

Amaze

(Autism Victoria)



Amaze (Autism Victoria Inc)



Annual Report

2012-2013

Amaze (Autism Victoria Inc)

About Amaze

Amaze (Autism Victoria) is a member-based not-for-profit organisation and is the peak body for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in the state of Victoria.

Our Vision

That all people affected by ASD have the best quality of life outcomes possible.

Our Mission

To provide information, advice and support to individuals, families and professionals; to advocate for systemic change; to establish networks, links and communities; and to provide training and accreditation to support services.

Our Core Values

- ▶ Integrity
- ▶ A Person-Centred Approach
- ▶ Inclusiveness
- ▶ Excellence
- ▶ Accountability
- ▶ Courage



fulfilling
life's
potential



“

It seems that for success
in science or art,
a dash of autism
is essential

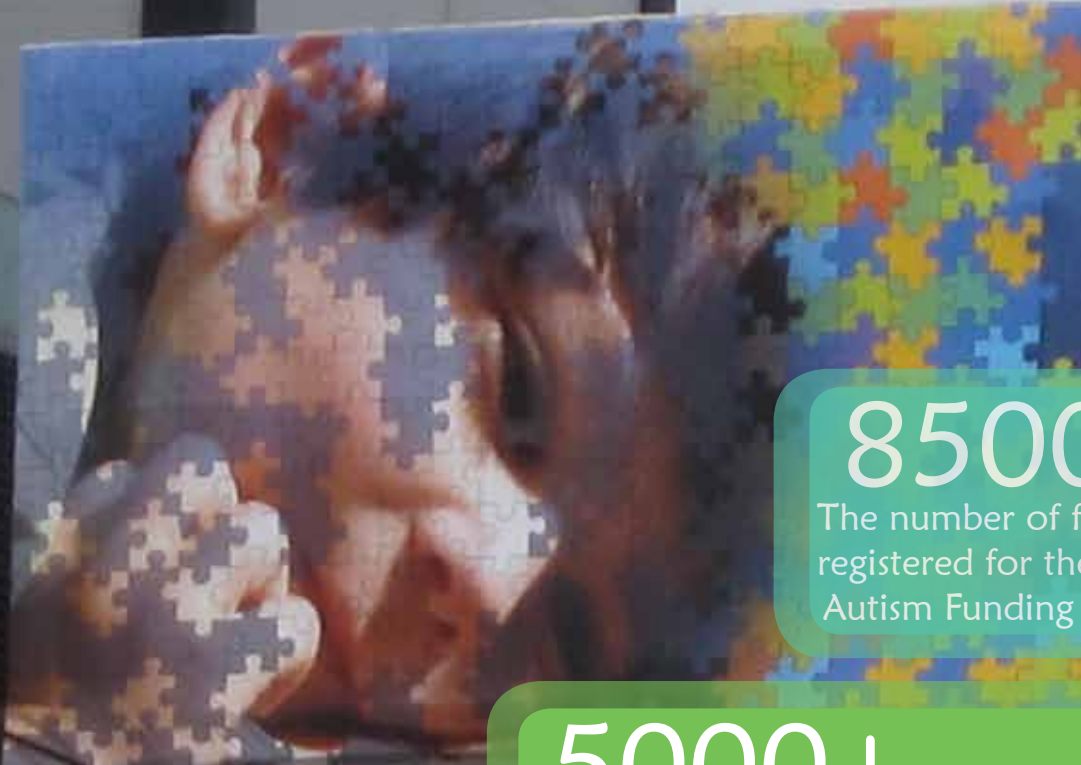
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Hans Asperger

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Amaze in Numbers



8500

The number of families registered for the Autism Funding

5000+

The number of people joining in the walk on World Autism Awareness

4500

The number of parents and carers who attended an Early Days workshop

356

The number of schools that received the Supporting Differences Program



108,000

The number of people who visited the Amaze website

55,000

The estimated number of Victorians who have Autism Spectrum Disorder

25,000

The number of contacts the Information services assisted

Life is a maze when you have Autism
Families who have
e Helping Children with
since it started in 2008

he
Day

Life is a maze when you have Autism
World Autism Awareness Day - April 2nd
Check amaze.org.au for local event details
Be Autism Aware

Background Photo: Amaze outdoor ad in Elizabeth Street,
made possible by Independent Outdoor Media (IOM)

Our Chair

Michele Carson

It is my pleasure to present the 2012-2013 Chair's report on behalf of the Board of Amaze; a year of challenges and great achievements; of review and future opportunities.

This year the board undertook a major strategic review and planning process, culminating in the 2013-2015 Strategic Plan which will soon be available on the Amaze website. The Board's approach was rigorous, and considered the many factors that will affect the organisation over the coming years. With the changing disability landscape, our strategies include diversifying our income streams to ensure our long-term viability; ensuring the range of services for members and the broader community continues to grow and adapt to their changing needs.

The introduction of the NDIA continues to be a major influence in the disability sector. Amaze is aware of the currently unfolding nature of the scheme and is involved in working parties and reference groups related to its roll out.

