



ANNUAL REPORT

2016



ASPIRE SUPPORT SERVICES LIMITED
www.aspiress.com.au

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ABOUT ASPIRE

Aspire Support Services exists on a strong foundation of experience, compassion and industry knowledge.

Aspire has been operating since January 2012 and provides services in the Albury, Wodonga and surrounding areas. Aspire's foundation organisations have delivered services as far back as 1983 and have established strong relationships with our communities. Aspire's values are based on Human Rights for People with a Disability. Aspire provides services to over 700 customers and their families to support them in accessing and integrating in the community, providing carers with respite both during the day and for overnight stays and also Early Childhood Intervention Services. Our customers ages range across the life span and come from a variety of backgrounds.

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

Board and Chief Executive Officer



Wolfgang Schwarz
Chairman



Kerry May
Secretary



Noel Sargent
Treasurer



Elizabeth Pogson
Director



John Garret
Director



Sue Slater
Director



Andrew Cottrill
Director



Jamie Gay
Director



Nigel Stone
CEO

VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

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-judgemental

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

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 fulfil our mission

CHAIR AND CEO's REPORT

Aspire and similar organisations that operate in the disability sector face significant opportunities and challenges as they head towards the implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). We believe that Aspire through its management, staff, systems and facilities is in a strong position to capitalise on these exciting times. Despite the challenges of this change we believe the outcome of the implementation of the NDIS will support a better life for our customers with a disability, their families and carers.

During the year the Board had some significant changes with the resignation of Jamie Gay, after a period of ill health and the recruitment of Kim Campbell, a senior executive at Baptistcare and Board member of Tallangatta Health Service along with Belinda Fenn, a local solicitor. This brings the Board membership to nine, with diverse and focused capability.

The 2016 Financial Year saw Aspire Support Services increase its focus on preparing for the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). The NDIS will commence in the Albury/Wodonga region in July 2017 with a gradual transition of customers during the first 12 months of operation.

Throughout the 2016 Financial Year Aspire implemented a number of new IT systems including HR3, an upgraded financial system to MYOB EXO and some new client management software to build the internal capability of the organisation to match its current operating requirements.

There was also a significant focus on developing and upskilling of our workforce to enable better quality of services and to assist individuals move away from the previous care models of service to the new support model that will be required to be successful in a NDIS environment. The shift towards a competitive market place will provide many challenges for the organisation, staff and families and we need to equip ourselves with the right skills and tools to successfully transition into this environment.

A careful eye has been kept on other jurisdictions where the NDIS has already commenced operation to monitor any trends or issues becoming known to providers. We have continued to build the internally capability based on being flexible and agile to meet the challenges that may lie ahead.



Wolfgang Schwarz



Nigel Stone

Aspire believe that the implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) will support a better life for people with a disability, their families and carers.

IN RECOGNITION OF JAMIE GAY

Jamie Gay joined the Cooinda Committee of Management in 2009, taking on and retaining the role of Treasurer for the next 4 years. Jamie worked with the Cooinda Staff and Executive to re-structure the financial systems, putting into place electronic transfers, modernising staff wage and bill payments, to ensure Cooinda was working towards more efficient management and best practice.

Jamie identified the need for Cooinda to grow, recognising that it could not remain as a small entity, in light of the proposed future expectations of disability organisations. Jamie was instrumental in the merger process and worked to ensure Cooinda's Members were fully informed on what the decision involved.

When the vote was passed to merge with Woodstock and Kalparin, Jamie was one of the two Cooinda Committee of Management Members who then became an Aspire Board Member.

Jamie became an integral part of the new Board, heading up several Subcommittees, where his experience with Cooinda and as Principal at Belvoir Special School gave him astute insights into finance, governance, assets, policy and many other areas.

Jamie brought great clarity of thought, common sense and vision, carrying out his responsibilities in a practical way yet with larrikin humour, all whilst managing to build a completely new school, with all that entailed.

Jamie worked very hard to assist in the smooth transition from separate organisations into one working tirelessly until he was struck with a rare illness last year which required him to take leave. The Board was very pleased that Jamie recovered after time, but then regrettably accepted his tendered resignation as he returned to work.

Jamie's contributions to the new organisation have been tremendous and we acknowledge and thank him for all he has done.

