



The
Sycamore
School



Autism - Friendly Learning

2018 Annual Report

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About Us

The Sycamore School was founded by Cindy and Cameron Corrie who wanted to find a school that would support and cater to the needs of their son, who is on the autism spectrum.

After years of hard work, The Sycamore School opened in 2017 and welcomed 44 students in classes from Prep to Year 6.

Today, The Sycamore School prides itself on providing educational choice to families of students with autism.

The school offers an innovative program that combines developmental and curriculum outcomes delivered in a meaningful and respectful way. The student is at the centre of the education model and benefits from a strengths-based approach to learning.

In addition to classroom learning, students benefit from the support of a multi-disciplinary Allied Health Team, including an Occupational Therapist, a Speech Therapist and a Social Worker.

The Sycamore School has grown to support 61 students and their families and it continues to grow with preparation underway to offer high school classes in 2019.





Message from the Chair

The Sycamore School has celebrated its second year of operation and has been busy building on the strong foundations laid in 2017.

The year has been spent broadening and embedding the specific curricula approach and establishing the routine and rhythm of the school. Our students have built on their own knowledge and understanding of what living with autism means for them.

So far, the feedback from parents and carers and the wider community has been overwhelming. The Derry family moved to Brisbane from New Zealand to give their son Michael an opportunity to attend The Sycamore School (read more on page 19), while at just two years of age Phoenix battled leukaemia at the same time he was given an autism diagnosis. Read mum Lisa's account on page 28 of how Sycamore helped not just Phoenix, but her whole family, when they moved here from Melbourne to attend The Sycamore School. And Karley still can't believe her son Ryan sits down every day to work on his times tables. Read Ryan's story on page 32. These are just three family stories that really clarify the impact that our school is having. These stories, and the stories of all our students, are the reason we do what we do.

It has been a very busy year. We recruited a new principal – welcome Ronwyn Collier – and we expanded our Board membership by three, adding a broader range of skills to the Board of Directors.

This year has also been significant because The Sycamore School has been granted accreditation to expand our offering to high school classes. This will see The Sycamore School grow to become a P – 8 school in 2019 and a P – 10 school in 2021. This is a major achievement for a school as young as this and this achievement serves our Strategic Priority to support more people on the autism spectrum.

This year, the Board also conducted its first significant Strategic Planning activity.

This resulted in developing three key pillars to support our broader, ongoing activity – evidence, growth and sustainability.

1. Evidence

- Critical to our ongoing success will be establishing and continually building a body of evidence that will guide our practice and decisions for the future. Evidence must underpin our decisions and our actions. This evidence-focused pillar will include partnering with universities on the longitudinal outcomes of our students' journey, along with work the Board will commission in 2019 to identify areas of demand that will inform our growth over the coming years.



2. Growth

- The Sycamore School is faced with myriad opportunities for growth. We receive enrolment enquiries in the hundreds and more than 50 parents have paid to place an expression of interest for prospective students in future years.
- In 2019 Sycamore will expand its delivery from P - 6 to P - 8 and the Year 8 cohort will then progress through the school to complete Year 10 in 2021.
- The Board is now exploring where the best opportunities for growth exist and will undertake the necessary due diligence and planning to determine whether:
 - i. We establish further campuses.
 - ii. We add a second stream of grades at our existing campus.
 - iii. How we will facilitate or deliver senior studies (to Year 12) and provide pathways to employment and post-secondary education for our students.
 - iv. We offer services such as after-school care, early years care or partnering and creating alliances with allied health providers to otherwise support the school community.

3. Sustainability

- We maintain a sharp focus on the school's long-term viability. We have set in motion cycles to ensure that financial planning, including infrastructure and technology specific to our approach, are in place.
- We have strengthened our systems and processes to ensure a robust and compliant educational environment that is focussed on the health, safety and wellbeing of its staff, students and the community.
- We must invest in our workforce to ensure our staff remains resilient so they can effectively meet the needs of the school as it expands. We are prioritising the development of our workforce to ensure we protect their wellbeing.

It has been my privilege to chair the Board this year through the second year of The Sycamore School. This has been a year of consolidation and growth. And while we have faced challenges, the successes have been very rewarding.

I must thank the tireless efforts of the remarkable staff of the school, who are inspirational in their extraordinary patience, resilience and skill with the students. We have also received very strong support from the parent community and it is this level of gratitude and support that has been personally satisfying.

I look forward to 2019 and the new milestones we will achieve together.

Jodi Schmidt



Message from the CEO

Growing and Planning for the Future

This year The Sycamore School completed its second, full year of operation. It has been a year of looking forward and setting new strategic goals for the future growth and development of The Sycamore School, its staff, its students and their families.

We exist to change the predicted future for people with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). By providing tailored, deliberate, and evidence-based support, students' formative years in education are used to prepare them for life.

In 2017 we set strategic goals so the organisation would remain focussed. Assessing our progress against those strategic goals, we have had an extremely successful year.

The Strategic Plan established in the school's foundation year included four priorities. These priorities have been achieved.

Priority 1

Create a safe and inclusive community that supports the social, emotional and educational wellbeing of each student through evidence-informed best practice, quality teaching and innovative pedagogical frameworks.

Priority 2

Create partnerships and relationships that support the organisation to achieve its goals and objectives.

Priority 3

Create an accepting, inclusive and educated community in respect to people living with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Priority 4

Create a capable organisation that supports the achievement of its goals through effective systems, policies and procedures and quality governance.

In 2018 we worked closely with the Board to develop and progress our Strategic Priorities. We have now developed a robust framework of goals that will direct our activity and direction through to 2024.



New Principal

At the end of 2017 we farewelled foundation Principal Nigel De Maria. After a careful and lengthy search, in March this year, Ronwyn Collier was appointed as the new school principal. Mrs Collier has a distinguished 30-year career working with students with special needs and she has been welcomed by the staff, the students and their families and she is an asset to the school.

Loan Repayments

We have reduced our debts, paying off all loans associated with the school's start-up process. Fiscal sustainability is the cornerstone for long-term success. Without a financially viable model the school would be unable to plan for the future, to grow or even survive. In May this year we repaid the final loan, supporting our goal to be a financially responsible organisation.

High School Accreditation

In June the school submitted an application to the Non-State School Accreditation Board to extend its education program to high school. This is a slow process and can take up to a year for an outcome, but in just five months, in October, the school received notification that accreditation had been granted.

Becoming a high school is another important step in changing the future for those on the spectrum and I congratulate everyone who worked so hard on our submission, especially our Principal Ronwyn Collier.

New Board Directors

In August, the Board welcomed three new directors, Antonia Mercorella, Andrew Soter, and Damien Barry, which takes the total to eight. These new directors bring additional skills and expertise to the Board which will benefit the Board in its planning and strategic capacity.

Autism Alliance of Australia

Through my position on the national body, Autism Alliance of Australia, we have input into issues such as teacher training, with the goal of ensuring all teachers have the tools and knowledge to bring a positive experience to every student in their classroom, including those on the spectrum. Statistically, there is at least one student with ASD in every classroom in Australia. By giving teachers the skills to connect with students on the spectrum we can improve the experience and outcomes for all students in the classroom.

This year, during the Federal Election campaign we created a framework of priorities of needs for the community of people living with ASD. This work highlights the conversations that we continue to have at a national level as we advocate for our community.

Looking back, 2018 has been a highly rewarding year, with our impact now measurable. We have 61 students who are now benefiting from a more positive school experience. This benefit goes beyond their time with us, but will deliver lasting impact for many years to come as they grow into independent, educated, employable members of our community.

Cindy Corrie



Message from the Principal

This has been a very busy year, with some extraordinary challenges and rewards to propel the school forward.

With 61 students enrolled in Prep to Year 6, and 12 teachers, supported by 12 Education Support Officers and an Allied Health staff of three – comprising an Occupational Therapist, a Speech Therapist, and a Social Worker, as well as a therapy dog - our teacher to student ratio is 1:5.

Our students have reached so many academic, social and behavioural milestones as a result of the strategies and the work we all do together, both at school and at home. We have seen a student begin to speak, a student overcome their fears, a student sitting down to do a mathematical equation and, for the first time, successfully working it out, and another student being invited to their first birthday party, to name just a few of the many, many successes this year has delivered.

Professional Learning Experiences

This year we continued our program of professional learning experiences, welcoming teachers to our school who are looking for tools and strategies that can be implemented in their mainstream classroom. Teachers from other schools spend time in our classrooms and then also have one-on-one time with our professional staff, who are able to help these visiting teachers address specific needs in their own classroom.

This program began in 2017 and has been very successful, with schools returning in 2018, asking us to help more teachers.

We welcome this opportunity. It's a good way to share what we know works and help even more students with autism. We are teaching others about the tools and strategies of autism-friendly education and this directly benefits students on the spectrum in a mainstream classroom.