The challenge is to keep abreast of what the NDIA will deliver for individuals with ASD, monitor the scheme as it unfolds and ensure the needs of these unique individuals are met, and adapt within our organisation to continue to support individuals with ASD and their carers in the new disability landscape.

Our organisation is blessed to have dedicated and committed staff members. This year saw that dedication and perseverance put to the test when our CEO Murray Dawson-Smith faced a major health challenge, which saw him step out of his role for 5 months. Murray handled his circumstances and the needs of the organisation with the dignity, grace and professionalism that he demonstrates every day in his role. I would like to commend our staff, team leaders and managers who always give 100% and, without missing a beat, stepped up, above and beyond their roles.

Thanks to Dianna Heggie, former CEO of Scope, who stepped in to lead the staff and steer the organisation in Murray's absence, and Val Spence who managed the transition back to Murray.

The New Year saw Murray back in full health, thankfully, returning with his legendary energy and enthusiasm to guide our organisation forward. On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank Murray for continuing to have the vision to develop Amaze into an ever further-reaching organisation, delivering positive outcomes for individuals and organisations.

The Board navigated many changes throughout the year, with a focus on future strategy and organisational governance. Towards the end of the year, we reviewed the organisation's constitution to bring it in line with legislative amendments, and our organisational and governance policies and procedures were overhauled.

At the 2012 AGM, Craig Shallard, Elizabeth Renn and Dennis Crowley retired and Professor Bruce Tonge stood for re-election. I'd like to thank each of them for contributing their time and expertise to the organisation. It is most appreciated.

With the re-election of Professor Bruce Tonge (Health



and Policy), the election of Dr Katrina Williams (Health and Policy) and Shannon Eeles (Social Policy & Systemic Advocacy), and the secondment of Julie Abeynaike (Finance), I'm confident the Board's broad skill base will provide the robustness, vitality and adaptability the organisation requires.

Early in 2013, Deputy Chair Anne Mustow took maternity leave: congratulations to Anne and her husband who are the proud parents of bouncing twin boys. Jane Evans was seconded to Anne's role, bringing skills in law and governance. I'd like to thank Jane who has been instrumental in steering the board through the changes to the constitution.

On a sad note, we lost a colleague in August with the passing of our Deputy Chair Ursula Smith. Ursula was a passionate advocate for systemic change across every aspect of life to ensure support and inclusion for individuals with ASD. Ursula's passing is a sad loss for Amaze and the sector as a whole and we extend our sympathy to her family.

I'd like to thank each Board member for their patience, energy, expertise and the time they have contributed throughout the year. We are fortunate as an organisation to have such a dedicated team.

On behalf of the Board, I'd like to acknowledge and thank our many enthusiastic volunteers. Without you we would not be able to create a wider awareness and understanding of Autism and its impact and we would lose the sense of community and togetherness built by your involvement.

Change can be difficult and confusing but it is in rising to the challenge and adapting that we find the most growth. We are constantly inspired in this by our members. As individuals, families and organisations, you mark our path forward with your determination to implement positive change in your daily lives. We thank you for your perseverance, your stories, your feedback, your influence and your support.

Transitioning through this time of change, it is heartening to look back and reflect that the challenges of the last year have resulted in Amaze broadening its scope: advocating for the community; lobbying government; delivering vital information for individuals, carers, families and organisations; engaging our members in more diverse events; influencing policy and practice; and ultimately, hopefully, making a positive difference to people's lives. The future continues to look bright.

Our CEO

Murray Dawson-Smith



I have great pleasure in bringing this report to members, on the 2012-13 year: with much change on the horizon, and some personal turmoil, this year has been one of highs and lows on both a personal and professional level.

One of the major events for the year was the Victorian Autism Conference 2012 which reached 1,150 delegates in 9 locations across the state. All four conference streams were received live at all locations thanks to our regional partners, with some venues at capacity. This community event provides an opportunity to share quality information with the whole ASD community and was very well received.

Many of you will know that 2012-2013 was a difficult year for me personally: just prior to VAC 2012, I was diagnosed with cancer and required urgent treatment. The Board were very supportive during this time and took immediate action to appoint Diana Heggie to the acting role until my return.

Diana had been CEO at Scope as well as other major not for profits in the disability area and stepped into the role without delay and with the skills and knowledge to continue the projects already under way.

This year was a very important year for the disability sector as a whole with the announcement from the Labour government of the National Disability Insurance Scheme to be launched in a limited number of sites on 1 July 2013, including the Barwon district in Victoria. Amaze has monitored progress, attended information events and kept members informed as far as possible throughout the year on this important change and will continue to do so in the coming year.

A major new initiative, Supporting Differences, funded by the Victorian State Department for Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD), got under way with program development during the first half of the year and trialling and delivery in the second half. This project aims to develop better understanding and inclusion of all types of difference across primary and secondary schooling.

With support from DEECD and in conjunction with the Community Childcare Association of Victoria, we also developed a resource for childcare, family day care and holiday program staff to support positive inclusion of children with ASD in these services.

Amaze received funding from the Federal Department for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) to produce a resource for families with young children to help them better understand the role and types of therapy. The resultant TherapyConnect was launched shortly after the end of the year.

