



ANNUAL REPORT  
2018



# Contents

Page	Report
2	About Aspire
3	Board of Directors and Chief Executive Officer
4	Vision and Mission Statements, Values
5	Chair and CEO's Report
7	Audit and Finance Sub-Committee Report
8	Risk and Performance Sub-Committee Report
9	Community Engagement Sub-Committee Report
10	Community Grants Sub-Committee Report
11	Operations Report

## About Aspire

Aspire Support Services (Aspire) provides support to people with a disability and their families through a range of services. These services include:

- Supported Accommodation
- Children's Short-term Accommodation
- Adult Short-term Accommodation
- Independent Living with Drop-in Support
- Specialist Services which includes Early Childhood Intervention, Support Coordination, Clinical Services
- Lifestyle and Leisure
- Out of Home Care
- Volunteers and Family Support

Based in the Albury and Wodonga regions, the breadth of our services enables us to support people with a range of issues, across their life span.

We aim to be industry innovators and to be responsive to the needs of the community. This will help us achieve our vision of building a community where all people are empowered and supported to achieve their individual goals and live the life they choose.



## Board and Chief Executive Officer



**Wolfgang Schwarz**  
Chair



**John Duck**  
Director



**Belinda Fenn**  
Deputy Chair



**Matthew Fagence**  
Director



**Kerry May**  
Secretary & Public Officer



**Michael terHaar**  
Director



**Nicholas Moore**  
Treasurer



**Emma Reid**  
Director



**Elizabeth Pogson**  
Director



**Nigel Stone**  
Chief Executive Officer

# Vision and Mission

## Vision

A community where people with disabilities and their families are able to achieve their goals and live the life they choose.

## Mission

Aspire works alongside people with disabilities and their families to achieve their goals and aspirations.

# Values

### **Respect for the individual**

- We acknowledge strengths and abilities of all people
- We accept differences and diversity
- We are non-judgmental

### **Understanding and responsiveness to individual needs**

- We listen to our clients, staff and the community
- We take a person centred approach to our work
- We are adaptive and flexible

### **Integrity and trust**

- We operate with transparency and are accountable for our decisions and actions
- We uphold privacy and confidentiality
- We follow through on our commitments
- We maximise safety through policies and practice

### **Commitment to children and young people**

- We will ensure that children and young people's safety, best interests and rights are paramount in all of our decisions
- We will cater for all children and young people, in a way which they can grow safely and fulfill their potential
- We value and listen to children and young people's views, respect what they say and promote their active participation in our organisation
- Early Intervention is important to us and we will ensure the best possible development outcomes for children and their families

### **Innovation and flexibility**

- We are open to new ideas and creativity
- We seek input from all stakeholders
- We maintain awareness of trends and evidence based practice

### **Quality and professionalism**

- We put in place and implement systems to ensure the quality of our services and we foster continuous improvement
- We undertake and respond to rigorous risk assessment
- We ensure staff have the skills and values to fulfill our mission



# Chair and CEO's Report

The 2018 Financial Year was a transitional year for Aspire moving from a traditional State based Disability funding scheme to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). This brought with it a range of challenges that Aspire's Board, Executive and staff dealt with successfully. During the year Aspire continued to grow and completed the year in a sound financial position.

The year was a mix of funding arrangements from both State governments and the NDIS. In 2018, the majority of Aspire's income was 65% government funding (\$8 million) and 35% NDIS income (\$4.4 million). The overall financial result shows a surplus of \$1.15 million with a working capital of \$4.9 million. This result has Aspire well positioned into the future years of the NDIS transition. A significant amount of consideration has been put into the improvement of business processes during the year to ensure that the NDIS related business rules are followed.

One of the greatest challenges we face is that of a cultural transition from a paid service provider to a market facing provider while providing our customers with high quality services in a respectful and dignified manner. Aspire has made significant steps to move in this direction.

Aspire's Board has continued to develop and we welcomed two new Directors, Emma Reid and John Duck. The Board's Sub-Committees structure has strengthened its financial accountability, risk and performance, and community engagement. The Risk and Performance Sub-Committee has developed an extremely sound Risk Assessment tool, which has enabled the Board to begin to better understand its risk appetite.

