



autism
awareness
AUSTRALIA

ANNUAL REPORT
2016 - 2017

Australia's
leading voice
for **Autism**

About Autism Awareness Australia



information



education



inclusion



awareness

Founded in 2007, Autism Awareness Australia is the country's leading not-for-profit autism education and awareness organisation.

Impacting a person's ability to communicate and to develop social relationships, autism affects one in every 100 of us making it the most common developmental disorder in Australia today. Yet despite the prolificness of the condition, it remains both misunderstood, under-resourced, and severely underfunded. We're on a mission to change this.

As the country's leading voice for the community, we have one simple goal: to improve the lives of all Australians on the autism spectrum and the families who are caring for them. We already have the largest network of autism families in the country — and we're growing.

Knowing that families are the best advocates for their children, we're here to empower them with quality information and support, including targeted educational programs. We're also campaigning for earlier diagnosis and access to effective early interventions. All of this alongside our ongoing push to de-mystify and bring awareness to the abilities and challenges faced by our community.

A Message from Our CEO

As we at Autism Awareness Australia mark our 10th year in operation, it is astonishing to look back at what we have achieved over the past decade. Our sole purpose has been to bring awareness to the wider Australian community through education. We are very proud of the support we've been able to offer parents over these past ten years, from the supplementation of factual information and resources, to hosting numerous programs and events Australia wide.

Autism Awareness has become a trusted resource for parents and we are so proud of the amazing community we have built. AAA has fostered this strong sense of community over time, through parents supporting parents, pulling one another up and sharing our experiences. In this last year alone we have collaborated with a stellar array of individuals and companies to bring the AAA community a variety of events, ranging from magic carpet rides to days at the beach to social football games.

We were delighted to team up with the Australian Medical Association to launch our combined National Autism Position Statement. Our continued work with the AMA aims to bring a wider awareness of autism to the medical community, which we hope will facilitate earlier diagnosis in children and ensure further support and understanding for their families.

I am so proud and humbled by all that Autism Awareness Australia has achieved in the past 10 years, and can't wait to see what the future will bring - because we have no intention of slowing down! We are on to bigger projects and new initiatives to help us continue to support individuals with autism and the families who love them.

Nicole Rogerson
CEO, Autism Awareness Australia



Our 2016-2017 Highlights



We celebrated 10 years with a brand makeover



We hosted 15 events and campaigns, reaching thousands nationwide



We continued to lobby and advocate for change at the local, state and federal levels of government, meeting with politicians and forming a key partnership with the AMA to launch a National Autism Position Statement



We built upon our existing relationships within the media, notching up countless column inches, both in Australia and overseas, helping to shed more light on both autism and the work we do to support families



We expanded our board, incorporating a mix of both parents and professionals, alongside our online community of members and followers, which surpassed the 90,000 mark

Autism Awareness Australia Brand Change

Autism
Awareness



AUTISM
AWARENESS



autism
awareness

A U S T R A L I A

Australia's Leading Voice for Autism

It's hard to believe that 10 years have passed since we launched Autism Awareness Australia. And what a journey.

A decade of grafting, championing, educating and supporting — all to help improve the lives of all Australians on the autism spectrum and the families who love them.

Over this time we have discovered a real need to pull together families from across Australia, to increase awareness, build a platform for advocacy, provide support and to empower parents and carers with quality information and resources. And while there's still a lot of work to be done, our birthday was cause to pause, reflect and celebrate everything we've achieved. And what better way to mark the milestone than a makeover?

Looking within our expansive community, we turned to friend — and parent of an autistic child — art director, Marc Jaackson, to help refresh our brand and the result was an updated look to reflect the kind of organisation we are — an organisation that is all about effective communication. Clean, simple, bold, yet retaining our heritage as the country's leading voice for autism, we're the same organisation, but with a brand spanning new logo.

Events And Campaigns





City2Surf - August 2016

The largest running event of its type in the world, the annual City2Surf brings tens of thousands of runners from the heart of Sydney's CBD to the sands of Bondi Beach. And a chunk of those participants in the 2016 race were pounding the pavement for Autism Awareness Australia.

We don't receive any ongoing government funding or corporate dollars, so its through our team of fundraisers (who recruit sporting friends, family and work colleagues to join them in their annual City2Surf campaign) and through the generosity of donors and partnerships, that we raise our much-needed dollars.