Sensory Gym

In 2018 we opened our Sensory Gym and it has been a fantastic addition for our students. The Sensory Gym is located in a space that offers separation from the classrooms and is close to an outdoor physical activity environment. Led by our Allied Health team of Occupational Therapist, Lindy Thompson and Speech Therapist, Kylie Fraser, a program has been created that delivers the students additional therapies that help them develop physical skills and strength as well as literacy and communications skills.

See our Allied Health and Wellbeing report on page 23.

High School

This year the school successfully applied for high school accreditation. The process was rigorous – providing details on staffing policies, enrolment processes, pedagogical frameworks, classroom strategies and curriculum for Year 7 through to Year 10, even though we will only offer Year 7 and Year 8 in 2019.

Once accreditation was granted the school quickly recruited staff and took enrolments in readiness for 2019. It was a very busy time!



Parent Satisfaction

During 2018 our families were asked to rank our school using a star rating with one being poor and five being excellent. The survey covered a variety of areas including staffing, student support, programming and reporting, facilities and value for money. We are very pleased to share that The Sycamore School ranked at least four stars on all criteria with an average of 92.2% satisfaction rating.

Statement	Percentage Satisfaction
All staff at The Sycamore School show care and respect towards my child.	98.6%
I feel the staff are approachable and willing to make time to meet with me.	97.8%
The Sycamore School provides my child with an autism-friendly learning environment.	97.0%
My child's overall academic development is being supported.	83.8%
I feel supported by other parents of The Sycamore School.	83.0%

Griffith University Literacy Research

The Sycamore School is proud to be working with Griffith University on a literacy project. Our Prep and Year One classes were involved focussing on literacy assessment for young people on the autism spectrum. We are thankful to have been chosen to be a part of this research and look forward to other opportunities in the future as we trailblaze new paths for our staff and students.

Autism-Friendly Learning

The Sycamore School is dedicated to Autism-Friendly Learning, a school with the pedagogical framework to put the student at the centre of the learning process so that each student is celebrated and nurtured for their unique gifts.

This year we have 61 students who have chosen an alternative to mainstream schooling by enrolling at The Sycamore School.

But this type of education is not a rejection of mainstream schooling. The goal at Sycamore is always to plan for mainstreaming our students wherever possible. However, first we must ensure that our students are equipped for a successful transition.

At Sycamore we empower our students to be their own advocate, to identify their needs and articulate those needs to the world around them.

We also work closely with mainstream schools so that teachers have the knowledge and the tools to embrace students living with ASD.

Beyond the School: Employment and Teacher Education.

The Sycamore School will have Year 10 graduates soon and, looking beyond the high school, our goal for them is to find pathways to employment and financial independence.

With that in mind, we are working with the community to reframe their expectations for students and adults who are on the spectrum. We are engaging with businesses and encouraging them to think differently about Autism Spectrum Disorder and what people living with autism can achieve. The reception has been positive, but there is much work to be done.

I would like to thank the wonderful staff of our school for the tremendous effort they put into each of our students throughout the year. Your dedication is a precious gift to our community. Thanks too, to each of our Board members for their continued support of me and commitment to our school.

Ronwyn Collier



What is Autism?

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD or autism) is a developmental condition that impacts a person in two main areas:

1. Social communication skills (including understanding social contexts, social cues, delays in language and speech development).
2. Restrictive and repetitive interests and behaviours (including insistence on sameness, self-stimulatory behaviours, sensory sensitivities, strong interests and repetitive behaviours).

ASD is a lifelong condition with no definitive cause or cure. Engagement in early intervention, strengths-based therapy and continuing lifelong support paves the way for success for people on the autism spectrum.

There are approximately 2.5% of school-aged students diagnosed with ASD in Queensland. And 85% require support at school in the areas of fitting in socially, learning and communication.

People with autism are less likely than others to complete an educational qualification beyond school and have needs for support that differ from people with other disabilities. People with other disabilities are 2.3 times more likely to have a Bachelor Degree or higher than people with autism, while people with no disability are 4.4 times more likely to have one (Australian Bureau of Statistics).


People on the autism spectrum have the highest rate of unemployment among the general population of people with a disability.

Paid employment is the main source of income for only 6% of adults on the autism spectrum. The Sycamore School provides educational options that support learning and independence to improve outcomes for people diagnosed with ASD.






In Australia, 1 in every
100 people have ASD.
That is **230,000**
Australians.


90% of people in
Australia with ASD are
under 25 years old.



The prevalence of ASD
in Australia
has increased by
25%
in the past 30 years.




In Queensland, 2.6%
of students have a
diagnosis of ASD.



2.6%
or **13,900** Qld state
school students
have ASD.


That's at least one
student in every class
across the state.



75% of students with
ASD **are bullied** at
school.


54% underachieve
academically.


Only 9% of school
leavers with ASD
will **complete post-**
school study.



13.4%
of students with ASD
leave Year 12 **without**
QCE or QCIA.

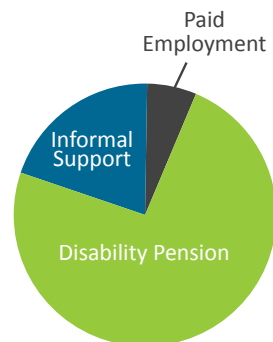
What we are working to change...


60%
of people with ASD
are **unemployed.**
This is the highest rate
of unemployment
among the general
population of people
with a disability.

74% receive the
majority of their
income through the
Disability Pension.

6% receive the
majority of their
income through paid
employment.


Less than **56%**
of people with ASD
are employed



Autism is Our Superpower Day

Autism Is Our Superpower Day is an annual event to celebrate the unique qualities of every individual on the autism spectrum while also raising awareness about the positive contributions they make to our community. The day is a reminder to our students that autism is part of their personality with many attributes that should be celebrated and respected.

Each year, our students and staff come dressed as their favourite superhero, or as something that reflects their strengths or interests. The day includes special Superhero assemblies, where each student's individuality is honoured.

Merlo Coffee donates \$1 from every coffee sold on Autism Is Our Superpower Day, and in 2018 raised \$10,000 for The Sycamore School. Staff at Merlo Coffee stores throughout Queensland dress as superheroes in support of the students at The Sycamore School.

This activity is building awareness about the value that people on the autism spectrum bring to our community.





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ort tree

The Sycamore School

Strategic Plan 2019 - 2024

This Strategic Plan is the result of the collaborative effort of our Sycamore community and stakeholders at all levels.

This Strategic Plan reflects the developing maturity of the school and our commitment to ensuring our students are the recipients of evidence-based learning to support meeting their prescribed goals both developmentally and academically.

Our Strategic Pillars of Evidence, Growth and Sustainability provide a focus for the Strategic Plan and will support underlying operational plans and overall development of the organisation.

Our Vision

To improve life outcomes for people on the autism spectrum.

Our Mission

The Sycamore School provides specialist support and education to people on the autism spectrum, their care networks and the community.

Our Values

RESPECTFUL

We value all perspectives

KIND

We are selfless and giving.

ACCEPTING

We value uniqueness

BRAVE

We face our challenges with conviction.

CREATIVE

We think outside the box.

PATIENT

We accept that all things happen in their own time.



Our Strategic Pillars



Evidence

Building our foundation through investigation, research and demand analysis.

Using evidence to guide decision making, understanding the needs of our community and informing our strategy.



Growth

Supporting more people on the autism spectrum.


Investigating additional support services that we can provide to enrich the lives of more people on the spectrum.



Sustainability

Future proofing our organisation.

Continuous development of internal systems and frameworks to support our service delivery and complement our growth.



"He's gone from a semi-verbal child to someone who won't stop talking! It's amazing!"



Michael's Story

Moving Heaven and Earth

Angela Derry took a big risk when she moved her family of four from New Zealand to Brisbane in the desperate hope her son Michael could attend The Sycamore School.

Michael's first school experiences in Auckland had been distressing for both Michael and his family.

"At his first school, which was a very good school, our experience was not good," Angela said.

"I would get calls from the teacher that Michael had had to be restrained, that he was running away, that he was having meltdowns. It was very upsetting," she said. Michael had been diagnosed at two years of age and Angela had tapped into all the funding and community resources available in Auckland - but it was not enough.

Then she read about The Sycamore School and after learning as much as she could she decided to move the whole family.

"I didn't even know there was such a thing as a school for autistic children. It was a revelation! But moving was such a big risk. We hadn't even been offered a place but I knew this would be the best option for Michael," Angela said.

So, they moved. Husband John, an engineer, came over first to find employment and the family followed. It was an uncertain time for everyone.

"I pestered Sycamore, trying to get Michael in. Eventually we got a meeting with the Deputy Principal, Elissa Brinckman, and when she said, 'Yes, we can help you' I just burst into tears," Angela said.

Even knowing that Sycamore was a school designed for students on the spectrum, Angela still had doubts.