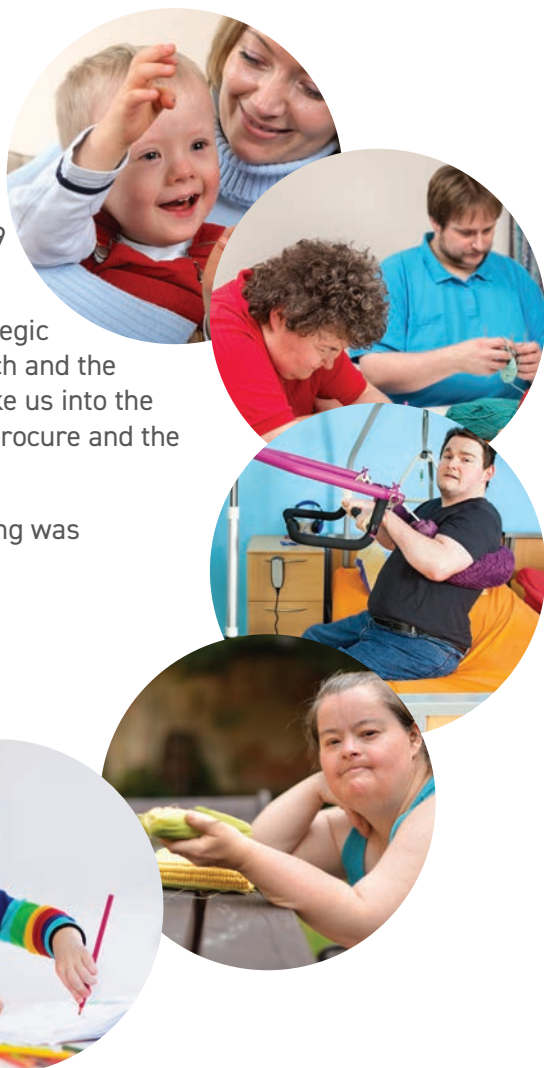
The Community Engagement Sub-Committee was formed in the latter part of the financial year and is now working towards having a greater understanding of the community's needs. The Community Engagement Sub-Committee was formed to engage with customers, families and staff to elicit information that would help Aspire both strategically and operational. This information is both regarding the types of services needed in the community but also seeking to better understand the relevance of our existing services. Much more work will be undertaken in the area throughout the course of the 2019 financial year.

Throughout the year Aspire delivered a critical component of its Strategic Plan by developing an IT Strategy. This Strategy incorporated research and the subsequent selection of a Customer Management System that will take us into the future. The new Customer Management System chosen by Aspire is Procure and the important task of implementation has now begun.

To bolster Aspire's internal strength around financial control Max Wang was appointed to the position of Chief Finance Officer (CFO).

Max was already part of Aspire's Management team but the role of CFO was created due to the retirement of Trevor Cowell in May.

Aspire embarked on a significant communication campaign to customers, staff and the broader community. Customers received regular newsletters which contained quarterly messages from the Aspire Board.



Staff also received greater communication with a weekly newsletter going to all staff with contents from the CEO, Executive Staff and Managers.

We have also sought feedback from staff every week through the newsletter to assist with obtaining and understanding the issues affecting front line staff.

Towards the end of the 2018 financial year we began to see a rise in the demand for services, particularly in the area of One to One services.

We also had many more enquiries from people that had not used Aspire previously. With growth in demand additional resources were sought and this demand outgrew our ability to supply.

A lack of human resources is currently a significant challenge and will be into the future. Other significant risks identified this year was injury to staff and the impact this has to WorkCover premiums in a regulated pricing structure. Also the empowerment of families through choice and control, which creates uncertainty in customer numbers.

The key challenges we face in the future remain our workforce capacity and capability, the implementation of Aspire's new Customer Management System, and ensuring we gain greater understanding of the needs of the community in terms of their choices around their needs.

There will also be significant challenges with the implementation of the Quality and Safeguarding Commission. Fortunately the Aspire team is well prepared and enthusiastic about the opportunities that lie ahead.

Aspire will continue focusing on building an agile workforce to meet the market demand whilst also working on delivering quality services to the community.

**Wolfgang Schwarz**  
Chair

**Nigel Stone**  
Chief Executive Officer





# Audit and Finance Sub-Committee Report

## Role

The Audit and Finance Sub-Committee consists of three Board Members.