In an effort to support a group that is often overlooked, Amaze ran a camp for those aged 11 to 18 who have a sibling with ASD. The BIG Weekend took place at The Portsea Camp, and thanks to their support and funding from the RadioMarathon Appeal and the Jack Brockhoff Foundation, a subsidised price of \$60 meant it was within reach for most people. We were pleased with the



feedback in pre- and post-event surveys which indicated a lasting positive effect from the weekend for those who attended and their families.

World Autism Awareness Day was celebrated in April with a walk finishing at Birrarung Marr with an array of booths, food, activities and entertainment. An estimated 5000 people attended and this is helping keep ASD firmly in the minds of our politicians.

In May, the long-awaited updated version of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, DSM-5, finally arrived. The abolition of the sub-categories of Autism introduced in DSM-IV is the most significant change with 'Autism Spectrum Disorder' now the term used by DSM-5 for all previous sub-types. From a practical point of view, it is too early to know the impact on the ASD community and it is something we will be monitoring closely.

In the year ahead, we anticipate more change to the organisation in view of the National Disability Insurance Scheme and the lead up to the state election in 2014.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Board, and particularly the Chair, Michele Carson, for their support during this very difficult year for me. We are very fortunate to have the calibre of board members that we do, who show a passionate interest in our community and a high degree of commitment to their roles. You will no doubt have read of the untimely passing of our Board Secretary, Ursula Smith, in August this year. Her support of Amaze will not be forgotten.

I would also like to again thank staff for their commitment and dedication to supporting individuals and families. The staff do a remarkable job in very challenging situations, and without their dedication much that we do could not be achieved.

Finally, I would like to thank all our members for their ongoing support of Amaze through their membership, their advice, involvement and all manner of support, without which this member-based organisation would not exist.

The Board of Governance

The Amaze Board of Governance is made up of nine elected members and is a skills-based board. Board membership is a 3 year term and each year, three positions come up for election. At the 2012 AGM, Professor Bruce Tonge was re-elected to the board, and new board members were Julie Abeynaike (Finance), Shannon Eeles (Social Policy and Systemic Advocacy) and Dr Katrina Williams (Health & Policy). In February, Anne Mustow took leave from the Board and Jane Evans was seconded to fill her position until her return.



Michele Carson, Chair

Qualifications: Diploma of Fine Arts – Graphic Design, Victoria College

Experience: Michele has extensive experience in the graphic design, marketing and communication sectors having established and managed a number of successful business enterprises. Currently active in managing change for organisations, individuals and teams in both public and private sectors: specialising in organisational strategy development and planning, marketing strategy, team effectiveness and performance management.

Special Responsibilities: Board Chair; Chair - Marketing & Communications

Anne Mustow, Deputy Chair

Qualifications: LLB. Bachelor Commerce, Grad. Dip. Applied Finance and Investment (FINSIA), Member Aust. Inst. Co. Directors

Experience: Anne is a senior lawyer with 14 years experience with Blake Dawson, becoming an equity partner in 2002. Currently Legal Affairs Manager with Bunnings.

Special Responsibilities: Finance, Audit & Risk



Graeme Wickenden, Treasurer

Qualifications: B.Bus., Grad Dip I.T., Grad. Dip. Finance and Investment, FCPA

Experience: Graeme has an extensive background in accounting and finance; he has held a broad range of finance-related positions at GMH, NAB, Dunn and Bradstreet, Aviva Financial Services and St Vincent De Paul Aged Care and Community Services. Currently he is employed as the CFO for the Villa Maria Society.

Special Responsibilities: Chair - Finance, Audit & Risk

Emeritus Professor Bruce Tonge

Qualifications: M.B., B.S., MD, DPM, MRCPsych., FRANZCP, Cert.Child & Adolescent Psychiatry RANZCP

Experience: Professor & Head of Psychiatry, School of Psychology and Psychiatry, Monash University; Senior Clinical Advisor to the Mental Health Programme, Southern Health, Monash Medical Centre. Distinguished record of research, teaching and clinical service in child psychiatry focussing on mental health problems, intellectual disability, ASD and anxiety/depression in young people.



Catherine Wyatt

Qualifications: Bachelor of Medicine

Experience: Catherine has been a General Practice Doctor for over 25 years and has been active in the local community having served on her local school council and sat on the Boards of two Aged Care facilities.

Special Responsibilities: Social Policy & Research



Julie Abeynaike

Qualifications: BEC, CA

Experience: Julie is a chartered accountant with extensive corporate and financial accounting experience accumulated during 20 years with multinational FMCG's and consulting companies. She is currently working at 3D Systems Asia Pacific.

Special Responsibilities: Finance, Audit & Risk





Shannon Eeles

Qualifications: B NursSc (Hons)

Experience: Shannon has worked with children with ASD and their families for over 10 years. She is the Founder and Director of the Centre for Inclusive Schooling of Children with Autism (CISCA) and is co-founder of the IDEA Program and the Little Learners Autism Program. Shannon's special areas of interest include education and public policy.