ASPIRE WELCOMED TWO NEW DIRECTORS



KIM CAMPBELL



BELINDA FENN

TREASURER'S REPORT



Noel Sargent
Treasurer

One year closer to the NDIS. Aspire has made much progress throughout the year to prepare for whatever the NDIS throws at us.

Aspire's IT systems upgrades have seen great progress after a slow start. The ongoing issues with have been disappointing; however, there is no other one-stop solution available. Hopefully, as Aspire moves closer to the NDIS some new entrants into the software market may emerge. The new accounting and payroll systems are working well after much effort by our Finance staff.

The development of a detailed "bottom-up" Budget for 2017 has been a worthwhile exercise with the added benefit of now knowing, in detail, Aspire's Over Heads, Operating Costs and Budgets. In previous years the Budgets were only at a high level which made it difficult to make judgements on the financial performance of the organisation. The ongoing losses in Aspiring Lifestyles were difficult to isolate with no detailed costing information or detailed budget available. We're hopeful that the losses in 2017 will be minimised as far as possible before we enter the NDIS environment.

Aspire's Operating Profit has seen a welcome increase from last year to a Surplus of \$141k, while we have made good progress in limiting the losses in Aspiring Lifestyles, our bottom line continues to be propped up by the surpluses in the other program areas.

Aspire continues to have a strong Balance Sheet with considerable cash reserves which we believe will be sufficient to sustain us through the early months of the NDIS. We also have some undrawn Loan Facilities available if the need arises to cover any short-term cash shortfalls. The Lawrence Street Property was sold during the year however we wrote-off all of the Leasehold improvements at the Farm.

The recruitment during the year of our Finance Manager, Max Wang, has been a welcome addition to our Finance Team and has given me great confidence in the Financial Reports being published. Max has also been instrumental in the implementation of our IT systems upgrades. Max has continued to be supported by Aidan Jenkin from Johnsons MME who assumed the Finance Manager role while we were recruiting Max and has continued to assist Max in the interim.

One of the Auditors recommendations last year was to move to our Financial Reporting to quarterly which has now been implemented. The Finance Subcommittee reviews the results in detail before they are distributed to the Board. The longer reporting period has avoided the task of reviewing the financial results each month and smoothed out any one-off fluctuations.

Also as recommended by the Auditors, an Internal Audit process is under way. We are hoping this will ensure the integrity of our Financial Reports and highlight any other risk exposures.

In last year's Treasurer's report, I said that 2016 would be my last as Treasurer however our inability to recruit a replacement has meant the extension of my role for another year. Hopefully, we will be successful in recruiting a Treasurer for 2018.



OPERATIONS REPORT

Aspire provides the following services to people with a disability:

- Supported Accommodation
- Children's Respite House
- Adult Respite House
- Independent Living with Drop-In Support
- Early Childhood Intervention
- Aspiring Lifestyles - Day Programs
- Respite Options - In home and community
- Out of Home Care
- Volunteers and family Support



Trevor Cowell
General Manager Operations

The following is a list of highlights from our service areas:

EARLY CHILDHOOD INTERVENTION - ECI

Accomplishments

January 2016 – Introduced the Key Worker service delivery model to ECI. This involved all staff completing the Noah's Ark Online Key Worker Course.

Commencement of Dr Virginia Loftus Clinic at EI with Glenys Salter.

Staff Training

- 2x staff training in DIR Floor time course (engagement, development and interaction training for children with ASD and disabilities)
- 2 x staff attended Sequential Oral Sensory Approach to Feeding course
- 2x staff attended Trauma Informed Practice conference by Bruce Perry
- 1 x staff attended Cerebral Palsy and Developmental Medicine (Conference)
- 1 x staff participating in advancing skills in Paediatric Physio course

Future Planning

Community Intake position at Albury Wodonga Paediatric Group – under proposal as on 30 June.

New Staff

3 x Interviewed in June and commenced July 2016.

BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT

Behaviour support is an integral component that assists Aspire to provide high quality services to customers who may have some challenging behaviours. Analysis and training is the key to assisting staff to support our customers through times when things are not going as well as they could.

Aspire will continue to promote the importance and value of our Behaviour Support service as we transition into the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

OPERATIONS REPORT CONT.

SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION

Out of Home Care - (OOHC)

- Accreditation application submitted
- Providing additional work with Challenge Community Services
- Key worker model has been implemented
- Training completed by OOHC employees included: Office of the Children's Guardian Child Safe Training & Understanding and Working With Trauma With Children and Young People
- The team have received positive feedback from Aspect, Wewak, James Fallon and FaCS regarding the work and improvement they have made with the children in Aspire's care. The relationships with these organisations are strong because of this work. This team have built a good reputation for Aspire

Supported Accommodation House

One new client transitioned into Andrews street during the year.

Adult & Children's Respite Houses

Strong demand has been maintained for both facilities throughout the year. The service provides an important break for carers and families.

ASPIRING LIFESTYLES - DAY PROGRAMS

Aspiring Lifestyles provide services to 170 people through a diverse range of flexible service offerings centred around inspiring programs, learning and connection to the community. We continue to develop and enhance individualised plans and provide person centred services to assist customers achieve their aspirations and goals. The rollout of the NDIS in the next twelve months within the region provides an exciting time to liaise closely with our customers and drive continuous improvement to the service offerings for the future.

There have been a lot of changes in Aspiring Lifestyles during the last 12 months. Our Lawrence Street property was sold and services relocated to Casper Lane, Adult Respite House and various community locations. In December the lease on the Farm expired which resulted in relocating services to a number of locations including Kiewa Street and numerous community facilities. A partnership with the Albury Wodonga Equestrian centre has seen great opportunities for our customers to be involved in a multitude of meaningful activities that enhances their skills and provides valuable support to the Equestrian centre.



OPERATIONS REPORT CONT.

RESPIRE OPTIONS

Respite Options (RO) provides services to over 150 families. The age range of customers is 12 months to over 80 years old.

This very important service gives families and carers short breaks to help them manage what is often a very demanding and challenging role in caring for their family member.

VOLUNTEERS AND FAMILY SUPPORT

This program supports over 50 volunteers including the many people who work at the op-shop. Assistance is also provided to various support groups including:

- Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder and/or Oppositional Defiant Disorder and related conditions Support Group
- Aspire Family Network Group
- Autism/Asperger's Family Network Group
- Dads Group
- Albury Wodonga Down Syndrome Family Network Group
- Albury Wodonga Home Schooling Network Group
- Sole Parents Network
- Healthy Mothers Healthy Families Support Group

Volunteers at Aspire have played a significant role in Family Support at Aspire. Four Support Groups are facilitated by Volunteers. This year has seen the support groups moving towards having two facilitators. This has proven valuable for the planning processes of groups and the groups' sustainability particularly. Volunteers continued to support social events including the family based school holiday evenings at Zealous Kidz play centre, the Easter BBQ and family Christmas Party in particular. The Aspire Opportunity Shop continued to have a dedicated group of Volunteers.



A partnership approach assisted in the running of the following workshops at Aspire this year:

- Healthy Mothers Healthy Families with Drs Helen Bourke-Taylor and Fiona Jane (Aspire; Intereach; SCOPE; Support Options; Villa Maria)
- Creating Connections – Autism Spectrum Disorder workshops with Sherri Cincotta and Elissa Plumridge (Family Relationship Support for Carers)
- Stepping Stones Triple P (Cerebral Palsy Alliance)

OPERATIONS REPORT CONT.

Aspire provided over a quarter of a million service hours during the 2015 - 2016 financial year.



The following table shows the number of hours delivered by service area.

SERVICES	SERVICE HOURS DELIVERED
Early Intervention	8538
Flexible Respite (RO)	18098
Centre Based Respite - Adult House	31484
Centre Based Respite - Children's House	28872
Day Programs	108632
Supported Accommodation and Drop In Support	60850

The commitment and dedication of our staff is of an exceptionally high standard and they are to be highly commended especially considering the many complexities and challenges they face on a daily basis.

The transition to the NDIS will create many challenges but Aspire is well positioned to meet the demands that the changes will bring to the way we provide services.



CORPORATE SERVICES REPORT



Mardi Weber

General Manager Corporate Services

Aspire Support
Services has an
ambitious plan for its
future

Aspire Support Services has an ambitious plan for its future. Aspire will play a major role in helping the community realise the objectives of the NDIS and what life will be like within the disability and community services industry into the future.

Survey data and regular communication with families has given us every indication that our community appreciates and values us as an organisation and would like us to be able to continue to deliver services to them well into the future.

Our organisation has undergone significant internal change and we are currently preparing ourselves to face monumental change with the impending NDIS and the impacts it will have on our industry and organisation.

