



autism  
awareness  
AUSTRALIA

Autism Awareness Australia  
**Annual Report | 2019**

# About AAA

At Autism Awareness Australia, our goal is to improve the lives of all Australians on the autism spectrum and the families who love them.

With a national reach of over 125,000 families, we are Australia's leading voice for autism.

Since we began in 2007, we've proudly delivered the majority of our events and programs free to families across the country. We're not a huge organisation and we're not government funded. Simply put, we are a small team who are committed to improving the lives of all Australians on the autism spectrum, and the families who love them.



# A Message From Our CEO



We have had another incredibly busy and exciting year at Autism Awareness Australia. For me personally, my highlight this year was the release of our documentary film, 'DAD: a film about autism and fatherhood'.

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Traditionally, mums tend to share their parenting experiences with friends and family or through mother's groups and online parenting forums. However, we rarely hear from the dads. It has always been a strong belief of mine that the best kind of support and understanding comes from sharing stories with your community. Sometimes, this is a community you may not even know is there.

So, Autism Awareness Australia produced a documentary film created especially for the dads who have found themselves parenting a little differently to what they had expected.

We brought together twelve gorgeous dads from a wide range of backgrounds, locations and ages to share their own raw and brutally honest accounts of this type of graduate-level parenting. Sharing their stories of success, struggle and love, the film is full of honest advice and words of support and wisdom. We hope the film will be an invaluable gift to dads who are new to the world of autism.

'DAD: a film about autism and fatherhood' premiered in October 2018 and can be viewed online in full and free at [www.dadfilm.com.au](http://www.dadfilm.com.au).

# Highlights



Our community has grown by 16% with a total of 125,000 members and followers

## InvisAbility

We launched InvisAbility, a new initiative that helps companies and organisations develop a better approach to diversity and inclusion



We made our second documentary, 'DAD: a film about autism and fatherhood'



We built upon our existing relationships within the media and appeared in a record number of TV and radio interviews across Australia, as well as countless articles

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We presented at both local and international conferences helping to shed more light on autism, as well as the work we do to support families



# Events & Campaigns

## **DAD** a film about autism and fatherhood



Launching 'DAD: a film about autism and fatherhood' + website

DAD is a documentary created to provide guidance, information, and support to fathers with children on the autism spectrum. The film shares the stories of twelve Aussie fathers as they discover a whole new world of parenting and what it means to be a dad. With funding from the NDIS Information, Linkages and Capacity Grants, DAD is our second short documentary film. The film was released online, in full and free, in November 2019. The film is hosted on a dedicated website with accompanying resources and 12 segments of bonus footage.

The film was produced purely to help dads who might be struggling to understand their new role. DAD is a filmic note from the future, encouraging them, supporting them and letting them know that there is hope. Whilst the film was made with new dads in mind, we suspect that a lot of parents with children on the spectrum will take great comfort from the beautiful stories and advice shared by these twelve dads.

## DAD Film Premiere

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We had the privilege of launching 'DAD: a film about autism and fatherhood' at Parliament House, Canberra in October 2018. The event was hosted by Social Services Minister, Paul Fletcher, and with many other ministers in attendance, it was a wonderful opportunity to shine a light on the issues still affecting autism families across the country.



## DAD Film Screenings: Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane

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We held three sold out screenings of DAD in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane in November 2018. Each screening brought together dads, mums and extended members of our community for an evening at the cinema. There were lots of tears, but also lots of laughter, as we learned from these twelve dads exactly what it means to be a father.

## World Autism Awareness Day 2019 #OurAutismCrew

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In April 2019, for World Autism Awareness Day, we ran an online campaign to celebrate everyone that makes up our wonderful autism community! From the incredible individuals on the spectrum, to the families and friends who love them, and to the educators, employers, medical and health professionals who support them...we all have #OurAutismCrew.

We took the month of April as an opportunity to recognise and celebrate all the individuals on the autism spectrum and the crew of people who support them. We received hundreds of submissions and shared a selection across our social media platforms throughout the month.







## InvisAbility

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In order for individuals with invisible disabilities to feel welcomed, understood and supported in their community, we need to start with education and awareness. Launched in January 2019, InvisAbility is a new initiative that helps companies and organisations identify how they can better support diversity and inclusion. We work directly with organisations across the tourism, education, disability and corporate sectors and offer online training, face to face workshops, organisation audits, resources and tools to help them improve the overall experience for people with invisible disabilities.

# InvisAbility



# Advocacy & Awareness

Vivid, June 2019

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We developed a social story for the Tumbalong Lights Inclusive PlaySpace to help 'create a world where everyone belongs' and give families an alternative way to experience Vivid.

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'Outcomes for Children and Young People with a Disability Forum', June 2018

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We took part in this forum working with the NSW Department of Education to help improve the school experience for students on the spectrum.

## Autism CRC Participant Day, April 2019

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We took part in the CRC participant day in April 2019 and reviewed the research projects and initiatives they have developed to support individuals with autism and their families.

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## NDIS, 2019

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We consulted with the NDIS on the Restrictive Practices Authorisation Model as well as the Eligibility Criteria for individuals on the autism spectrum.