Special responsibilities: Board Secretary; Marketing and Communications; Social Policy & Research

Jane Evans

Qualifications: LL.B (Hons), B.A.

Experience: Jane is a lawyer with over 15 years experience in corporate and commercial legal practice in Australia, Hong Kong and the UK. She was a partner of leading law firm Mallesons Stephen Jaques (now King & Wood Mallesons) until 2008. Jane serves on boards in the not for profit sector and is currently also a director of Not For Sale Australia Limited.

Special Responsibilities: Governance



Dr Katrina Williams

Qualifications: paediatrician and public health physician; PhD about autism

Experience: Katrina is APEX Australia Chair of Developmental Medicine, University of Melbourne; Director, Developmental Medicine, Royal Children's Hospital; Honorary Research Fellow, Murdoch Children's Research Institute; for more than 15 years, actively involved in the development of new knowledge, synthesis of existing evidence, establishment of population data and promotion of evidence into practice and service delivery, especially in relation to autism and other developmental disability; current Chair, Advisory Panel for Australasian Society for Autism Research (ASfAR), Board Member, Australian Autism Advisory Board; panel member for the AMAZE accreditation panel.

Special Responsibilities: Social Policy & Research



Ursula Smith, Secretary

Qualifications: B. Arts, B Social Work, Diploma of Teaching

Experience: Ursula has extensive experience in the teaching field with particular emphasis on Special Education. Has worked extensively in both New Zealand and Australia. Holds the volunteer position of Deputy Chair of the Frankston Council Disability Access and Inclusion Committee.

Special Responsibilities: Chair - Social Policy & Research



Vale Ursula

We are very sad to report that Ursula lost her long and brave battle with cancer in August this year. The Board wishes to express their gratitude to Ursula for her commitment to the organisation and to individuals with ASD for whom she was a strong advocate.

"Ursula's work on the policy and technical documents in the lead up to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) on behalf of individuals with ASD was one of her major achievements during this time. She applied a rigorous and methodical approach to this undertaking to ensure an outcome that will be a lasting testament to her, and one which future generations will be benefit from," says Murray Dawson-Smith, CEO of Amaze.

Ursula is survived by husband Perry, son Isaac and daughter Arielle.



“Amaze always has an answer”

I've found that Amaze always has an answer to my questions: especially in the early days when my little boy was diagnosed, I could ring and get some suggestions on where to go for help with different things. When you first receive a diagnosis it can be overwhelming, and I found it very comforting to be able to call and talk to someone who could help me. Even if the answer was 'no', at least I could feel confident that the Amaze staff knew what they were talking about!

The library has been a great help, both in those early times and also further down the track with support for our daughter – she's a bit older than our son, and the librarian was able to give me a good selection of books for her to read. We've sent our daughter to the BIG Weekend too – we see this as the next stage of finding support for her. She's really looking forward to going.

Overall, what I find is that Amaze is always there for us. It's very reassuring to just know that I can call any time if I need to – and if I don't need to call, the magazine and website are there too.

Sarah

Supporting

The ASD Community

The Amaze Vision, 'that all people affected by ASD have the best quality of life outcomes possible' guides our activities.

Over the year, we have worked with this in mind to support the ASD community in a variety of ways and at many levels. Activities have included the following.

Victorian Autism Conference

The biggest event on the calendar for Amaze in 2012-13 was the Victorian Autism Conference 2012 - VAC.

As in 2010, the conference was run from Melbourne with all four conference streams broadcast live to eight venues across Victoria, enabling those individuals and professionals living in rural and regional Victoria to attend locally.

Professor Tony Attwood, Carol Gray and Sue Larkey gave keynote presentations, as well as the Petty family from New Zealand, with son Jonathan entertaining the audience with a medley of Australian music on the piano.

Delegates also had the opportunity to see a range of products and services on display, visit poster presentations and network with others.

BIG Weekend - Camp for Individuals who have a Sibling on the Spectrum

A new event in the 2012-13 year was the 'BIG Weekend', a camp for those aged 11 to 18 with a sibling (or more than one sibling) on the spectrum.

Research showed us that there was a great deal of interest in an event of this type and indicated that at \$60, all but one respondent would find it affordable.

This was made possible thanks to the Portsea Camp providing their facilities at cost, and the Jack Brockhoff Foundation and the RadioMarathon Appeal providing grants to cover hire of buses, staffing and other expenses.

Surveys were carried out with parents/carers and participants both before and after the event, with the results indicating a positive ongoing effect for those who attended and their families, through better understanding, improved tolerance and a realisation that they are not alone.

[Opposite: BIG Weekend participants enjoy the beach.]

[Left: World Autism Awareness Day 2013]





World Autism Awareness Day

The focus of this year's event was to provide an opportunity for all individuals with ASD of all ages to attend a public event where they could feel completely at ease, knowing that everyone there would show understanding towards them.

The event included a walk from the Boathouses across the river, finishing at Birrarung Marr with a range of activities, food and entertainment.

City of Melbourne regulations no longer allow a balloon release, so walkers had flags to carry and 30 white doves were released.