"I really wasn't sure that Sycamore could help us but within a few days I knew this was going to be different. And within a few weeks he was a different child," she said.

At his first school all of Michael's energy was spent coping with his environment. At Sycamore, all of those stressful triggers were removed and he was able to begin learning.

"Within a few days he was telling me about the letters of the alphabet and picking up a pencil and holding it properly. Within a few weeks he was writing and sitting down to concentrate," she said. "He's gone from a semi-verbal child to someone who won't stop talking! It's amazing!"

It has been life-changing, not just for Michael but for the entire family.

"He is part of a community that is proud to be autistic, one that celebrates their strengths and appreciates the positives and what makes each of them unique. This will help Michael build his self-esteem as he forms his own identity. That would never have happened at a mainstream school. Now, I can see a future for him where he can live independently. Sycamore has changed all of our lives."

Message from the Deputy Principal



Following our very successful foundation year, 2018 has been another busy and equally successful year at The Sycamore School. We have spent the year consolidating and further developing the processes and frameworks that were introduced in 2017.

Staff Performance and Development Framework

Working with a consultant from Independent Schools Queensland, this year I completed the major project, The Teaching Performance and Development Framework, which is the framework that encompasses the systems and processes by which the school body (Teachers, ESOs and Allied Health Team) align in the teaching and learning arena at The Sycamore School. It has an emphasis on continued and carefully considered, professional learning and development across the school, to ensure that best practice continues to be our focus.

Essentially, this document focuses on the process for professional learning and professional development and outlines how we embed the Autism-Friendly Learning practices into our day-to-day teaching and learning experiences. The Teaching, Performance and Development Framework outlines the principles and best-practice procedures to ensure that all staff members have a shared understanding and consistent approach to the implementation of Autism-Friendly Learning practices.

This year was spent ensuring that the staff had a solid understanding of the platforms that guide our practice. The Teaching Performance and Development Framework is designed to focus on a positive, proactive and strength-based approach to education and is designed to build collaborative partnerships in our teams and set the foundations for longevity and success.

Importantly, while the framework is a formal structure, how we approach each of our students and their learning, requires flexibility. What may be the best support strategy and intervention for one student may not necessarily be the best strategy or intervention to support another. The framework and the support we provide our staff, exemplifies this approach.

The framework also outlines the professional development requirements for our teaching staff, which sits within the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers.

Elissa Brinckman





A Place of Celebration

Emily Blumhagen
Sycamore School
2018

A Place
of
Celebration

A
Spectrum
of Choice





Allied Health and Wellbeing Report

In 2018, with a \$30,000 grant from The Little Kings Movement, The Sycamore School opened a Sensory Gym, a designated space fitted out with specialist sensory equipment, tools and aids to help students address challenges commonly faced by those with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

The Sensory Gym was designed to help improve planning motor skills, gross motor skills, strengthen muscle tone, improve coordination and dexterity. The Sensory Gym was also designed to improve language, communication and literacy skills.

***Social Worker** Mandy Scott*

This year our Social Worker, Mandy Scott supported the students individually, as well as their parents, and the staff of The Sycamore School. Mandy has a holistic role that focusses on well-being, support and empathy for all.

The school places a strong emphasis on staff wellbeing and providing mental and emotional support.

On a day-to-day basis Mandy will support students who may find social engagement challenging, or need support regulating emotions. The school teaches strategies that will help students self-identify their emotions and self-regulate, learning to transition independently into a calm state.

This year, with many of our students returning for a second year, the tools we have taught them in 2017 are having an impact. We have seen huge improvements in students' emotional literacy, using prescribed strategies independently to help them through challenging situations.

***Occupational Therapist** Lindy Thompson*

***Speech Therapist** Kylie Fraser*

The Sycamore School's Occupational Therapist Lindy Thompson and Speech Therapist Kylie Fraser created a program for the Sensory Gym that would help students in a range of areas. Benefits include improved learning in the classroom, as well as social, emotional and physical development.

The Sensory Gym is a calm and quiet space. The routine and structure help the students navigate tasks and expectations.

Gym sessions were divided into two sections – a physical activity session and a language and literacy session.

Each student's Personal Learning Plan is incorporated into the Sensory Gym sessions and the classroom teachers were updated with progress reports after each session, outlining milestones and achievements.

Successes large and small were found in the Sensory Gym this year with many students achieving physical goals and communication milestones.

Our therapists also focussed on delivering another series of successful parent workshops, teaching skills and strategies to help continue the learning from school into the home environment.



Allied Health and Wellbeing Report

Meet Eve, the Therapy Dog

Eve, the therapy dog, was formally introduced to The Sycamore School in 2018 as a classroom support resource.

Eve is a mixed breed dog, including part American Staffy, and is handled by Linda Flintoff, a Sycamore School 'Angel' (Education Support Officer who floats between classes).

Eve delivers a range of benefits to the classroom and she has been a resounding success, exceeding expectations. The feedback from parents and classroom staff has been extraordinarily positive.

Eve is used in a multitude of ways. She is a motivational tool, with students encouraged to complete tasks in order to play with Eve when they are done. Students will routinely complete extra tasks so they can spend time with Eve as a reward.

Linda also uses Eve to teach empathy, and is having considerable success. Eve is incorporated into discussions about regulation of emotions and moods. The students are taught how to read Eve's body language, how to give her space when she needs it, how to understand if she is happy, sad or agitated.

Eve is also used by students to regulate their own emotions. There are many individual success stories, but here are two that illustrate how Eve delivers a positive impact to individual students when they are regulating their own emotions.

A student self-identified that they were "getting a bit silly". The student asked Linda if they could throw the ball to Eve outside in the yard and this physical activity helped move the student back into a calm state.

Students who have identified as being afraid of dogs have gradually overcome those fears through regular, direct and indirect contact with Eve. Able to observe Eve bringing happiness to classmates these students have overcome their own fears and reached out to pat or touch Eve. These small, but meaningful moments, are self-esteem building. They bring happiness to the students and are an opportunity for development, growth and learning.

Perhaps some of Eve's greatest successes could be encouraging non-verbal students to communicate with more confidence.

There have been students who started the year without language skills, but by the end of the year were using words to talk to Eve. The thing that is special about Eve is that she comes without any expectations and that's what the students respond to.







Early Years' Report

The Sycamore School Early Years' teachers concentrate on developing functionality and skills that build independence.

At the beginning of each year, time would be spent on learning the classroom routine, understanding what tasks were involved and how they were to be completed, as well as how to transition.

Classroom activities are generally a series of tasks completed at workstations. Students would rotate through the workstations throughout each classroom session.

Students enjoyed the benefits of the creative arts being brought into the classroom, delivering activities that helped improve general capabilities. These activities included music and playing instruments, dramatic role play and a range of fun, sensory sensitivity activities.

Platforms that have guided our practice:

Structured Teaching
The Zones of Regulation
Positive Behaviour Support
School-Wide Character Values
Regular Communication

Our curriculum comprises:

Respect The Spectrum (RTS)
Australian Curriculum Learning Areas
Australian Curriculum General Capabilities

All activities were guided by the Australian Curriculum and Respect The Spectrum (RTS), known as the school's 'hidden' curriculum. RTS

shapes the skills that are taught so that students can access the academic curriculum and settle into the task of learning.

Respect The Spectrum focusses on:

Communication
Social Interaction
Adaptive Behaviour
Sensory Processing
Information Processing

Additionally, all classes focus on learning how to manage their emotional state and recognise behaviours that can be identified with each of the Zones of Regulation. Teaching the students to identify and self-regulate moods, emotions and behaviours is key because through this learning students are able to ensure they are in a ready state for learning.

Teaching these skills successfully requires first building a foundation of connected, engagement; a relationship must form between teacher and student, and trust built.

By the end of 2018 the early years students were exhibiting significantly improved regulation skills and functionality. Also, students were showing capacity for consideration of others in their environment.

Clear signs of social awareness were also developing by the end of the year, including forming connections in the playground and engaging with classmates in a social context.



Phoenix's Story

Joining the Sycamore community.

Few children have a tougher start to life than Phoenix. By the time he was three, Phoenix had been diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder and leukaemia.

Fighting health fires on two fronts was expensive. Mum, Lisa, a Triple Zero Emergency Operator, and Dad Chris, a building certifier knew that early intervention was crucial, so they tapped into their local community with fundraising activity to help pay for the help Phoenix needed.

"As a result of the fundraising we were able to afford intensive, one-on-one Applied Behavioural Analysis therapy for a year and a half for Phoenix," Lisa said. The early therapy was helpful, giving Phoenix a start on early language and writing skills, but eventually the funding ran out and Phoenix was enrolled in a special needs school.

Phoenix was placed in a classroom with non-verbal children and Lisa could see this wasn't helping him develop. The school wasn't meeting Phoenix's needs and Lisa became concerned.

"It didn't feel like he was getting the support he needed. It was such a large school. It just wasn't working for him. They were doing their best, but they had their hands full and they couldn't work with Phoenix individually," she said.