John Elder Robison 'Up close - My Asperger's Life - September 2016

The older brother of famed writer, Augusten, whose 2002 memoir, "Running with Scissors", was turned into a Hollywood blockbuster of the same name, John Elder Robison is a world-recognised authority on living with autism.

A New York Times bestselling author and autism advocate, his books "Look Me In The Eye: My Life With Asperger's", "Be Different" and "Raising Cubby" are the most widely read accounts of life with Asperger's in the world.

Given that John's drive is to improve the quality of life for those living with autism today — and their family members — he was a perfect event partner for Autism Awareness Australia. Speaking at a special live event, John reminded both us and the packed audience that, given the appropriate support, people on the spectrum can develop throughout their lives, and that it's never too late to hope for or expect change.





Surfers Healing Australia - February 2017

Even heavy rain couldn't curb the enthusiasm of the 700-plus kids who experienced our workshops with US-based non-profit, Surfers Healing, over February at locations in Manly Beach, Bondi Beach and the Gold Coast.

Partnering for another year with the organisation, the experience introduced children to surfing and the calming effects of the ocean, which can help with sensory overload that often accompanies autism.

The free surf days offered children and their families a fun, engaging day at the beach, but more profoundly helped challenge notions of capability and empower their families and carers to believe that anything is possible.

Autism-friendly Performance of "Aladdin The Musical" - March 2017

Following on from three successful partnerships, this year we once again teamed up with Disney for a specially adapted, autism-friendly performance of "Aladdin The Musical."

Staged at Sydney's Capitol Theatre during the run of the Broadway spectacular, the production was adjusted to remove elements such as strobe lighting, pyrotechnics and any jarring sound effects, to make it suitable for people on the autism spectrum. Not that the magic of the show was lessened at all. The event saw a full house of eager theatregoers dancing in the aisles and singing along — it was "A Whole New World"!





Professional Development Masterclass - March 2017

At Autism Awareness Australia we understand that being a parent or carer to a person on the autism spectrum can be both rewarding and challenging at the same time.

Knowing this — and as a response to various requests from within our community — we developed and presented a masterclass on both behaviour management strategies, and how to navigate the government's new National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) which was presented by two leading experts in the field.

Parent Information Workshop – March 2017

Supporting people with autism is a lifelong journey that continues way beyond childhood and this ongoing need should be recognised and prepared for.

Continuing one of our core goals of empowering parents and carers with resources and education, we held a series of workshops through March at locations in both Sydney and Melbourne. Packed full of practical know how and strategies for parents, our experts covered everything from early intervention and managing the school system, through to pathways to successful employment.





World Autism Awareness Day - April 2017

An annual highlight on our event calendar, the United Nations World Autism Awareness Day sees iconic buildings around the world turn blue in recognition of all individuals on the autism spectrum and their abilities, their strengths and their contribution to the community.

In Australia, we once again partnered with Australia's most iconic landmark, the Sydney Opera House, to mark our contribution to the important global awareness campaign. Turning the sails of this beautiful building blue on April 2 for the seventh year running.

Barry Hall and Kleenex Football Clinic - April 2017

Taking our grassroots level ethos seriously, we teamed up with Sydney Swans legend Barry Hall and Kleenex to run a free football clinic for 30 children on the autism spectrum in Sydney's Alan Davidson Oval.

The former Swannies captain led our excitable kids through a fun and sun-filled kickabout. The AFL legend's enthusiasm was infectious and everyone participating on the day had a ball. Literally.



Advocating For Change

Autism Awareness Australia doesn't just sit back and wait for change — we're working right on the front line, lobbying for policy reforms and meeting with leading decision makers and government officials to discuss current issues and the needs and concerns of our community.



NSW Disability Minister John Ajaka September 2016

Following on from the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) rolling out across Australia, our CEO, Nicole Rogerson, spent time discussing the scheme and other issues affecting the autistic community with the NSW Disability Minister John Ajaka. Given that the NDIS aims to improve early intervention and to help participants attend mainstream schools and engage in the community through support ranging from specialist therapy to assistive technology; there was a lot to discuss.



Assistant Minister for Social Services and Disability Services The Hon Jane Prentice November 2016

When the minister for social services and disability services offered up some time to discuss the NDIS rollout, we didn't need to be asked twice.

With our goal of supporting people on the spectrum and their families top of mind, our CEO, Nicole, tackled the nitty gritty of how the scheme would work in helping to support our community achieve their goals of independence, inclusion, education, employment and wellbeing.