TV personalities, Tom Gleisner, comedian, and George Calombaris from Masterchef, were with us for the afternoon and music was provided by Declan Sykes and the Dukes of Debonaire.

The ASD community was there in force with an estimated 5000 people attending the event.

Community Support for Individuals with ASD

Amaze continues to work with groups and organisations to provide better access to activities and events that are taken for granted by the wider community.

Sensory-friendly Movies

In 2012-13, Amaze partnered with Village Cinemas to screen sensory-friendly movies at a number of their outlets. This began in September and was very well received with good attendance at most venues: as a result Village continued to schedule them on a monthly basis throughout the year, extending to both Saturday and Sunday mornings for the last 6 months.

Variety Christmas Party

Amaze was given the opportunity to invite 100 children to the annual Variety party for children who are disadvantaged or have a disability. The response was overwhelming and all places were taken up.

Sensitive Santa

Highpoint Shopping Centre (part of the GPT group) approached Amaze to trial a visit to Santa for individuals with ASD. The InfoTeam provided training and support so that the relevant staff were well prepared. Feedback on this trial was very positive and we are optimistic of an ongoing relationship with GPT.

LEGO™ Fun

The Melbourne Lego User Group provided a small quantity of free passes to attend a preview of the BrickVention LEGO convention in January.

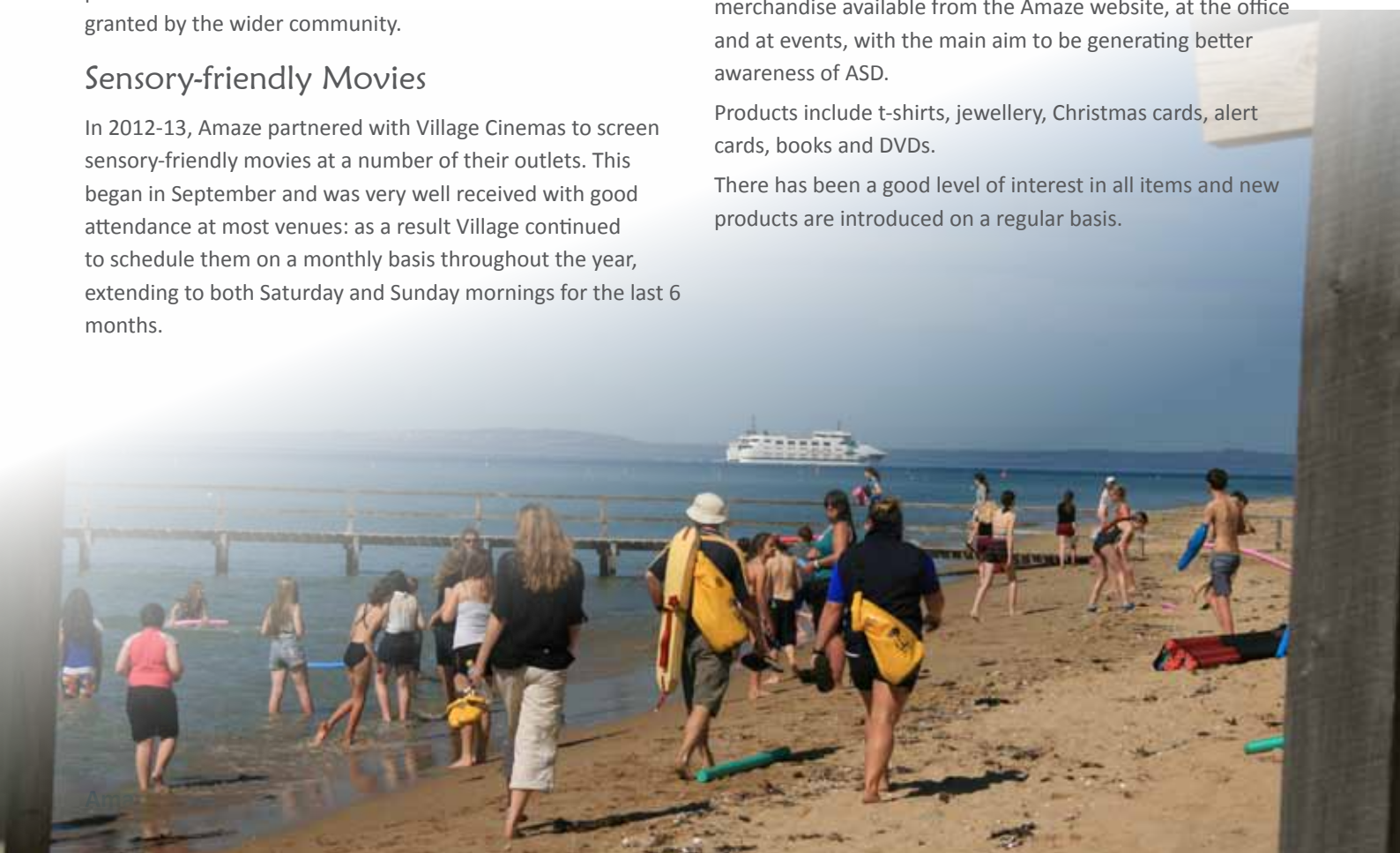
Amaze is committed to continuing to seek out ways that we can partner with others to enable those on the spectrum to take part in community and public events as others do.

