



Aspect Hunter School

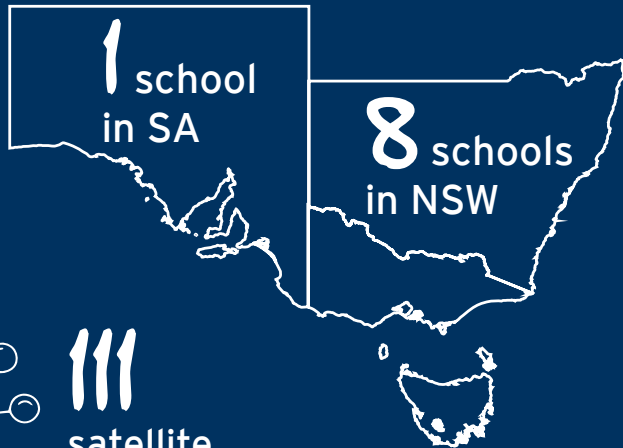
Giving children the opportunity  
to reach their full potential



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

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111  
satellite  
classes

## Our Purpose

*a different brilliant*<sup>®</sup> - understanding, engaging and celebrating the strengths, interests and aspirations of people on the autism spectrum

## Our Vision

The best opportunities for people on the autism spectrum

## Our Mission

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

## Our Values

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

## Our Work

We focus on the *strengths and interests* of people on the 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 Education

Aspect runs one of the world's largest autism-specific education program.

Aspect schools are specifically designed for children on the autism spectrum and focus on equipping students with skills to become as independent as possible to help them to transition into the wider community.

Each Aspect School consists of a main campus and satellite classes based in host schools - typically Public Schools or Catholic Schools. We cater for children on the autism spectrum aged up to 18 years of age and currently have more than 1100 students attending our classes. We have 9 main school campuses operating in NSW and South Australia.

## Aspect Comprehensive Approach

Our goal is to provide the best opportunities across Aspect Schools for students on the autism spectrum, through evidence-informed practices that are person-centred and family focused.

The Aspect Comprehensive Approach is our commitment to a consistent evidence informed approach to education and service delivery.

The Aspect Comprehensive Approach recognises the importance of positive behaviour support through environmental accommodations, structured supports, transition planning, transdisciplinary expertise, family involvement and professional learning for staff.



## Our nine schools are:

Aspect Central Coast School (Terrigal, NSW)

Aspect Hunter School (Thornton, NSW)  
- including Port Macquarie Campus

Aspect Macarthur School (Cobbitty, NSW)  
- including Coffs Harbour and Alstonville Campus

Aspect Riverina School (Albury, NSW)  
- including Wagga Wagga Campus

Aspect South Coast School (Corrimal, NSW)

Aspect South East Sydney School (Peakhurst, NSW)

Aspect Treetop School (Adelaide, SA)

Aspect Vern Barnett School (Forestville, NSW)

Aspect Western Sydney School (Wetherill Park, NSW)