Australian Digital Health Agency Industry Forum with Federal Health Minister Sussan Ley December 2016

We were delighted to be offered the chance to speak at the Australian Digital Health Agency Industry Forum with Federal Health Minister Sussan Ley. Bringing attention to the needs of autism families in the emerging digital health space. We talked about how members of our community are looking to navigate their medical needs and shared our thoughts on the future of health and care in the digital world.



AMA Launch Autism Position Statement December 2016

Throughout this year we worked with — and formed a key partnership with — the AMA (Australian Medical Association) to launch a combined National Autism Position Statement.

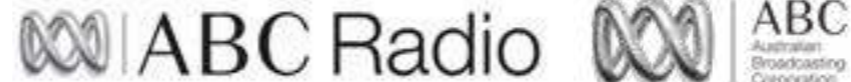
Calling for action to speed up the diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and to provide early intervention therapies, the statement was fuelled by research Autism Awareness Australia commissioned, which found 34 per cent of families waited more than a year for diagnosis, and close to 20 per cent waited more than two years. Given brain plasticity in childhood, early intervention is critical.

Joining the Australian Medical Association at NSW Parliament for the launch, we relayed these findings and emphasised the importance of early detection to give those on the spectrum the best outcome possible.

Media Coverage

Already a go-to for journalists and producers nationwide, Autism Awareness Australia — and by proxy the events we hold — has a constant presence across TV, radio, digital and print media.

In the last 12 months our media presence has grown substantially with a range of coverage in major outlets, both nationally and internationally, across TV, radio, print and online.



Our Board



Nicole Rogerson - CEO and Director

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.



Stephanie Smith - Director

Stephanie is a partner at PwC, the leading global professional services firm, working with clients in the financial services industry for over 19 years.

In 2012, Stephanie volunteered with Surfers Healing, a US not-for-profit who introduces the unique experience of surfing to children on the autism spectrum. She was impacted by the challenging and positive experiences she witnessed, a therapeutic moment for the kids instilling calm and confidence, and a celebration for the families who see what their kids can do. Stephanie was instrumental in facilitating the partnership of Surfers Healing with Autism Awareness Australia and bringing these experiences to our Aussie kids on the spectrum.

Prior to her involvement with Surfers Healing, Stephanie was completely unaware of the challenges faced by kids on the spectrum and their families. She has now met hundreds of these special kids and families and is passionate about helping Autism Awareness Australia in their goals including educating the broader community and supporting increased understanding and inclusion.



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 recently recognised for this 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.



Prof. Brian Owler - Director

Prof. Brian Owler is a paediatric and adult neurosurgeon based in Sydney. He 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.

He is a Clinical Professor of Neurosurgery at the University of Sydney.

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.



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.

With Thanks

We couldn't have done it without you!

Here's to our amazing supporters who have raised money through community fundraising events, so that Autism Awareness Australia can continue to provide our invaluable programs and resources to those on the spectrum and their families.



Organisations We Work With:



Autism Awareness Australian Limited (Abn: 42 130 217 962)
Statement Of Profit Or Loss And Other Comprehensive Income For The Year Ended 30 June 2017

	2017	2016
	\$	\$
Revenue	213,686	359,709
Advertising and marketing	(13,348)	-
Employee benefit expenses	(100,396)	(142,729)
Event expenses	(39,437)	(126,113)
Event related expenses	(37,679)	(53,389)
Donation collection expenses	(3,051)	(7,540)
Postage and Shipping	(1,280)	(964)
Administration expenses	(23,547)	(58,253)
Loss before income tax	(5,053)	(29,279)
Income tax expense	-	-
Loss for the year	(5,053)	(29,279)
Total comprehensive loss for the year	(5,053)	(29,279)

Autism Awareness Australian Limited (Abn: 42 130 217 962)
Statement Of Financial Position For The Year Ended 30 June 2017

	2017	2016
	\$	\$
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	27 400	28 170
Inventories	39	785
Total current assets	27 439	28 955
Non-current assets		
Property, plant and equipment	1539	2577
Total non-current assets	1539	2577
LIABILITIES		
Current Liabilities		
Trade and other payable	2871	4455
Employee benefits	7063	4294
Total current liabilities	9934	8749
Non-current liabilities		
Employee benefits	9735	8422
Total non-current assets	9735	8422
TOTAL LIABILITIES	19 670	17 171
NET ASSETS	9308	14 361
EQUITY		
Retained earnings	9308	14 361
TOTAL EQUITY	9308	14 361