Sales of Merchandise

In 2012-13 Amaze launched a range of ASD-awareness merchandise available from the Amaze website, at the office and at events, with the main aim to be generating better awareness of ASD.

Products include t-shirts, jewellery, Christmas cards, alert cards, books and DVDs.

There has been a good level of interest in all items and new products are introduced on a regular basis.





“Funding helps”

At 3 my beautiful son, Leo was using mainly single words. Now almost 5, our amazing speechie, Betty Mihelakos, has taught him how to talk. Starting with weekly private speech sessions last year and moving onto a speech and social skills group this year has seen him make great gains in his expressive language, and confidence. Leo also has a fantastic OT, Michelle Beneke whose kinder visits this year have assisted him greatly in play skills and socialising with the other kids.

Case in point:

Leo to friend who shouted at him. “When you used your loud voice my ears hurt and I felt sad.” Friend’s response, “Sorry Leo.” In that moment I knew he was going to be ok. FaHCSIA funding made these sessions possible (worth every cent and more!) and I am now much more confident about sending him to school next year.

Thank you to Amaze and all the parents who lobbied to make this funding possible in the first place.

Dione



“It was life changing”

Hi my name is Sam and I would love to share my story about the help I received from the Autism counselling service.

I contacted Amaze earlier in the year asking for help. My 8 year old was suicidal, refusing to go to school (or leave the house) and running away from home.

It was lovely to be listened to and not spoken down to. They understood my concerns and gave me strategies to help not just me but my son too. It was life changing.

Thank you Amaze and your counselling service. You were there for us when we had no idea where to turn for help.

Sam

Supporting

Individuals & Families

Amaze works in partnership with Federal and State Government to deliver a range of programs to help those with ASD.

Autism Advisor Program

One of these is the Autism Advisor Program which administers the ‘Helping Children with Autism’ funding provided by the Federal Department for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA).

The 2012-2013 financial year saw the Autism Advisor team assist over 2,200 children to access the Helping Children with Autism funding for children aged 0-6. By the end of June, the team had registered over 8,700 children for the package since its introduction in October 2008 and applications remain steady.

The year saw some staffing changes, with two Autism Advisors taking maternity leave and new team members being welcomed in their place. A change to the structure with Team Leader, Carla Stagles, managing the group, provided greater focus on the day-to-day running of the service and the support of staff to give the best service possible to families accessing the HCWA package.

Resources & Materials

The team constantly looks for ways to provide families with information and support beyond their initial contact with their Autism Advisor and the development of resources to assist families is an important part of the role.

Staff members developed a “how-to” video showing families how to navigate FaHCSIA’s website to search for HCWA providers.

The team updated the ‘Helping Children with Autism Information Booklet’ and feedback indicates that this guide is a great help to families.

Autism Advisor Forum

In March, three team members attended the Autism Advisor Forum in Adelaide, meeting with counterparts from all states and territories and representatives from FaHCSIA, to share information, hear updates to the program, discuss challenges and develop networks. In addition to updates



Supporting Individuals & Families

about the upcoming launch sites for the NDIS, Dr Giacomo Vivanti delivered a presentation on the recently released Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), which is one of the diagnostic tools used to assess ASD.

TherapyConnect

TherapyConnect is a resource that guides families through the therapy process, outlines what they can expect and describes what the various FaHCSIA-funded therapists do.

This project has been run by the Autism Advisor team with Rhiannon Memery taking on the role of Project Manager.

By the end of the financial year, the project was in its final stages and awaiting a final review from experts and parents. Special thanks go to the entire Autism Advisor team who supported this project and especially the internal working party led by Rhiannon Memery and assisted by Kelly Tucker, Carla Stagles and Lia Castorina.

Also completed this year was an information resource for the Australian Advisory Board for Autism Spectrum Disorder, designed to give information about ASD and services available for individuals with ASD up to the age of 25 to families and professionals. This has proven to be a valuable resource and is available through the state ASD associations.

Early Days Program

The Early Days workshop program is a national program for parents and carers of children aged 0-6 who have ASD or who are currently undergoing a diagnosis. Amaze is funded by FaHCSIA to run the program in Victoria.

During the 2012-13 year, changes were made to the staffing, moving to one full time coordinator with a number of casual staff employed to cover regional areas such as Mildura and Echuca, as well as metropolitan areas. This takes advantage of relationships that these staff have in their local areas and reduces time spent travelling.