"So, I spent the next two years researching, I was always searching and always googling. And that's how I found The Sycamore School," Lisa said. She knew this was where she wanted to send Phoenix and enrolled him immediately.

The only thing left for this Melbourne family to do was pack up and move to Brisbane.

"As soon as we started at the school everything changed. They started by teaching Phoenix to pack his own school bag. Just that one little thing meant so much to Chris and me," Lisa said.

Life is rarely smooth sailing and even after starting at Sycamore Phoenix had challenges to overcome. The first term was very difficult as Phoenix struggled to learn the routine and settle in to the classroom.

"It took a term for Phoenix to settle in and learn the routine but he got there," she said. "Since then, every day has been getting better and better," she said.

"We've learned strategies that help him at home. I can now sit down with him at the table and work with him on activities at home for an hour," she said.

"He knows how to regulate his emotions. He's now at the stage where he's actually labelling his own emotions which is a really big step for us. Before, it would just be him screaming at us but now he actually says, 'Sad', or when he makes angry noises, he tells us he's angry."

The Sycamore School has also brought benefits for Lisa and Chris, with the welcoming network of families in the Sycamore community.

"When we started at the intensive therapy centre, there were families there, and we've also been at the special school, but I've never felt like I do at The Sycamore School in terms of that community support," Lisa said. "It's like a family," she said.

"If anything happened to me and I couldn't get Phoenix from school I know there are families who can pick him up and bring him to me. There's that level of support there," she said.

Life is very different for Phoenix's family since they moved to Brisbane.

"Phoenix has fallen in love with this place. The first term was hard, but the second term, once he learned the routine, he was so happy. On the weekends he would get his school uniform and bring it to me and say, 'School? School?'. He wanted to go to school. We've never had that before," Lisa said.

"It's a great feeling. We feel safe. We feel that the whole thing about schooling a kid with special needs is that it's scary. You just want them to be safe and we know that he's totally safe and happy at The Sycamore School. The teachers and the staff do everything that they can to make sure everyone is safe and try to make sure all the kids are happy – it's a good environment for everyone."

"On the weekends he would get his school uniform and bring it to me and say, 'School? School?'. He wanted to go to school. We've never had that before."







Upper Years' Report

In 2018 many of the Upper Years' students were in their second year of Respect The Spectrum learnings, bedding down that knowledge and building on the foundations laid in 2017. Students were more knowledgeable and skilled at identifying their own Zones of Regulation, as well as modifying their behaviours to move themselves into a calm zone, or a ready state for learning.

Staff use social scripts and visual supports to teach the students about expected behaviours and what routines are in place. These social scripts were sent home with parents who were then part of a collaborative approach and able to help teach and prepare students at home for the upcoming classroom routines.

Throughout the school, Positive Behaviour Support underpins our practice. We ensure that language, supports and strategies are positive, proactive and constructive to achieve the best outcomes for our students. A range of motivators and rewards are established in all classes that align to the school values, to help maintain engagement, participation and connection. These expectations are always clear, consistent and explicitly taught to the students in both Connection and Zones of Regulation sessions, as well as during incidental learning opportunities.

Friday afternoons in the second half of 2018 saw the introduction of The Sycamore Clubs. These clubs were formulated around the current interests of the students at the time, such as the 'Nintendo', sensory play, Halloween and box construction clubs. These clubs were a designated structured time for students to extend on their personal interests, and foster friendships and social groups with others who share their interest. The clubs were changed regularly to ensure they best supported the needs and interests of the students at The Sycamore School. Clubs provided opportunities for students to refine social skills taught in weekly Connections sessions and to generalise the skills learnt in the classroom to other areas within their local community. Clubs were highly motivating for the students and provided an ideal opportunity for staff and students to build upon and foster relationships and connections.

2018 saw the Year 6 students design, develop and take on several leadership roles within the school. These roles included Wellbeing Officer, Environmental Officer, Visual Arts Officer and School Photographer, Technologies Support Officer and Communications Officer. These roles allowed the students to engage in a multitude of ways to support their school and its' community and to develop, refine and practice their leadership skills. Some of these roles included the set-up of environmental education programs such as Recycling and Clean Waterways Programs, peer support programs where the Year 6 students worked with their younger peers, including in extra curricula activities such as AFL Footy Frenzy program and helping during the weekly school assemblies. These leadership roles also saw students contribute to the fortnightly school newsletters providing reviews, advice columns and factual information regarding their areas of interest or expertise.



Ryan's Story

Life Changing Opportunity

For Karley Williamson, The Sycamore School was her last resort for school and a formal education for her son Ryan. From Prep to Year 3 Ryan had not settled into mainstream school and it seemed Karley's only option was to home school Ryan.

'I spent a lot of time researching educational pathways and distance education, and then another Mum told me about Sycamore. The school hadn't opened but was seeking expressions of interest from families who wanted an alternative to mainstream schooling and support for their children with autism,' Karley said.

Karley applied to have Ryan enrolled at the school and he was accepted. The day the school opened its doors for the first time, Ryan walked through the doors as a Year 4 student.

"The school has been absolutely wonderful - life changing," Karley said. "Ryan comes to school for the whole day and if there are hiccups during the day they're managed. He is able to learn from that experience and keep moving forward," Karley said. "He is building up his self-esteem and making progress," she said.

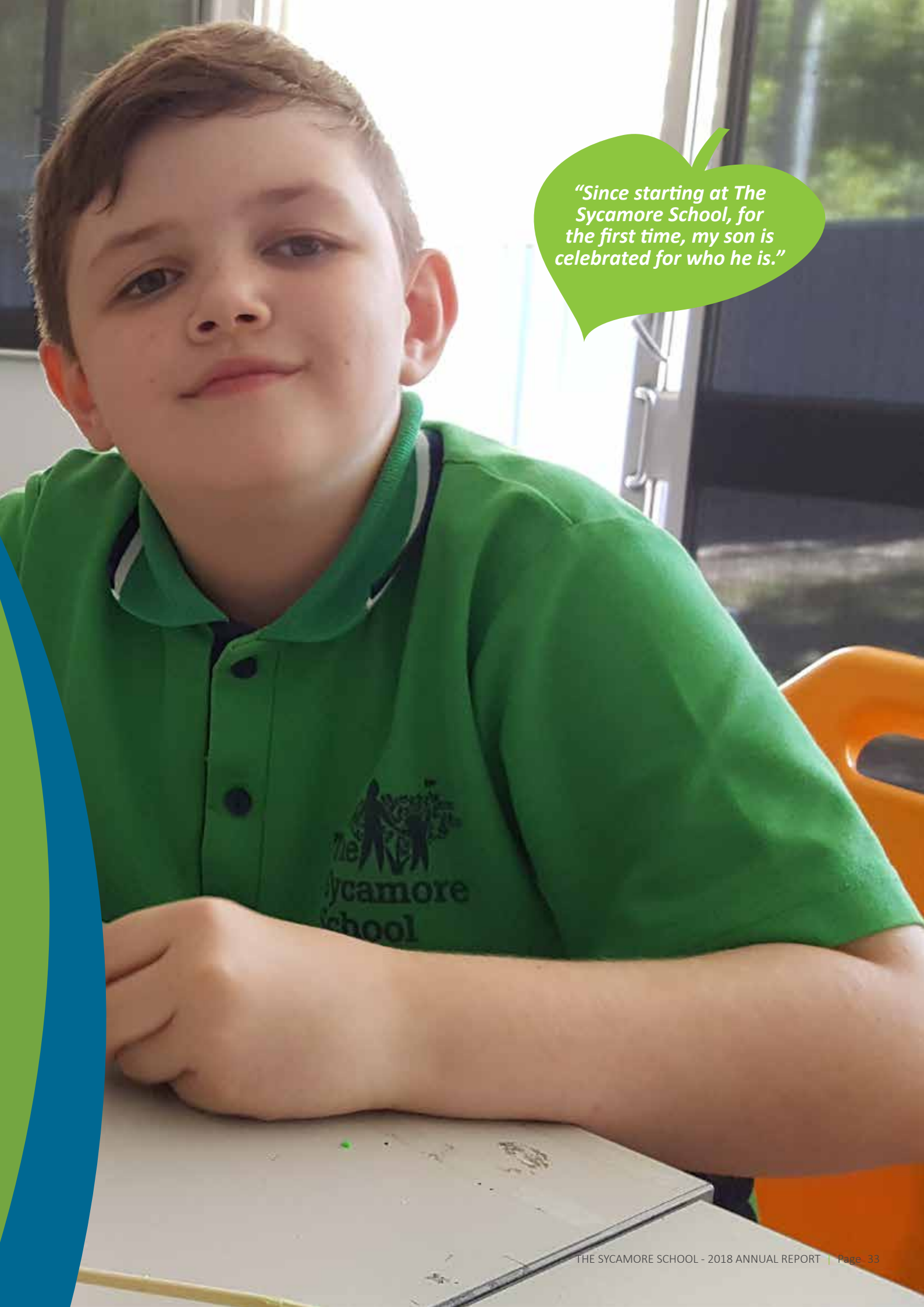
The school's impact doesn't stop at the front door when the kids go home.