The Committee is established to assist the Board in fulfilling its corporate governance responsibilities in regard to audit, financial reporting, financial management and procurement including:

- (a) maximising its financial and other resources, and using these resources efficiently and effectively in support of the achievement of Aspire's strategic plan
- (b) has adequate financial management systems and internal control structures to discharge their corporate governance and financial management responsibilities
- (c) oversight and performance monitoring of the external and internal audit functions
- (d) complies with accounting policies and standards, applicable laws and regulations and with Aspire's policies and procedures

## Membership

### Nicholas Moore

Treasurer and Chair - 28 November 2017 – 30 June 2018

Member - 1 July 2017 – 27 November 2018

### Noel Sargent

Treasurer and Chair - 1 July 2017 – 27 November 2017 (retired)

### Matthew Fagence (Member)

1 July 2017 – 30 June 2018

### Wolfgang Schwarz (Member)

1 July 2017 – 30 June 2018

## Major Tasks in 2017-18

- review and revise the Terms of Reference of the Committee
- review and endorse 2016-17 Audited Annual Financial Statements.
- review, revise and endorse 2018-19 Budget
- review and revise format of monthly financial reporting to Board
- review Delegations of Authority
- review Interim and Final external auditor management letters

## Major Tasks for 2018-19

The main focus for the Committee 2018-19 will be the appointment of an internal auditor following a tender assessment process and the establishment of an internal audit plan and associated reviews.

## Attendance

Attendance of Committee members is detailed below.

Member	Attended	Eligible to Attend
Nicholas Moore (Chair)	3	3
Noel Sargent	2	2
Matthew Fagence	2	3
Wolfgang Schwarz	2	3

### Nicholas Moore

Treasurer

# Risk and Performance Sub-Committee Report

## Role

The Risk and Performance Sub-Committee consists of three Board Members.

The Committee is established to undertake the following functions:

- strengthens the oversight of risk management through the monitoring of internal control systems and an annual review of the risk management framework
- performance monitoring of the business including oversight of key management systems
- oversee and present an organisational Risk Assessment to the Board of Directors for endorsement

In 2017-18, the Committee was refreshed from prior formats with the inaugural meeting of the committee in November 2017 focusing on monitoring performance against Aspire's strategic direction.

## Membership

### Matthew Fagence (Chair)

29 August 2017 – 30 June 2018

### Michael terHaar (Member)

29 August 2017 – 30 June 2018

### Nicholas Moore (Member)

29 August 2017 – 29 May 2018

### Belinda Fenn (Member)

29 May 2018 – 30 June 2018

## Major Tasks in 2017-18

- reviewed and Revised the Terms of Reference of the Committee
- reviewed the Aspire Strategic Plan
- reviewed the Aspire Business Plan
- developed Board Risk Reporting on the Strategic Plan and Business Plan
- developed Board Emerging Risk Reporting
- developed Risk Matrix Framework, inclusive of Likelihood and Consequence ratings, along with an escalation and reporting framework
- reviewed Aspire's Insurance Portfolio
- reviewed Audit Report on Victorian Accreditation to the National Standards for Disability Services (NSDS)

## Attendance

Meetings are required to be held at least quarterly and at any other times on request of Committee members or the Board. In 2017-18, the Committee met five times. Attendance of Committee members is detailed below.

Member	Attended	Eligible to Attend
Matthew Fagence (Chair)	5	5
Michael terHaar	5	5
Nicholas Moore	2	5
Belinda Fenn	0	0

### Matthew Fagence

Director

# Community Engagement Sub-Committee Report

The Community Engagement Sub-Committee was established in the 2018 financial year to support the Board by providing feedback from the community on Aspire's service performance as well as what services the community expect.

We have established the Sub-Committee with two members of the Board, four representatives from the community and strong support from the Executive. Our aim is to be better informed as a Board on the changing needs of the community so that we can better plan for the continued growth and improvement in services offered by Aspire.

The Sub-Committee oversees the important work done by the Executive and in particular, the organisation processes to ensure that:

- quality information is sourced from the community to inform strategic development
- community resources and communications are used in support of the achievement of Aspire's mission and Strategic plan by forming partnerships and networks with individuals and groups in the community
- the Board recognises and understands areas of need of clients, carers and their families
- the Board is able to undertake effective and efficient planning, monitoring and reporting frameworks for community-engagement strategies
- the organisation engages with relevant local, regional and national stakeholders, leading and fostering a collaborative approach to developing the provision of services

There will be a range of opportunities offered to the community to inform us on what are the important elements that will help us grow and improve. This will include both staff and service user surveys and next year we are planning a broader community consultation.