AAA in Canberra, April 2019

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**We met with Senator Keneally to discuss the impact the NDIS wait times and reduced funding packages are having on autism families, and how we can work together to improve the outcome moving forward.**

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Australian Child Neurodevelopment Disorders Research Network (ACNDN), June 2019

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**We were invited to be a part of this collaborative forum hosted by Brain and Mind Institute to help improve the pathway to diagnosis and provide better support post-diagnosis for individuals and their families together to improve the outcome moving forward.**



## Speaking Events

Macquarie Bank, Lunch & Learn:  
We presented a 'Lunch and Learn' seminar to 100 Macquarie Bank staff on valuing diversity in the workplace as part of their Culture and Diversity program

Parenting and Education Conference in Macau, 2019:  
Our CEO presented a session on transitioning to adulthood for young adults on the spectrum

Autism West Conference, 2019:  
Our CEO was the keynote speaker at the 2019 Autism West Conference and presented a talk on the present state of autism in Australia, looking specifically at what has changed and what has not over the last 20 years



# Our Reach




Combined social media community of **105,000** followers




National database of **20,000** individuals & families



over **400,000** unique website visitors

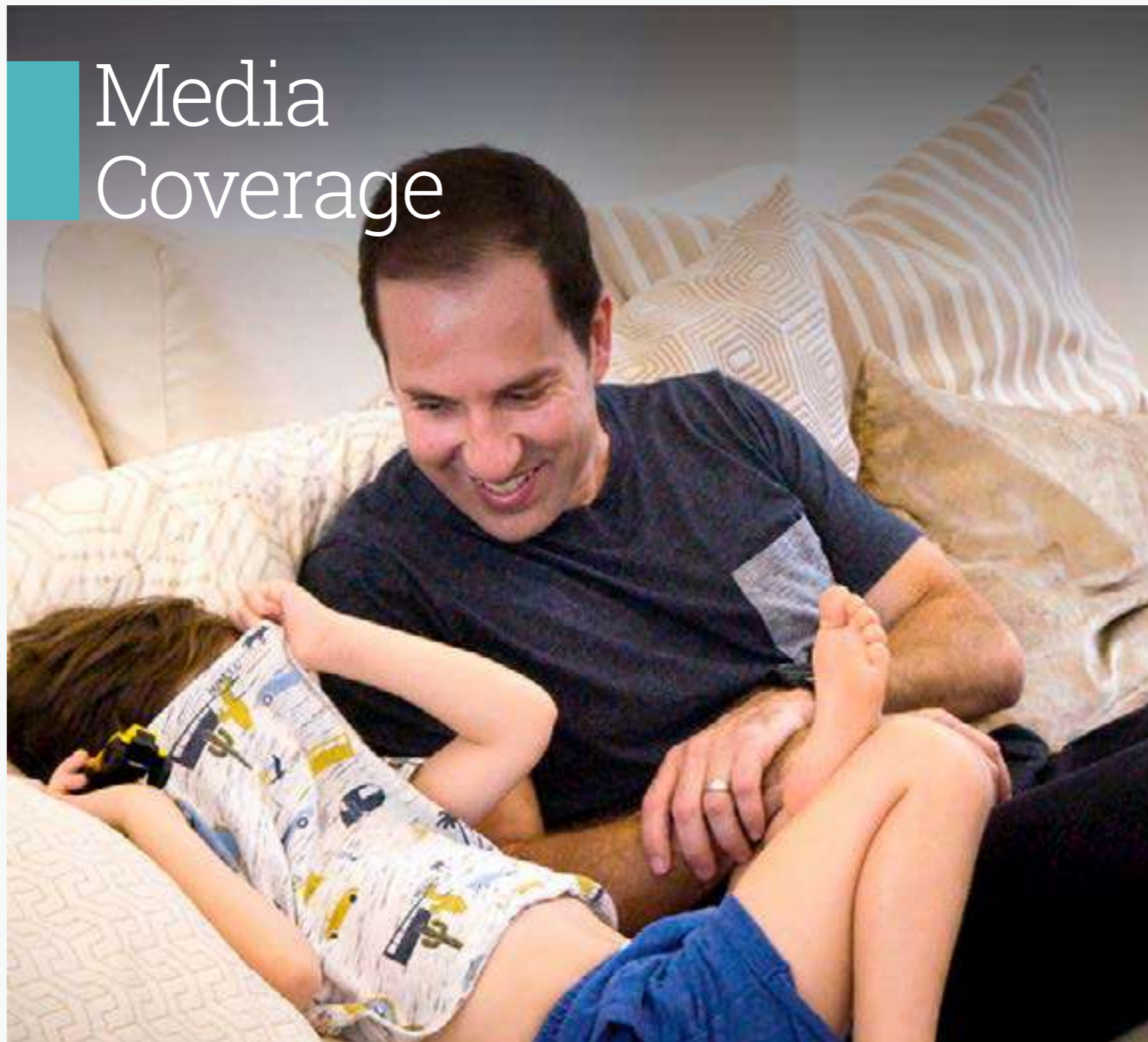


**1.5** million page views on our website  
↑ **100% INCREASE** on last year



**MEDIA PRESENCE:**  
**4.1** million readers/viewers  
across **126** media articles/segments

# Media Coverage



# Our Board



## Nicole Rogerson CEO

Nicole Rogerson is the founding Director of Autism Awareness Australia. She volunteers her time as CEO and is one of the nation's leading advocates for the awareness and understanding of Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Nicole has led many campaigns and events that have inspired, touched and educated Australians, including Light It Up Blue for World Autism Awareness Day, production of a short film 'What are you doing?' for school children, and three television community service announcements.