"Ryan is a different child at home. Ryan is now happy and calm at home and able to listen to instructions a lot better. We still have moments, but he can listen to directions and he's more willing, more cooperative," Karley said.

"I am absolutely delighted that The Sycamore School and its vision came to fruition. It would have been difficult to home school as I would not have been aware of what was possible and completely unaware that there was a different way of approaching education," she said.

Ryan is now doing academic work for the first time. "He's now doing times tables. It amazes me. The teachers send photos of what the kids are doing. They're all sitting at their tables, sitting in their chairs, writing and doing their work. They send photos every day. I am still delightfully in awe that my son is sitting at a table holding a pencil and doing his learning."

For Karley and Ryan, The Sycamore School has been a blessing that has opened up a future of possibilities for Ryan that would have otherwise likely been out of reach. Karley said "Since starting at The Sycamore School, for the first time, my son is celebrated for being who he is".



"Since starting at The Sycamore School, for the first time, my son is celebrated for who he is."





Fundraising and Awards

Fundraising Initiatives

In 2018, The Sycamore School's key fundraising initiatives were focussed on Literacy and STEM resource development.

We would like to thank all of our donors and volunteers for their efforts in supporting our school to change the lives of our students and their families.

We raised \$57,934.00 and purchased some exciting new resources for our students!

Winning Awards and Changing the Educational Landscape



Redlands Australia Day Awards

Local Hero Award – Cindy Corrie

Our Founder and CEO, Cindy Corrie, was recognised for the help and support she has given to so many Redlands families when she opened The Sycamore School in Alexandra Hills in 2017. Cindy's tireless work advocating for those living with Autism Spectrum Disorder, and their families and carers, has earned her the Redlands City Australia Day Local Hero Award.

Westfield Local Hero Awards

Carindale – Cindy Corrie

The Westfield Local Hero Awards recognise those in the community who promote social wellbeing or inclusion through their work. Each Westfield centre names three award recipients and each one receives \$10,000 to put towards their work or their organisation.

In 2018 The Sycamore School Founder and CEO, Cindy Corrie, was recognised by the Westfield Carindale centre for her work developing autism-friendly learning through the creation of The Sycamore School.

The Sycamore School used the \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes Grant to fund STEM equipment. Many with Autism Spectrum Disorder have strong computer skills and are proficient with technology. The school is implementing a STEM program that will give its students the opportunity to develop skills required to obtain meaningful employment.

Queensland College of Teachers' Excellence in Teaching Awards

Outstanding Contribution to School Community Award Finalist – Elissa Brinckman

In 2018 Deputy Principal, Elissa Brinckman, was recognised for her outstanding work developing the pedagogical frameworks and the individualised curriculum at The Sycamore School. Her work towards creating the culture and values upon which the success of The Sycamore School is built has rightfully earned her esteem and recognition from her professional peers and the alumni at the Queensland College of Teachers.

She created a curriculum framework that adapts to the individual needs of each student, putting each student at the centre, an important factor for their success.

Elissa's work is evidence based, with informed structures and strategies that support all staff and students, as well as carers, at The Sycamore School.



Reporting Information

Descriptive Information



SCHOOL SECTOR

Independent



SCHOOL ADDRESS

Block F, TAFE Campus,
29 Windemere Road
Alexandra Hills



TOTAL ENROLMENTS

62



YEAR LEVELS OFFERED

Prep to Year 6



CO-EDUCATIONAL OR SINGLE SEX

Co-Educational



NUMBERS AND PROPORTIONS

56 Males
6 Females



PROPORTION OF INDIGENOUS STUDENTS

In 2018 there were no
Indigenous students
enrolled at the school.



CONTACT PERSON

For further information
on the school and its
policies contact
[Ronwyn Collier, Principal.](#)

Staffing Information

Staff Composition, Including Indigenous Staff

	Teaching Staff	Non-Teaching Staff
Full-Time	10	13
Part-Time	1	6
Temporary Contract	0	3
Casual	7	1
Indigenous	1	0

Qualifications of Staff

Qualification	Teaching Staff	Non-Teaching Staff
Doctorate or higher	0	0
Masters	2	1
Graduate Certificate/Diploma	3	3
Bachelor Degree	6	4
Diploma	0	5
Certificate	0	5

Expenditure on and Staff Participation in Professional Development

Participation in Professional Development (PD)

All permanent employees participated in one or more Professional Development activities throughout the year 2018. External PD opportunities were consistently promoted via email, discussion and on the PD notice board in the staff room. Staff were consistently encouraged to make applications to attend PD or sign up to online workshops. PD was also delivered by the Principal, Deputy Principal and various other members of staff addressing a variety of topics including: Team Teach, Child Protection, NDIS, Literacy, Positive Behaviour Support and Curriculum.

Category of Professional Development Activity	Teaching Staff	Non-Teaching Staff
Autism Specific	39	64
Curriculum (General)	8	13
Curriculum (Literacy)	21	28
Curriculum (STEM)	8	13
Educational Leadership	14	0
Information, Communication & Technology	0	10
Other Professional Development	3	7
Positive Behaviour Support	39	68
Student Health and Wellbeing	13	18
Workplace Health and Safety	20	26
Total	165	247

Expenditure on Professional Development

All Staff

Total Number of Staff	Total Expenditure of all Staff Professional Development \$	Average Expenditure on Professional Development per Staff Member \$
33	\$13,724	\$416
Total Funds Expended on Teacher Professional Development in 2018		\$5,480
The proportion of the staff involved in professional development activities during 2018		100%

Teaching Staff

Total Number of Teaching Staff	Total Expenditure of Teaching Staff Professional Development \$	Average Expenditure on Professional Development per Teaching Staff Member \$
11	\$5,480	\$498
Total Funds Expended on Teacher Professional Development in 2018		\$5,480
The proportion of the teaching staff involved in professional development activities during 2018		100%

Non-Teaching Staff

Total Number of Non-Teaching Staff	Total Expenditure of Non-Teaching Staff Professional Development \$	Average Expenditure on Professional Development per Non-Teaching Staff Member \$
22	\$8,244	\$375
Total Funds Expended on Non-Teaching Staff Professional Development in 2018		\$8,244
The proportion of the non-teaching staff members involved in professional development activities during 2018.		100%

Staff Attendance

Average staff attendance for the school, based on unplanned absences of sick and emergency leave periods of up to 5 days:

Number of Staff	Number of Working Days	Total Days Staff Absences	Average Staff Attendance Rate
33	198	414.26	93.6%
For permanent and temporary teaching staff and school leaders the average staff attendance rate was 92.2% in 2018.			
For permanent and temporary classroom non-teaching staff the average staff attendance rate was 93.6% in 2018.			

Staff Retention

Proportion of teaching staff retained from the previous year:

All Staff

Number of Permanent Staff at end of Previous Year	Number of these Staff Retained in the Following Year	% Retention Rate	Average Staff Attendance Rate
27	24	88.8%	93.6%
From the end of 2017 88.8% of staff were retained for the entire 2018 school year			

Teaching Staff

Number of Permanent Teaching Staff at End of Previous Year	Number of these Staff Retained in the Following Year	% Retention Rate	Average Staff Attendance Rate
10	8	80%	93.6%
From the end of 2017 80% of staff were retained for the entire 2018 school year			

Non-Teaching Staff

Number of Permanent Non-Teaching Staff at End of Previous Year	Number of these Staff Retained in the Following Year	% Retention Rate	Average Staff Attendance Rate
17	16	94.1%	93.6%
From the end of 2017 94.1% of staff were retained for the entire 2018 school year			

Student Attendance

Average student attendance rate (%) for the whole school:

Number of Possible Attendance Days	Total Number of Students	Total Number of Days Absent	Total Attendance
10930	62	1037.5	9892.5

The average attendance rate for the whole school as a percentage in 2018 was 90.36%.