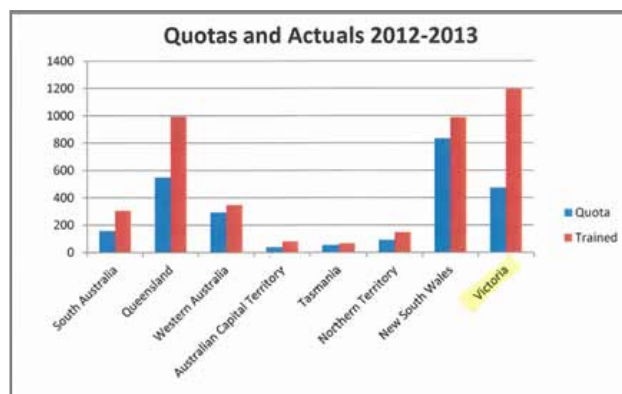
As well as being delivered in the traditional face-to-face workshop setting, the team has also offered them by phone and Skype, enabling us to reach more families.

The Early Days program offers interpreters for families where English is not the main language spoken at home. During the year, the team delivered sessions in thirteen different languages including Mandarin, Vietnamese, Hindi, Somali, Turkish and Auslan.

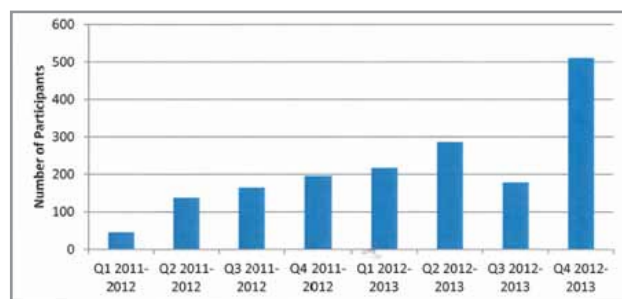
The Early Days team delivered workshops to indigenous families through the Yappera Childcare Centre, the Aboriginal League Club, and the Gathering Place in Maidstone.

In addition to the introductory workshop, the team provides sessions on behaviour, early interaction, play and social learning, everyday skills and progression to school.

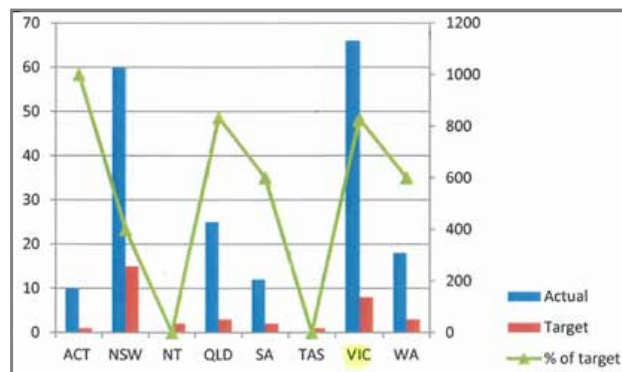
The team exceeded targets set by FaHCSIA for the 2012-13 financial year and in the last quarter, Victoria had the highest rate of culturally and linguistically diverse attendees of all states, as well as the highest number of attendees for the whole year.



Victoria Quarterly Performance



Culturally & Linguistically Diverse Attendees April-June 2013





“That decision was made with more confidence because of going to that workshop...”

My daughter has Asperger’s and will be starting high school next year.

I was attending an Amaze workshop this year in Melbourne about schooling kids on the spectrum.

I happened to be sitting beside another adult with whom I was having a conversation regarding mainstream high schools and my concern about getting this decision right.

She told me that she had attended the high school that I was hoping that my daughter would go to. Her next words will stay with me for a long time. She told me that she “wouldn’t be too sure if she would still be alive if it wasn’t for this school, it changed my life!”

She then went on to tell me that she too was on the spectrum with Asperger’s..... If I hadn’t been at this workshop I would have missed having this incredible conversation with this very interesting parent. I still get goose bumps when I think about the intensity that this lady spoke of about this school. That decision, of which high school to choose, was made with more confidence, because of going to that workshop.

Deb

Supporting Individuals & Families

(From previous page)

Information Services

Intensive Information Services

Amaze received funding from the Department of Early Childhood Development (DEECD) and the Department of Human Services (DHS) to run the intensive information and family counselling service.

This service continued to provide a very important service to the ASD community and the work of the staff is regularly validated in feedback.

The staff also provide family Information sessions on a variety of topics that are useful to parents, carers and individuals with ASD. These have been running monthly and this year, evening sessions have been introduced.

InfoLine

The Infoline phone information service is open to all. Callers may be individuals, parents, carers, family members, practitioners, educators, residential workers, GPs and anyone else living or working with a person with ASD.

Enquiries cover topics from toileting to finding employment, and from locating an understanding dentist to finding a suitable holiday location.

The InfoLine staff responded to many thousands of requests for assistance during the 2012-2013 year.

Information Booths & Talks

The InfoTeam staff attend forums, community events, expos and conferences to help increase awareness and understanding of ASD across the state, attending around 20 events in the year.

The staff also provide a 1 hour free information talk to community groups, delivering around 40 for the year.

Information Materials

The InfoTeam staff continue to add to the resources available, with new Information Sheets on those topics that come up frequently. During 2012-13, a number of new sheets were developed on subjects such as toileting and information for grandparents.

Directory of Services

This internal database of autism-aware and autism-specific products and services continues to be an important source of information provided to callers to the InfoLine.

The InfoTeam maintained this resource and continued to add to it over the year.