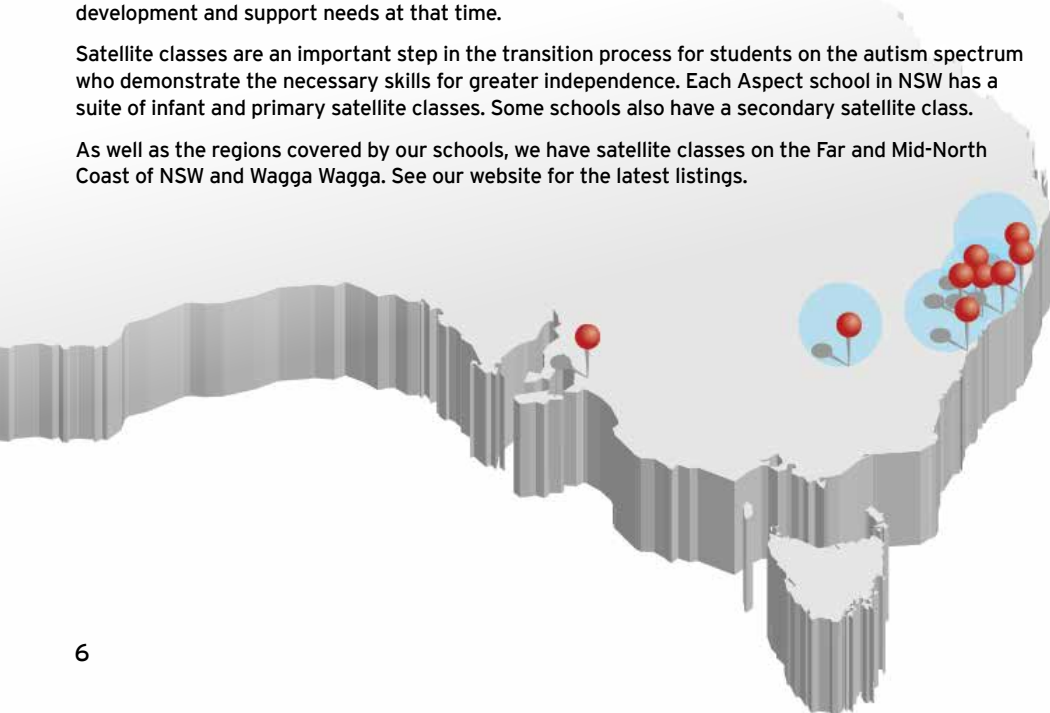
## Satellite classes

A satellite class is an Aspect autism-specific class operated by an Aspect school but located in a host school. In NSW, this is either a Department of Education, Catholic mainstream school or an Independent School. Our satellite class system has been very successful in helping students to transition to a mainstream school environment.

Generally, satellite classes cater for students on the autism spectrum who could benefit from integration with a mainstream education setting. Student placement is directly related to their skill development and support needs at that time.

Satellite classes are an important step in the transition process for students on the autism spectrum who demonstrate the necessary skills for greater independence. Each Aspect school in NSW has a suite of infant and primary satellite classes. Some schools also have a secondary satellite class.

As well as the regions covered by our schools, we have satellite classes on the Far and Mid-North Coast of NSW and Wagga Wagga. See our website for the latest listings.





## **Specialist collaboration**

Aspect schools recognise the importance of collaborative input from a wide range of professionals and support staff, as well as from the students themselves and their families and carers.

Each school has a Learning Support Team, made up of the senior leaders of the school and the school therapy team, usually a psychologist, speech therapist and an occupational therapist. This team works with the individual teachers to support the needs of each student.

## Transition and inclusion

**Our focus is to equip students with the skills to become as independent as possible, enabling them to transition into the wider community.**

Our transition model strongly supports our focus to have students on the autism spectrum included in mainstream settings wherever possible.

All our students have an Individual Plan which is reviewed each year at an annual student planning meeting attended by the Learning Support team. If the team agrees the child is ready, we support the transition to the school of their choice.

For 12 months after leaving our school, Aspect provide follow-up consultation to the student, their family and the receiving school to help them to succeed in their new environment.





## Aspect Education

### Partnering with our Aspect Research Centre for Autism Practice (ARCAP)

By partnering with ARCAP, Aspect schools are uniquely placed to inform and apply evidence-based classroom practices that strive to provide the best opportunities for students on the autism spectrum.

Our participatory approach means we draw upon the hands-on knowledge of educators and lived experience of autistic students and their families and carers, to shape ARCAP research in the field of autism education. This ensures our research is relevant, respectful and translates into proven practices that support autistic students to realise their learning goals.



## How to enrol in an Aspect School

**Aspect schools are open to children on the autism spectrum. We hold regular information sessions at our main school campuses to answer your questions and provide enrolment applications.**

Enrolment applications are assessed and approved by an Aspect School enrolment committee.

To be eligible for placement in one of Aspect's schools, prospective students must have the following:

1. Australian citizen, permanent resident of Australia or other eligible visa holder
2. In NSW, we require a current diagnosis of autism from a specialist medical officer or clinical psychologist (which is not more than two years old) and a current psychological assessment.
3. In South Australia, we also require a second report from a Psychologist or Speech Pathologist to confirm the diagnosis and an education report.



# Aspect school fees

A student's placement at one of our schools is partially funded by the state and federal governments. However, these contributions do not cover all the costs of our specialised intensive approach to autism education and to preparing our students for transition to a more general educational setting. The balance of the cost of each place is met through school fees, which are subject to annual review.

## Sibling discount

When siblings attend an Aspect school at the same time, the eldest child will be charged the full school fee, the second and subsequent children will each receive a 10% discount.

## Sponsored places and fee relief

We rely on community support to be able to offer assistance to our students' families in relation to the payment of school fees. With this support, we are able to make sure that some of our students receive the best possible educational programs and at the same time grow our services to meet the ever-increasing need, particularly in regional areas.

We are also able to offer a limited number of sponsored places for eligible students, subject to relative need and availability. This helps us broaden access to Aspect School services for those students whose families would otherwise not be able to afford the annual Aspect School fees.