Average Student Attendance Rate for Each Year Level

Average student attendance rate (%) for the whole school:

Year Level	Number of Possible Attendance Days for Year Level	Total Number of Students in Year Level	Total Number of Days Absent by Students in Year Level	Total Attendance	Average Attendance Rate for Each Year Level as a Percentage in 2018
Prep	1006	6	101	905	88.97%
Year 1	1611	9	129.5	1481.5	91.97%
Year 2	1731	10	132	1599	91.98%
Year 3	1424	8	166	1258	88.39%
Year 4	1969	11	241.5	1727.5	87.75%
Year 5	1757	10	95.5	1661.5	94.45%
Year 6	1432	8	172	1260	88.00%

Management of Non-Attendance

- In 2018 The Sycamore School had a number of young people enrolled who had previously experienced school refusal in their prior educational settings. The Sycamore School worked with these families to ensure each student was supported to attend school daily. When attendance was lacking, the Collaborative Education Team (CET) and/or Leadership Team and Social Worker would meet with the parents and student and put strategies in place to support full-time school attendance.
- Parents are asked to communicate with the school when their child is likely to be absent.
- Parents who do not notify the school are contacted so the school can follow up and support the families and student where necessary.
- If a student is absent because of an incident which occurred on the previous day the CET and/or Leadership Team and Social Worker work through a re-connection process. The re-connection process is in place to ensure the student is able to return to school and re-connect with those involved as soon as possible.
- If a student is continually absent due to school refusal the Principal and Social Worker work alongside the family and CET in order to address any underlying concerns. A return to school plan is put into place starting with the student attending a portion of the day and then lengthening the day when the student is comfortable and has enjoyed success.

The Sycamore School and the Autism Community

Our Commitment to Providing Employment Opportunities

The Sycamore School was honoured to partner with DXC Technology through the Dandelion Internship Program in 2018.

This program brings groups of autistic adults together to demonstrate their strengths and interests in coding and programming through a collaborative programming project. Some of the group will then go on to be offered employment at DXC Technology.

The project requires the internship group to program Dandy, the robot, to deliver prescribed curriculum outcomes to an audience of students at The Sycamore School.

The collaboration was a meaningful assignment for everyone involved, enabling autistic adults to gain employment, and providing Sycamore students with an opportunity to interact with outstanding role models as well as advanced educational technology.

We'd like to congratulate those in the 2018 Dandelion group who gained employment at DXC Technology.



The Value of the Autistic Voice

The Sycamore School values the lived experience of people with autism and encourages self-advocacy as part of its program. We value the depth of support an autistic mentor can bring to a student, and in 2018, The Sycamore School hosted Deklahn McAuley as a mentor for Sycamore students.

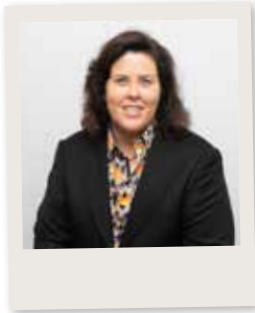
Deklahn has shown an incredible ability to relate and share his experiences with the Upper Years' students, supporting them in transitions, navigating social situations, and being a valued role model in the school.

"We've not only seen the benefits for Sycamore students, but for Deklahn also. This mentoring role has boosted Deklahn's confidence, and we're so proud to have him as a member of our school community", said Principal Ronwyn Collier.

Deklahn also supported our Board of Directors during their 2018 strategy planning meeting, providing valuable insight into his schooling journey, and his experiences in finding employment.



Board Biographies



Jodi Schmidt - Board Chair

Jodi is an experienced CEO and Board Director with a track record of successful business transformation, returning underperforming organisations to profitability and significantly enhancing shareholder value. Jodi brings strengths in governance, business development and strategy, leadership, stakeholder management, and financial management.

Jodi has been a key figure in the Australian VET sector leading a wide range of vocational education and training reforms across Queensland in her former role as CEO of TAFE Queensland. Jodi was also previously the Deputy Director-General, Training and Employment with the Queensland Department of Education, Training and Employment with full responsibility for the state's training and employment portfolio.

Cameron Corrie - Deputy Chair

Cameron is the father of a child with autism and is co-founder of The Sycamore School. Cameron has almost 20 years' experience working in an international ITC organisation as a Systems Engineer. He has a keen interest in the use of technology to assist learning for students with autism and supporting young people on the spectrum in working towards a career in ITC.



Dr Douglas Hunt - Secretary

Doug is the father to two children with autism and a member of the Regional Development Australia committee. He holds a PhD in Economics and has expertise in mine closure, cost-benefit analysis, desktop research, field research, stakeholder engagement, policy development, strategic development and strategic planning, project management and developing positive business relationships. Doug is also a registered teacher and has experience teaching students with autism.

Paul Habib - Treasurer

Paul is the grandfather of a child with autism, and has more than 40 years' experience in finance, lending and property development. Paul's experience has been instrumental in investigating and securing potential sites for The Sycamore School and in seeking Social Impact Investment to open The Sycamore School. Paul's experience has also been valuable in establishing relationships with key individuals.





David Gardner - Board Director

David holds a Federal Government appointment as a member of the Regional Development Australia Logan and Redlands Committee and also serves on the Board of the Logan Tourism Association, and the PCYC Logan City. He has previously served on the Board of John Paul College and as the corporate advisor to the Board of the Logan Country Community Bank. In 2016 he was the Australian Bureau of Statistics Logan District Manager for the 2016 Census of Population and Housing. David is also state president of an Olympic sporting organisation.

Antonia Mercorella - Board Director

Antonia is the mother of a child with autism. She is the CEO of the Real Estate Institute of Queensland and is an accomplished business leader and solicitor. Antonia brings a wealth of legal expertise and a high level of board experience to the role. Having first-hand experience of the frustrations that come with a system that has difficulties dealing with those who do not fall neatly within standard definitions, Antonia has a deep appreciation for the efforts of organisations devoted to addressing or alleviating these gaps. As such, Antonia has a personal connection to the objectives and values of The Sycamore School.



Damien Barry - Board Director

Damien has been a teacher and school administrator for over 20 years. He is a current Principal and has occupied various roles such as Deputy Headmaster, Head of Middle School, and Head of HPE, across both public and independent schools throughout Queensland. Damien has a passion to see all students achieve their potential, to be given every opportunity to find their gifts, and to lead lives of purpose.

Andrew Soter - Board Director

Andrew is the Managing Director of Open Door Consulting, a consultancy that supports business and not-for-profit organisations with political decision-making processes by connecting them with key influencers. Andrew has a personal connection with autism through adult family members who are on the spectrum. Andrew is committed to improving the futures for people on the autism spectrum.



Financial Report

Director's Report

The Director's present their report on ASD Learning for the financial year ended 31 December 2018.

1. General Information

The name of the directors in office at any time during, or since, the end of 2018 are:

Names	Appointed/Resigned
Ms Jodi Schmidt (Chair)	Appointed 1 December 2017
Mr Cameron Corrie (Deputy Chair)	Appointed 31 July 2015
Mr Paul Habib (Treasurer)	Appointed 31 July 2015
Dr Douglas Hunt (Secretary)	Appointed 20 November 2015
Mr Robert Hannaford	Resigned 27 June 2018
Mr Mark Pearce	Resigned 19 May 2018
Mr David Gardner	Appointed 28 November 2016
Mr Andrew Soter	Appointed 27 July 2018
Ms Antonia Mercorella	Appointed 8 August 2018
Mr Damien Barry	Appointed 27 July 2018

Review of Operations

The Surplus/(Loss) of the Company amounted to \$530,382. The Sycamore School is an independent school, accredited from Preparatory to Year 10. The school caters specifically for students on the autism spectrum, and was the first full-time educational program of its kind in Queensland. The school currently supports 77 students from Preparatory to Year 8.

Principal Activities

The principal activity of ASD Learning during the financial year was the advancement and promotion of education via The Sycamore School. The Sycamore School is a primary school for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) which supports its students to reach their developmental and academic potential and independence.

2. Other Items

Events After the Reporting Date

No matters or circumstances have arisen since the end of the financial year which significantly affected or could significantly affect the operations of the Company, the results of those operations or the state of affairs of the Company in future financial years.

Future Developments and Results

Likely developments in the operations of the Company and the expected results of those operations in future financial years have not been included in this report as the inclusion of such information is unlikely to result in unreasonable prejudice to the Company.

Director	Number of meetings eligible to attend	Number of meetings attended
Ms Jodi Schmidt	11	10
Mr Cameron Corrie	11	11
Mr Paul Habib	11	10
Dr Douglas Hunt	11	6
Mr Robert Hannaford	6	3
Mr Mark Pearce	5	0
Mr David Gardner	11	9
Mr Andrew Soter	4	2
Ms Antonia Mercorella	4	3
Mr Damien Barry	4	3

Indemnification and insurance of officers and auditors

ASD Learning is currently fully insured. No indemnities have been given during or since the end of the financial year, for any person who is or has been an officer or auditor of ASD Learning.

Auditor's Independence Declaration

The lead auditor's independence declaration in accordance with section 60-40 of the Australian Charities and Not for Profit Commission Act 2012, for the year ended 31 December 2018 has been received and can be found on page 5 of the financial report.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Board of Directors:

Director:

Jodi Schmidt (Chair)

Director:

Paul Habib (Treasurer)

Dated this 11th Day of April 2019

Auditors' Independence Declaration



INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF ASD LEARNING LTD

Opinion

We have audited the financial report of ASD Learning Ltd (the Entity), which comprises the Statement of Financial Position as at 31 December 2018, the Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income and Statement of Changes in Equity for the year then ended, Notes to the Financial Statements, Director's Report and Responsible Persons' Declaration.