Nicole is one of the most passionate voices on the challenges of autism in Australia, having hosted numerous seminars, advised the Federal Government and presented to the United Nations. She is frequently asked to speak about autism, with appearances on 60 Minutes, the 7.30 Report, the Today Show, A Current Affair, Today Tonight and Australian Story as well as The Australian, Fairfax newspapers and The Australian Women's Weekly.

Nicole has two sons, the eldest of which is on the autism spectrum.



## Sally Collins Director

Sally is the Chief Operating Officer at VFMC, Victorian Funds Management Corporation. With 22 years experience in financial services she has lead many large functions within VFMC, NAB, CBA and AXA Australia.

At work, Sally has been a vocal advocate for gender diversity and inclusion and also workplace flexibility. She was recognised as the 2016 recipient of the Financial Executive Women (FEW) Positive Progression of Women award. She is also an author and her first book, Stepmother Love, is all about the challenges faced by stepmothers in finding their way and building loving families.

It's this combination of Sally's corporate skills and advocacy for tough parenting gigs that brought her to AAA. She's looking forward to learning more about the challenges faced by children on the autism spectrum, and their families, and can't wait to help AAA be as successful as possible in their great work.





## Melanie Carrier Director

An accomplished Director in Marketing and Advertising, Melanie set her career aside to care for her third child who was diagnosed with autism in 2003.

At the time, services were scarce and prognosis was grim. Melanie tirelessly researched best practices for her son.

Since moving to Australia in 2011, Melanie and her family have volunteered for events such as Light it up Blue, City2Surf, Surfers Healing and have even held their own fundraising boot camps. It was therefore a natural extension for Melanie to join the Board of Autism Awareness Australia and continue to advocate for families like hers, help increase awareness and build upon the many amazing programs and events.

Her passion has always been to support individuals on the spectrum to become independent, fulfilled, contributing members of society.



## Prof. Brian Owler Director

Prof. Brian Owler is a paediatric and adult neurosurgeon based in Sydney, and a Clinical Professor of Neurosurgery at the University of Sydney.

Prof Owler is a Consultant Neurosurgeon at the Children's Hospital at Westmead, the Sydney Adventist Hospital, Norwest Private Hospital, Macquarie University Private Hospital and Westmead Private Hospital.

Prof. Owler is a past President of the Federal and NSW Australian Medical Associations. In these roles he has been a public health advocate. This includes the RTA/NSW AMA Road Safety 'Don't Rush' campaign and lobbying to prevent childhood injury. Brian has a daughter with autism. He is an enthusiastic supporter of Autism Awareness Australia having worked closely with us in his previous role with the AMA. He looks forward to contributing to our ongoing efforts to improve the lives of all Australians on the autism spectrum.

# Our Fundraising



# Our Sponsors & Partners



# Financials

## Autism Awareness Australia Limited

(ABN: 42 130 217 962)



Statement Of Profit Or Loss And Other Comprehensive Income For The Year Ended 30 June 2019		
	2019 (\$)	2018 (\$)
Revenue	380 752	334 957
Advertising and marketing	3118	9732
Employee benefit expenses	181 554	75 661
Event expenses	80 584	139 005
Event related travel expenses	10 296	39 608
Donations collection expenses	4878	5410
Postage and Shipping expenses	625	307
Administration expenses	86 021	40 873
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>367 076</b>	<b>310 598</b>
Profit before tax	13 676	24 359
Income tax expense	-	-
Profit / (Loss) for the year	13 676	24 359
Other comprehensive income	-	-
<b>Total comprehensive income</b>	<b>13 676</b>	<b>24,359</b>

Statement Of Changes In Equity For The Year Ended 30 June 2019		
	2019 (\$)	2018 (\$)
Retained earnings at the beginning of the year	33 667	9,308
Profit for the year	13 676	24 359

Statement Of Financial Position For The Year Ended 30 June 2019		
	2019 (\$)	2018 (\$)
<b>ASSETS: Current Assets</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	71 686	21 686
Trade and other receivables	1	-
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>71 687</b>	<b>21 686</b>
<b>ASSETS: Non-Current Assets</b>		
Plant and equipment	2148	-
<b>Total Non-Current Assets</b>	<b>2148</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>73 835</b>	<b>21 686</b>
<b>LIABILITIES: Current Liabilities</b>		
Trade and other payables	7382	-
Other liabilities	-	-
Employee benefits	19 090	-
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>26 472</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>26 472</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>47 363</b>	<b>21 686</b>
<b>EQUITY</b>		
Retained earnings	47 363	-
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>	<b>47 363</b>	<b>21 686</b>



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