Throughout Aspire's merging and restructuring process, through all of the successes and failures we have experienced, we have become champions of change; we are gaining mastery over adaptability, fluidity and flexibility which will be the underpinning critical success factors in the new funding and service delivery landscape.

Corporate Services have a huge role to play in supporting the organisation to transition from a block funded charitable model to a business model which promotes business excellence.

The Corporate Services team have worked hard to review Aspire's activities across the organisation and plan the transition to business excellence models providing specialised knowledge, best practices, and IT solutions to support operation and all internal and external stakeholders.

Corporate Services Report Cont.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS FOR THE YEAR

NDIS readiness plan using seven key domain areas.

In order to ensure Aspire's readiness and success for the future we commenced the transition of operating under a viable and sustainable business model which is vastly different to the block funded model that the industry has traditionally operated under.

Plans were developed and implemented over the last year using seven key domain areas as measures to ensure all facets and activities of Aspire move towards and achieve a new business model.

Our aim has been to transition to a business model using a planned approach in order to minimise any adverse impacts to our staff, customers and many stakeholders.

All staff have been educated in and involved in completing the business plan and specifically the part they will play in achieving its success. All staff have also been involved in consultation and preparation of our new models of service delivery.

Many changes have already taken place and this will be an ongoing reality for Aspire as we face many more hurdles and challenges as an organisation over the next three to five years.

THE SEVEN KEY DOMAIN AREAS:

DOMAIN	QUESTION
STRATEGY	How does our strategy allow us to be agile, flexible and responsive to the changes in our Industry?
CORPORATE GOVERNANCE	Do our decision making processes allow us to effectively manage the key risks, challenges and opportunities facing our business?
CLIENTS AND MARKET FOCUS	How will we differentiate ourselves to retain and attract clients in an increasingly competitive market?
FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY	What impact will individualised funding have on our business and the way our services are costed, priced and funded? What changes do we need to make?
PEOPLE AND CAPABILITY	How will we attract, recruit and retain staff with the right values, skills and capabilities to support the changing needs of our clients and our business?
INFORMATION KNOWLEDGE AND MANAGEMENT	Do we have the right information management systems in place to respond to the reforms? How will our systems support the necessary changes to our business, clients, operations and finances over the next decade?
SAFEGUARDING, QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND IMPROVEMENT	How do our systems, processes and people help us to maintain and improve our safety, quality and performance? How will we know when we are doing well, or at risk?

Corporate Services Report Cont.

THE SHIP – AN ANALOGY TO ACCELERATE LEARNING AND UNDERSTANDING

In order to support staff in the monumental change in transitioning to a business model of operation, we have used an analogy to accelerate learning, resulting in a shift of thinking and culture within the organisation.

Analogies have proven to be effective learning tools for reinforcing thinking skills and conceptual understanding. Good teachers use metaphors and analogies to make new and unfamiliar concepts more meaningful by connecting what people already know to what they are learning. Analogies and metaphors accelerate understanding and meaning and add "sparkle" and fun to learning and understanding.

We have designed an organisational development program using the analogy that Aspire is a ship, preparing itself to sail across the unknown waters of the NDIS. In order to be ready to sail into and across undiscovered waters we need to prepare both the ship and the crew.

All staff have been encouraged to adopt an explorer's mindset and to understand that everyone sees things from different angles and perspective on the ship and therefore it's important to get everyone's input and perspective when developing and implementing plans to ensure we prepare well and succeed in our travels.

A program of monthly meetings has been designed and implemented in which all staff have the opportunity to attend, participate and contribute.

The aim of the monthly meetings is to ensure all staff understand and provide input to:

- the ship and what is on the ship
- what we as the crew have to do on the ship and how our roles might change during the course of the journey
- how we will communicate to each other on the ship
- how we want people to "identify" the ship and its crew – what is our brand?
- the experiences we want our passengers to have whilst they are on the ship and what they will tell others about our ship
- how we can all have a part in re-building the ship and prepare it well for the journey
- how we can prepare to change course quickly if needed
- how we will let each other know when we are headed for perils such as "storms, sandbars and icebergs", or when we encounter "pirates"
- how we will enjoy the journey together and celebrate our successes



Corporate Services Report Cont.

The development program using the ship analogy has so far met its objectives. Staff regularly provide feedback to say they love the analogy as it helps them to understand what is happening within Aspire and what their role is in the bigger scheme of things. They have also said that it makes the journey fun and has helped unite the crew as together we are developing an explorers mindset and preparing the ship.