In our opinion the accompanying financial report has been prepared in accordance with Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*, including:

- + giving a true and fair view of the registered entity's financial position as at 31 December 2018 and of its financial performance for the year ended on that date; and
- + complying with Australian Accounting Standards and Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013*.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of our report. We are independent of the Entity in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants* (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code and the independence requirements of Division 60-40 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Emphasis of Matter – Basis of Accounting

We draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared to assist the Entity to meet the requirements of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose. Our opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

Responsibilities of Committee of Management for the Financial Report

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with the financial reporting requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, management is responsible for assessing the Entity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters relating to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Entity or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Entity's financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- + Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- + Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Entity's internal control.
- + Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the directors.
- + Conclude on the appropriateness of the committee's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Entity's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Entity to cease to continue as a going concern.
- + Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with the directors regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

ACCRU⁺ HARRIS ORCHARD



BEN WILLINGTON
DIRECTOR

Dulwich, 2 May 2019

Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

	Notes	2018 \$	2017 \$
Revenue	2	3,302,212	2,851,094
Cost of Sales		46,231	25,769
Employee Benefits Expense		2,092,574	1,823,028
Depreciation and Amortisation expense		30,930	14,803
Other General Expenses		597,848	437,562
Finance Costs		4,247	53,081
Profit before Income Tax		530,382	496,851
Profit from Continuing Operations		530,382	496,851
Profit for the Year		530,382	496,851
Total Comprehensive Income for the Year		\$530,382	\$496,851

Statement of Financial Position

	Notes	2018 \$	2017 \$
Cash and Cash Equivalents	3	1,077,691	643,171
Trade and Other Receivables	4	43,279	119,289
Total Current Assets		1,120,970	762,460
Total Land, Property, Plant and Equipment	5	227,177	180,588
Total Non-Current Assets		227,177	180,588
Total Assets		1,348,146	943,048
Total Trade and Other Payables	6	349,353	341,290
Provisions		33,012	0
Syndicated Loans	7	0	166,992
Total Current Liabilities		382,365	508,282
Total Liabilities		382,365	508,282
Net Assets		965,782	434,766
Accumulated Funds - Beginning of Year		434,766	(62,085)
EBITDA-Surplus, Plus Trading Less Depreciation and Interest		530,382	496,851
Prior Year Adjustment Brought to Account		634	0
Accumulated Funds - End of Period		\$965,782	\$434,766

Statement of Changes in Equity

	Notes	2018 \$	2017 \$
Retained Earnings as at 1st January		434,766	(62,085)
Profit Attributable to Members of the Entity		530,382	496,851
Prior Year Adjustment Brought to Account		634	
Retained Earnings as at 31st December		\$965,782	\$434,766

Statement of Cash Flows

	Notes	2018 \$	2017 \$
Cash Flows from Operating Activities			
Receipts			
Tuition Fees		411,780	317,778
Grants Received		2,815,996	2,326,547
Interest Received		29	38
Other Income		68,581	154,590
Payments			
Wages		(2,051,695)	(1,800,445)
Payments to Suppliers		(571,349)	(337,949)
Interest		(4,247)	(53,081)
Net Cash provided by (used in) Operating Activities	9	669,096	607,477
Cash Flows from Investing Activities			
Capital Purchases		(77,505)	(134,296)
Net Cash provided by (used in) Investing Activities		(77,505)	(134,296)
Cash Flows from Financing Activities			
Capital Grants		9,934	2,779
Loan Drawdowns/ (Repayments)		(166,992)	(83,008)
Net Cash provided by (used in) Financing Activities		(157,058)	(80,229)
Net Increase/(Decrease) of Cash Held		434,533	392,952
Cash at the Beginning of the Reporting Period		643,171	392,952
Cash at the End of the Reporting Period		\$1,077,691	\$643,171

Note 1 - Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

(a) Income Tax

The Company is exempt from income tax under Division 50 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997.

(b) Revenue and Other Income

Revenue is recognised when the amount of the revenue can be measured reliably, it is probable that economic benefits associated with the transaction will flow to the Company and specific criteria relating to the type of revenue as noted below, has been satisfied.

Revenue is measured at the fair value of the consideration received or receivable and is presented net of returns, discounts and rebates. All revenue is stated net of the amount of goods and services tax (GST). Other income Other income is recognised on an accruals basis when the Company is entitled to it.

(c) Finance Costs

Finance cost includes all interest-related expenses, other than those arising from financial assets at fair value through profit or loss.

(d) Goods and Services Tax (GST)

Revenue, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of Goods and Services Tax (GST), except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO). Receivables and payable are stated inclusive of GST. The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the ATO is included as part of receivables or payables in the statement of financial position. Cash flows in the statement of cash flows are included on a gross basis and the GST component of cash flows arising from investing and financing activities which is recoverable from, or payable to, the taxation authority is classified as operating cash flows.

(e) Property, Plant and Equipment

Each class of property, plant and equipment is carried at cost or fair value less, where applicable, any accumulated depreciation and impairment. Items of property, plant and equipment acquired for nil or nominal consideration have been recorded at the acquisition date fair value.

Where the cost model is used, the asset is carried at its cost less any accumulated depreciation and any impairment losses. Costs include purchase price, other directly Note 1 continued attributable costs and the initial estimate of the costs of dismantling and restoring the asset, where applicable.

Land and Buildings

Land and buildings are measured using the cost model.

Plant and Equipment

Plant and equipment are measured using the cost model.

Depreciation

Property, plant and equipment, excluding freehold land, is depreciated on a straight-line basis over the assets useful life to the Company, commencing when the asset is ready for use. The estimated useful lives used for each class of depreciable asset are shown below:

Fixed Asset Class	Useful Life (Years)
Buildings	50
Furniture, Fixtures and Fittings	5-20
Motor Vehicles	8-10
Computer Equipment	2.5-4
Other Property, Plant and Equipment	5

At the end of each annual reporting period, the depreciation method, useful life and residual value of each asset is reviewed. Any revisions are accounted for prospectively as a change in estimate.

Note 1 - Continued

(f) Financial Instruments

Financial instruments are recognised initially using trade date accounting, i.e. on the date that the Company becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument. On initial recognition, all financial instruments are measured at fair value plus transaction costs (except for instruments measured at fair value through profit or loss where transaction costs are expensed as incurred).

Financial Assets: Financial assets are divided into the following categories which are described in detail below:

- loans and receivables;
- financial assets at fair value through profit or loss;
- available-for-sale financial assets; and
- held-to-maturity investments.

Financial assets are assigned to the different categories on initial recognition, depending on the characteristics of the instrument and its purpose. A financial instrument's category is relevant to the way it is measured and whether any resulting income and expenses are recognised in profit or loss or in other comprehensive income.

All income and expenses relating to financial assets are recognised in the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income in the 'finance income' or 'finance costs' line item respectively.

Loans and Receivables

Loans and receivables are non-derivative financial assets with fixed or determinable payments that are not quoted in an active market. They arise principally through the provision of goods and services to customers but also incorporate other types of contractual monetary assets. After initial recognition these are measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method, less provision for impairment. Any change in their value is recognised in profit or loss. The Company's trade and other receivables fall into this category of financial instruments.

Significant receivables are considered for impairment on an individual asset basis when they are past due at the reporting date or when objective evidence is received that a specific counterparty will default. The amount of the impairment is the difference between the net carrying amount and the present value of the future expected cash flows associated with the impaired receivable. In some circumstances, the Company renegotiates repayment terms with customers which may lead to changes in the timing of the payments, the Company does not necessarily consider the balance to be impaired, however assessment is made on a case-by-case basis. Financial assets at fair value through profit or loss.

Financial assets at fair value through profit or loss include financial assets:

- acquired principally for the purpose of selling in the near future
- designated by the entity to be carried at fair value through profit or loss upon initial recognition or
- which are derivatives not qualifying for hedge accounting.

The Company has some derivatives which are designated as financial assets at fair value through profit or loss. Assets included within this category are carried in the statement of financial position at fair value with changes in fair value recognised in finance income or expenses in profit or loss.

Any gain or loss arising from derivative financial instruments is based on changes in fair value, which is determined by direct reference to active market transactions or using a valuation technique where no active market exists.

Held-to-Maturity Investments

Held-to-maturity investments are non-derivative financial assets with fixed or determinable payments and fixed maturity. Investments are classified as held-to-maturity if it is the intention of the Company's management to hold them until maturity. Held-to-maturity investments are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method, with revenue recognised on an effective yield basis. In addition, if there is objective evidence that the investment has been impaired, the financial asset is measured at the present value of estimated cash flows. Any changes to the carrying amount of the investment are recognised in profit or loss.