We know too, that exceptional circumstances can arise for our students' families and that this may make it difficult to meet their obligations. In these cases, our families may be able to apply for fee reduction for a short period of time.

Conditions outlined above are subject to change.

## Enrolment fee

To secure a place in an Aspect school, new enrolments must pay \$500. This payment will be deducted from the first term's school fees. The enrolment fee is non-refundable.

## School fees

Please refer to [autismspectrum.org.au](http://autismspectrum.org.au) for our current schedule of fees.



## **OnOn's journey**

OnOn is your fairly typical 7 year old boy. He enjoys the Wiggles, kid's cartoons, playing with his cars and trucks, and he loves tickles from his family. What makes OnOn special is the journey he and his family have taken to arrive where they are today.

OnOn is the third of four children. OnOn's mum, Lily, suspected early in OnOn's life that something wasn't quite right with his development, particularly around social and verbal skills.

*"I had two children previously, so I could see that OnOn wasn't meeting some of the developmental milestones that I had watched my other children make. Milestones such as talking and interacting with others." - Lily*

Lily sought help quite early from her local GP and OnOn was diagnosed with autism when he was 2 year's old . *"It was quite an isolating time for me after the diagnosis. I really struggled to understand what the diagnosis meant for OnOn's future and for myself, while continuing to deal with the demands of a young family."* - Lily

Lily felt helpless. She wasn't sure how to help OnOn and she didn't feel that anyone understood what she was going through. She was starting to lose hope and realised that not only did OnOn need help, but that she needed support as well to deal with the changes in her family.

When OnOn was 4 years old, Lily found an Aspect School and enrolled her son in kindergarten. The support she received from teachers and the wider autism community was instant and welcoming.

*"Meeting other parents who had been through similar experiences was such a relief, I finally felt like I wasn't alone. I had found somewhere that we both belonged and where we were fully accepted. Being a part of the Aspect autism community is now so important to me, and to OnOn."* - Lily

Now in Year 2, Lily says the changes to OnOn's character have been incredible and he is able to concentrate for longer periods of time, take turns, get involved in classroom activities and communicate through the use of single words and an iPad.

*"The one on one attention that he has received from the Aspect teachers has been so amazing and the community at the school so supportive. I can't express strongly enough how life-changing finding the Aspect School has been. We are just so grateful to have a happy boy who is learning and improving every day. OnOn has taken us all on an amazing journey and we have all changed and benefited from it. He is happy and our family is happy. It has given us all hope"* - Lily





aspect  
hunter  
SCHOOL



## About our school

The Aspect Hunter School has provided specialised autism education for over 40 years across Newcastle, Maitland, Lake Macquarie and Port Macquarie Local Government Areas.

Our main school campus is at Thornton and includes a junior, middle and high school program. We also have satellite classes at Tarro, Cardiff, Abermain, Waratah West, Port Macquarie and Muswellbrook.

Our school currently enrolls over 160 students ranging from 4 to 18 years of age. Aspect Hunter School uses the Aspect Comprehensive Approach to provide individualised education programs that understand, engage and celebrate strengths, interests and aspirations of people on the autism spectrum.

### Curriculum

Aspect Hunter School is registered and accredited by the New South Wales Education Standards Authority (NESA). Class programs align with the NSW curriculum with accommodations and adjustments made to meet individual needs and ensure a positive learning experience.

Working closely with parents/carers and using the Aspect Comprehensive Approach, each individual student's strengths, interests and aspirations are incorporated into an Individualised Plan (IP), providing a unique profile of their preferred learning style.

### Technology

Our school uses technology to complement classroom learning. As with all components of our program, this is individualised to the needs of students. We closely monitor all uses of technology to ensure that it is not the only means of delivering a program.

### Positive Behaviour Support

The Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) approach is used to support our students with regulating their behaviour. PBS understands that challenging behaviour occurs for a reason, and is communicating important information about what the individual needs and how to better support them. Sometimes the demands of a student's situation exceeds their ability to cope positively. When this happens we focus on a student's individual strengths and interests to motivate learning, and celebrate the diversity and talents of the individual.

### School tours

Information sessions and school tours are held regularly through the school year. Prospective parents/carers and their support networks can find out more about our school during these sessions. Please contact the school to learn more.

**Aspect Hunter School**  
**3 Kooralbyn St**  
**Thornton NSW 2322**  
**(02) 4922 5900**  
**autismspectrum.org.au**

In 1966, Aspect's first year of operation, there were

**7** students.

In 2019 there are

**1161** students





## Contact details

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