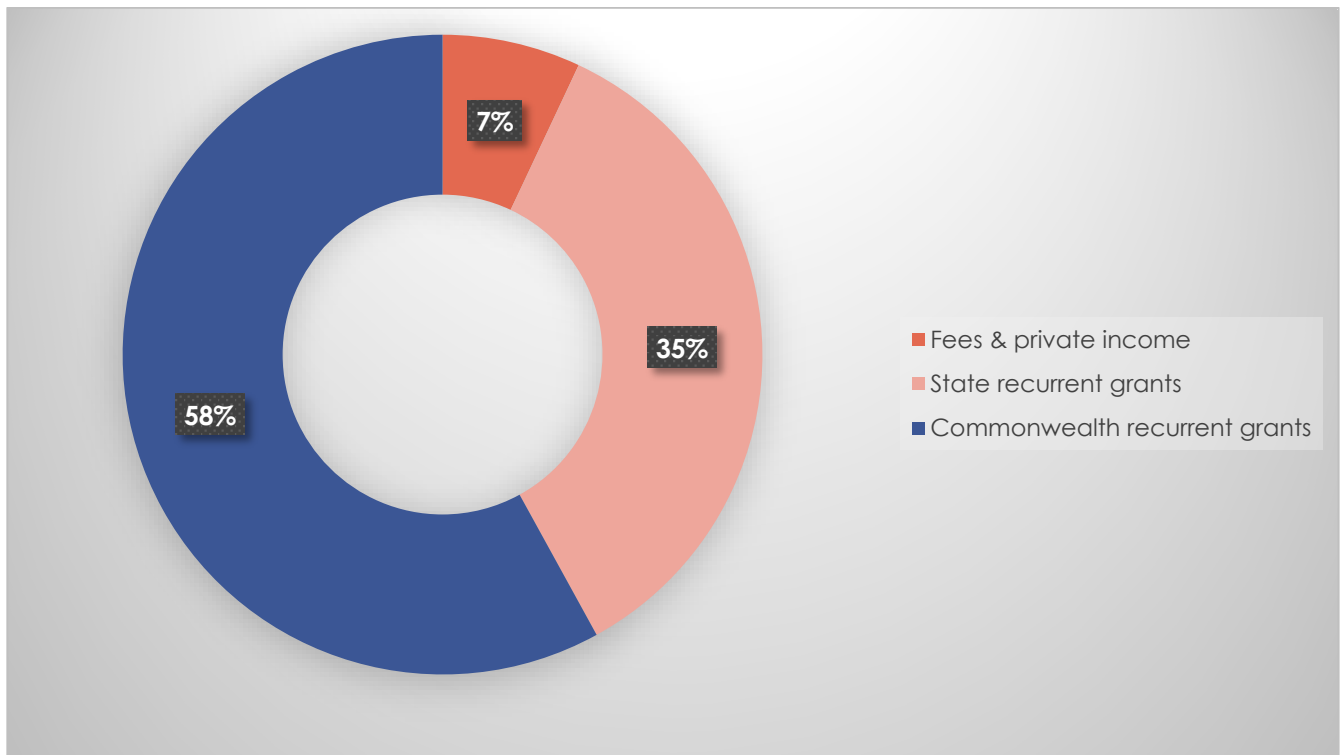
Aspect Education holds a biennial Perspectives Survey, and Aspect also survey staff annually through the Culture Dashboard. The results of these surveys support whole school initiatives, and company improvements, to ensure all staff are developing in their professional knowledge, practices, and engagement to best support the team, families and students.



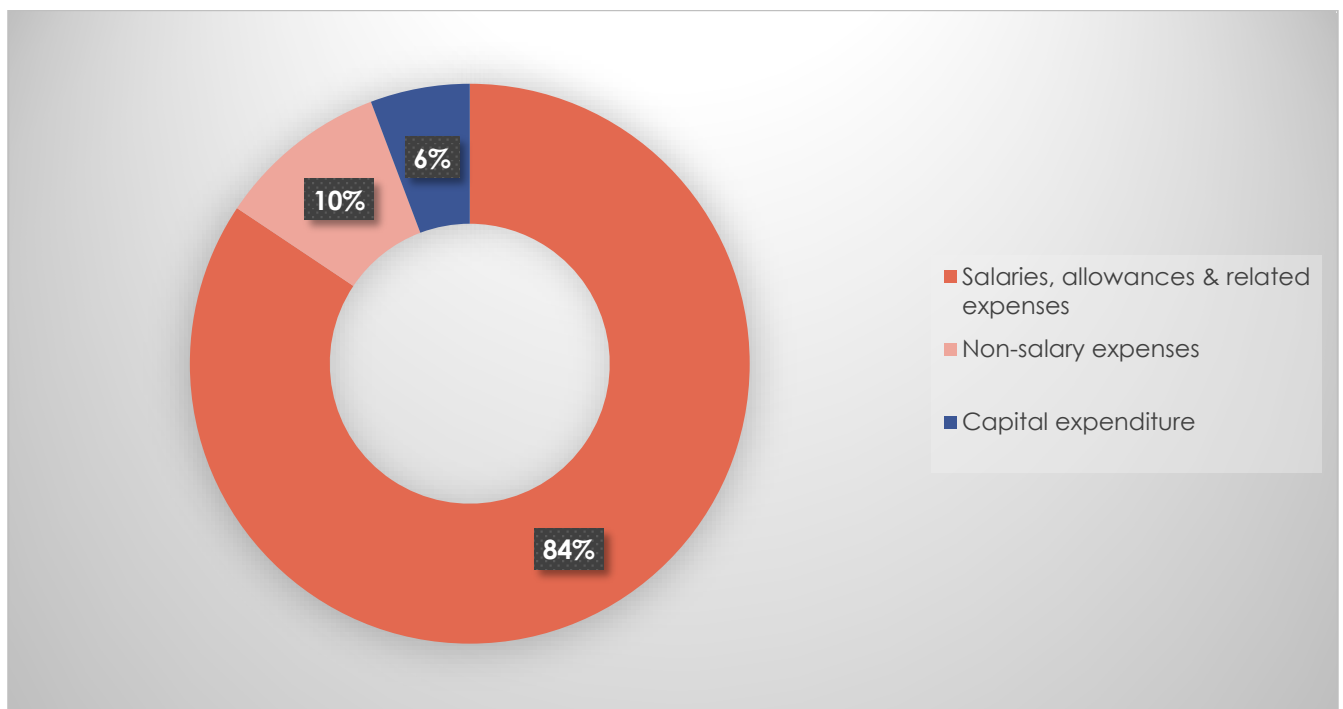
# Financial information

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## Income



## Expenditure





[aspect.org.au](http://aspect.org.au) | 1800 277 328 | [customerservice@aspect.org.au](mailto:customerservice@aspect.org.au)