Available-For-Sale Financial Assets

Available-for-sale financial assets are non-derivative financial assets that do not qualify for inclusion in any of the other categories of financial assets or which have been designated in this category. All available-for-sale financial assets are measured at fair value, with subsequent changes in value recognised in other comprehensive income. Gains and losses arising from financial instruments classified as available-for-sale are only recognised in profit or loss when they are sold or when the investment is impaired. In the case of impairment or sale, any gain or loss previously recognised in equity is transferred to the profit or loss. Losses recognised in the prior period statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income resulting from the impairment of debt securities are reversed through the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, if the subsequent increase can be objectively related to an event occurring after the impairment loss was recognised in profit or loss.

Financial Liabilities

Financial liabilities are classified as either financial liabilities 'at fair value through profit or loss' or other financial liabilities depending on the purpose for which the liability was acquired. Although the Company uses derivative financial instruments in economic hedges of currency and interest rate risk, it does not hedge account for these transactions. The Company's financial liabilities include borrowings, trade and other payables (including finance lease liabilities), which are measured at amortised cost using the effective interest rate method.

Impairment of Financial Assets

At the end of the reporting period the Company assesses whether there is any objective evidence that a financial asset or group of financial assets is impaired. Financial assets at amortised cost If there is objective evidence that an impairment loss on financial assets carried at amortised cost has been incurred, the amount of the loss is measured as the difference between the asset's carrying amount and the present value of the estimated future cash flows discounted at the financial assets original effective interest rate. Impairment on loans and receivables is reduced through the use of an allowance accounts, all other impairment losses on financial assets at amortised cost are taken directly to the asset. Subsequent recoveries of amounts previously written off are credited against other expenses in profit or loss. Available-for-sale financial assets A significant or prolonged decline in value of an available-for-sale asset below its cost is objective evidence of impairment, in this case, the cumulative loss that has been recognised in other comprehensive income is reclassified from equity to profit or loss as a reclassification adjustment. Any subsequent increase in the value of the asset is taken directly to other comprehensive income.

(g) Impairment of Non-Financial Assets

At the end of each reporting period the Company determines whether there is an evidence of an impairment indicator for non-financial assets. Where this indicator exists and regardless for indefinite life intangible assets and intangible assets not yet available for use, the recoverable amount of the asset is estimated. Where assets do not operate independently of other assets, the recoverable amount of the relevant cash- generating unit (CGU) is estimated. The recoverable amount of an asset or CGU is the higher of the fair value less costs of disposal and the value in use. Value in use is the present value of the future cash flows expected to be derived from an asset or cash- generating unit. Where the recoverable amount is less than the carrying amount, an impairment loss is recognised in profit or loss. Reversal indicators are considered in subsequent periods for all assets which have suffered an impairment loss.

Note 1 - Continued

(h) Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents comprises cash on hand, demand deposits and short-term investments which are readily convertible to known amounts of cash and which are subject to an insignificant risk of change in value. Bank overdrafts also form part of cash equivalents for the purpose of the statement of cash flows and are presented within current liabilities on the statement of financial position.

(i) Economic Dependence

ASD Learning is dependent on the Federal and State governments for the majority of its revenue used to operate the business. At the date of this report the directors have no reason to believe the Federal and State governments will not continue to support ASD Learning.

(j) Going Concern

This financial report has been prepared on the going concern basis.

Note 2 - Revenue and Other Income

	Notes	2018 \$	2017 \$
Tuition Income		450,263	414,875
School Discounts, Rebates and Scholarships		(37,163)	(38,860)
Enrolment and Application Fees		4,000	4,327
Capital Fees and Levies		9,934	2,779
Donations Received		40,000	77,188
Other Sundry Income		19,181	64,238
State Government Recurrent Grants		293,820	99,631
Other Recurrent Grant Income		421,459	322,893
Federal Government Recurrent Grants		2,100,717	1,904,023
Total Recurrent Income		\$3,302,212	\$2,851,094

Note 3 - Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash and Cash equivalents reported in the statement of cash flows are reconciled to the equivalent items in the statement of financial position as follows:

	Notes	2018 \$	2017 \$
Cash on Hand		953	242
Cash at Bank		1,076,738	642,929
Total Cash and Cash Equivalents		\$1,077,691	\$643,171

Note 4 - Trade and Other Receivables

The carrying value of trade receivables is considered a reasonable approximation of fair value due to the short-term nature of the balances. The maximum exposure to credit risk at the reporting date is the fair value of each class of receivable in the financial statements.

	Notes	2018 \$	2017 \$
Debtors - Tuition Fees		5,807	91,237
Prepayments		23,492	18,149
Stock - Clothing Shop		13,980	9,902
Total Trade and Other Receivables		\$43,279	\$119,289

Note 5 - Property, Plant and Equipment

	Notes	2018 \$	2017 \$
Furniture and Equipment		107,306	96,257
Fixtures and Fittings		86,659	61,495
Computer Equipment		73,481	32,189
Less: Accumulated Depreciation		45,551	15,256
		221,895	174,685
Plant and Machinery		6,212	6,212
Less: Accumulated Depreciation		930	310
		5,282	5,903
Total Land, Property, Plant and Equipment		\$227,177	\$180,588

Note 6 - Trade and Other Payables

	Notes	2018 \$	2017 \$
Income Received in Advance		19,000	102,000
Creditors		54,330	102,122
Accruals		221,956	72,279
Superannuation Clearing Account		15,023	0
GST Clearing Account		39,045	64,889
Total Trade and Other Payables		\$349,353	\$341,290

Note 7 - Borrowings

All existing loans were repaid in full during 2018. No new loans have been entered into.

	Notes	2018 \$	2017 \$
Tranche A - Sandhurst Trustees Ltd		0	112,842
Tranche B - Impact Investment Group		0	54,150
Total Syndicated Loans		\$0	\$166,992

Note 8 - Economic Dependence

ASD Learning is dependent on the State and Federal Governments for the majority of its revenue used to operate the business. At the date of this report the directors have no reason to believe the State and Federal Governments will not continue to support ASD Learning.

	Notes	2018 \$	2017 \$
Cash at Bank		1,077,691	643,171
Loans and Receivables		43,279	119,289
Total Financial Assets		1,120,970	762,460
Financial Liabilities at Amortised Cost - Borrowings		0	166,992
Total Financial Liabilities		\$0	\$166,992

Note 9 - Reconciliation of Result for the year to cashflows from Operating Activities

	Notes	2018 \$	2017 \$
Surplus/Deficit for the Year		530,382	496,851
Depreciation and Amortisation expense		30,930	14,803
Cash Donations - Capital		9,934	2,779
Increase/(Decrease) in Trade and Other Receivables		95,010	(97,827)
Increase/(Decrease) in Trade and Other Payables		(175,003)	128,763
Increase/(Decrease) in Accruals		182,689	72,279
Increase/(Decrease) in Super Clearing		15,023	(4,613)
Total Cashflow from Operations		\$669,096	\$607,477

Note 10 - Members' Guarantee

The Company is incorporated under the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 and is a Company limited by guarantee. If the Company is wound up, the constitution states that each member is required to contribute a maximum of \$10 each towards meeting any outstanding obligations of the Company.

Note 11 - Key Management Personnel Disclosures

The totals of remuneration paid to the key management personnel of ASD Learning during the year are as follows:

Gross Pay		
	2018 \$	2017 \$
Short Term Employee Benefits	\$350,587	\$371,745

Note 12 - Related Parties

The company's main related parties are as follows:

Key Management Personnel: Any person (s) having authority and responsibility for planning, directing and controlling the activities of the entity, directly or indirectly, including any director (whether executive or otherwise) of that entity are considered key management personnel.

The Directors of ASD Learning are not remunerated.

The related parties within the Board of Directors are the Treasurer and Deputy Chairperson who are related to the CEO.

Note 13 - Company Details

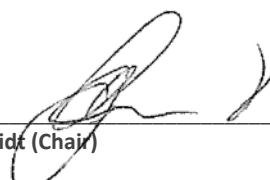
The registered office of and principal place of business of the Company is:

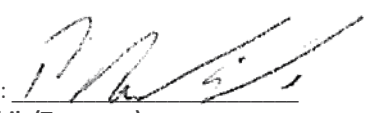
The Sycamore School
Block F, 29 Windermere Road
Alexandra Hills QLD 4161

Note 14 - Responsible Persons' Declaration

The responsible persons declare that in the responsible persons' opinion:

- There are reasonable grounds to believe that the registered entity is able to pay all debts, as and when they become due and payable: and
- The financial statements and notes satisfy the requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission Act 2012. Signed in accordance with subsection 60.15(2) of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission Regulations 2013.

Director: 
Jodi Schmidt (Chair)

Director: 
Paul Habib (Treasurer)

Dated this 11th Day of April 2019





Thank you to each of our students, staff members, parents and carers, volunteers, community supporters and friends for all you have done to make 2018 such a wonderful year of progress and development!







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