If you have any ideas for Aspire and its future, I urge you to take an opportunity to let us know.

**John Duck**  
Director



# Community Grants Sub-Committee Report

Aspire continues to provide a point of difference with its Community Grants Scheme, where two rounds of applications per year are invited, one in May and one in November.

Due to an overwhelming amount of funds needed to properly support this scheme, the Board adopted our recommendations to change from 4 rounds per year and subsequently narrowed the regional catchment area to Wodonga City, Albury City, Federation and Greater Hume Shire Councils.

In the reporting period, we had two rounds, with a total of \$26,642.94 being granted, to date \$24,232.73 having been paid out.

Some of the funds granted have yet to be spent. The Sub-Committee is in the process of reviewing the policy and this topic is under discussion. Where unspent funds are not used, we are looking to set a realistic time-period for monies to be held. This will be dependent on the type of grant requested. Some applications are for co-funded ventures or equipment, so there can be a reasonable wait for other monies to be sourced.

This scheme exists solely as a result of the funds raised from the annual Aspire Oaks Day Luncheon, plus an annual, very much appreciated \$20,000 donation from the Albury Commercial Club, without which it could not be viable.

The Annual Oaks Day Luncheon in its 10th year in 2018, will once again be a forum to highlight some of our Customers who, with admirable support and initiative from staff, have now been coming along and entertaining the guests with song and dance for many years and is now an expectation. It is terrific to be able to showcase some of the work done by Aspire as well as providing a wonderful opportunity for these young people to shine.

It is with great pleasure that we see these funds go to very worthy applicants, be they individuals, families or community groups.

We still see many requests for IT equipment, where communication aids are vital for many young students.

There are applications for mobility and accessibility assistance, for various therapies and diagnostic assessments, also for inclusion in sporting activities, leading to a vast coverage of ages, abilities and interests.

This scheme gives us wonderful opportunities to proudly live by our Mission and Vision Statements, to work alongside people with disabilities and their families to achieve their goals and to assist them to live the lives they choose.

**Lizzie Pogson**  
Director



# Operations Report

We celebrate another year of challenges, key learnings and hard work as we reflect on the past year in which we moved from year one to year two of the NDIS operation.

The operating environment of the NDIS has presented many challenges, but as with our team of dedicated staff, Aspire has worked through all challenges presented. We have demonstrated as an organisation that we are committed to “supporting people to achieve” regardless of the challenges. This really is something to celebrate.

Our Operational areas this year include:

- Specialist Services which includes Early Childhood Intervention, Support Coordination, and Clinical Services
- Supported Accommodation
- Short-term Accommodation
- Drop-in Support
- Lifestyle and Leisure
- Out-of-home Care
- Voluntary Out-of-home Care

Some of the key challenges and celebrations we have worked through this year are outlined below.

## Dual Accreditation

Due to the fact that we are a cross border organisation we have had to follow two sets of accreditation rules, which has seen us undergo accreditation on an annual basis. The accreditation guidelines we have been measured against had no consideration for the NDIS environment making it difficult to achieve competency in some areas.

This will now be largely resolved as we transition to the new NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission, however, we are still obligated to comply with Victorian regulation and accreditation until 2020, at which time Victoria will join the National scheme.

The dual accreditation has put enormous pressure on resourcing.

## Quality and Safeguards Framework

The new NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission and Framework commenced operation on the 1 July 2018.

The new Framework changes the way we operate as providers and changes the reporting mechanisms for our Industry.

This equates to an incredible amount of work for providers to make this new transition and ensure they are operating within new guidelines and regulation.

We have developed and created roles to ensure we are able to systematically work through these changes.

## Supporting our people, through change

It has been both challenging and rewarding to support both our staff and our customers through all of the changes we have faced.

We have initiated many strategies to support 500 customers and 200 staff through the last year. We have gained key insights on how we can continue to improve into the future.

We look forward to the next year, ready to work as a team with all of our stakeholder groups.

I would personally like to thank all of the staff and customers who have worked with me to help our organisation succeed and improve.

**Mardi Weber**

General Manager - People, Performance and Culture