Together we have learnt that great explorers develop a mindset which allows them to be:

- flexible
- inquisitive learners
- good communicators
- open to new experiences and perspectives
- willing to change their mind in the light of evidence that contradicts their previous view of the world
- able to adapt
- able to make plans for the future but are willing and able to radically change their plan if new information emerges
- not individualistic super heroes but rather team players
- constantly assess the usefulness of their beliefs, practices and resources and discard what is no longer needed

FINANCE - COSTING AND PRICING

The Finance Team have worked incredible hard over the year to implement:

- a new finance software package - MYOB EXO
- new financial management systems which meet legal and ethical requirements ensuring best practice principles are met
- sound financial management policies and procedures to ensure that there are adequate resources to meet our objectives and that we remain solvent as an organisation and are able to continue to support the community
- transparency so that people internally and externally can see how Aspire uses the money we receive, to make certain that the social objectives of the organisation are met and that the treatment of our customers is equitable (that is fair and impartial), consistent, efficient, effective and person centred
- the development of efficient costing and pricing models to sustain us into the future



Corporate Services Report Cont.

PEOPLE AND CAPABILITY

Highlights from our Human Resources Team for the year:

- 8 employees graduated in Certificate IV in Disability
- 1 employee graduated in Certificate IV in Allied Health Assistance
- 1 employee graduated in Diploma of Human Resources
- Recruitment for Finance Manager and Aspiring Lifestyle Manager
- Introduction of Staff Recognition Program celebrating staff years of service
- Commenced Implementation of HR3 Payroll and WHSOnline systems
- WHS 4801 Audit undertaken, results concluded Aspire was considered 75% compliant, work continues on being 100% compliant
- Health and Wellbeing Committee successful organised an Aspire team to enter City2City walk, Dragon Boat Regatta, Border Relay for Life and the Premiers Active April
- In total 34 positions were recruited in 2015/16
- Introduction of the Leadership Program and monthly staff NDIS readiness meetings (preparing the ship and the crew)

HIGH PERFORMING TEAMS – AN AUSTRALIAN EXPERIMENT AND TRIAL

Workforce recruitment, retention and engagement are critical elements to the success of organisation within the NDIS. With the appropriate model, structure and support, the disability workforce will be the sector's greatest asset. The NDIS will bring changes to the way our workforces will need to operate.

National Disability Services (NDS) have continually sought opportunities to influence the necessary changes within the sector and support organisations through the changes in a way that will enable them to respond flexibly to consumer demand whilst still offering conditions that attract and retain the right workforce. To support organisations within the sector to address their workforce needs, NDS developed a trial program or experiment in the implementation of High Performing or Self Managed Teams within the disability sector.

Benefits of High Performing Teams include:

- flatter and less hierarchical job structures
- people working in teams with greater autonomy
- people working with higher levels of trust and communication
- a focus on continuous learning and capability development
- reduction in quantum of corporate overheads
- employees sharing in ownership or profitability



Corporate Services Report Cont.

Aspire was successful in the application to be a part of the Australian trial which involves 21 organisations from the disability sector across all of Australia.

As participants of the trial we have worked with CEO and founder of Buurtzorg (a company in the Netherlands) who has developed a “High Performing Teams” or self managed workforce model that is critical to the success of the disability sector under the NDIS.

As a group of 21 organisations we have attended various webinars and meetings and explored how different models could work within our sector. We have been provided with mentorship from workforce experts in our country and overseas and have collaborated on many ideas.

The trial has proved successful in many areas for Aspire as we work towards achieving an efficient workforce model.

COMMUNICATION

Aspire has engaged a communications expert last year to develop a communications strategy. The strategy has been designed to deliver the following objectives:

- Ensure all staff fully understand the future directions of the organisation and the industry and where they fit in to the picture
- Help build a staff culture that aligns to Aspire’s Mission, Visions and Values
- Provide opportunity for two way communication between Executives and all staff
- Ensure staff feel connected to their workplace
- Set a strong foundation for external communications and marketing strategies

Since the development of the strategy, we have engaged the services of a communications consultant to work with Aspire to implement the strategy.

Our communications consultant has worked with us to improve communications internally through various strategies and is now working with us to develop a marketing and branding strategy which will be implemented in the coming year.