Support for the Education Sector

In 2012-13, Amaze received funding from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) to develop programs to support individuals with ASD in the school system.

USB Teachers' Tool

The DEECD commissioned Amaze to produce a tool that teachers and other school staff could access with ease that would give them valuable strategies and information to support their teaching and the learning of students with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

The 2012-2013 year has been one of development for this tool, which is expected to be presented to all schools in Victoria in USB form. Content was developed for both primary and secondary schools and this work will continue in the new financial year.

Supporting Differences Program

In 2012, Amaze secured funding from DEECD to develop a program to assist and enhance positive relationships between children on the spectrum and their peers in mainstream school settings: the 'Supporting Differences' program was born.

The program consists of 5 streams to suit the differing needs of children from Prep to Year 12.

As part of the program, Amaze facilitated 21 free professional development sessions for teachers across Victoria to discuss ASD and issues around bullying, giving teachers practical strategies to manage difficulties that may arise in schools.

In the latter part of the 2012-13 financial year, staff delivered the program to students across Victoria. Feedback from those receiving it has been very positive.



Supporting Professionals



Amaze Certification Services

Amaze Certification Services (ACS) provide organisations with Autism Spectrum Disorder standards in three areas: Early Childhood, Education, and Adult.

There were some significant changes in the certification department, with a name change in May this year. Previously known as Amaze Accreditation, the change came about as a result of the service beginning the process to become a certified body under the Joint Accreditation for Australia and New Zealand (JAS-ANZ) accreditation system.

Initially, ACS had been providing organisations with formal certification against Amaze's autism specific standards for early childhood, education and adult services. Once complete, JAS-ANZ certification will enable the organisation to provide certification against the Victorian Department of Human Services Standards and the internationally recognised ISO 9001:2008 Quality Management Systems Standards.

Working in partnership with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD), 10 schools began the process to become certified against the ASD Education Specialist Standards. Several adult services have also begun the process.

The ASD standards themselves have been undergoing a review as part of ACS's own commitment to continual self-examination and improvement. It is anticipated that the changes will simplify the certification process for clients.

Additionally, ACS began developing 'Inclusive Practice Standards' to help organisations outside the disability sector to reflect on their practices and implement systematic change to genuinely include all people.

ASD Case Consultant Practitioner Program

The Autism Spectrum Disorder Case Consultant Practitioner (ASD CCP) program is funded by the Department of Human Services (DHS) to build capacity and provide ongoing support to DHS-funded disability services and DHS-funded community service organisations. Each region in Victoria has an ASD CCP, and Amaze facilitates the project in two regions: the North West and Eastern Metropolitan Regions.

Individual Service Support

The ASD CCP program offers phone and email support to a number of organisations across the regions. This financial year the program introduced secondary case consultancy to



“It either is or it isn’t”

I was 34 years old when I got my diagnosis of Asperger’s Syndrome. I was given the diagnosis of Asperger’s Syndrome but not Disorder.

I had been seeing psychologists and counsellors on and off over the years, knowing something was wrong, but nothing ever really fit. I went to the neuropsychologist to get a definitive answer, because after doing a couple of tests on the internet and some research I believed it sounded like me.

Getting my diagnosis was a relief to me, but it also was very confusing. I did more research. I tried to contain my anxiety, which had turned obsessive. I couldn’t get rid of the thought. How could I have Asperger’s but not have Asperger’s?

I found Amaze on the internet because I researched local places where I might be able to talk to someone who knew something about Asperger’s. Luckily for me I found a Family Counsellor at Amaze and she was straight to the point. She read the report I’d been given by the neuropsychologist, she told me she couldn’t give me an answer but she could get the psychologists who were on the premises to give me their opinion based on the report. She left the room after asking if that was ok, and then she came back. All I wanted was an answer either way. It was driving me crazy. I’m not joking.

She came back in the room and told me that the psychologists believed that I had Asperger’s. I was relieved. I had an answer. Something either is or it isn’t. Life is too confusing for me without having ambiguities like that.

Having a membership with Amaze has given me many opportunities to understand that it’s ok to be me, and that there are other people who have similar issues and that it’s just the way we think. Utilising the books and DVDs through the Library has also been a phenomenal help to me. There are most certainly people that have greater issues to deal with on the spectrum, but I’m just glad to have an answer and support whenever I need it from a voice that knows about Asperger’s or what is now called ASD.

Lynda

Supporting Professionals

(From previous page)

eligible organisations, a valuable resource for services to discuss one-on-one cases and develop individual plans with external support.

Community of Practice and Forums

The North West Metropolitan region was host to four Community of Practice meetings which focused on topics of interest to the disability support community, such as mental health, ageing, trauma and transition.

The North West Metropolitan region was also host to two forums, which were longer in duration and attracted a larger audience, to hear about the National Disability Insurance Scheme and service change management.

Speakers gave their time to facilitate the Community of Practice and to speak at the Forums, and Amaze would like to thank everyone involved for their generosity in providing their expertise and sharing their resources.

Representation

The ASD CCP represented Amaze on a number of professional networks throughout year, many of which represent key stakeholders within the sector. These include:

- ▶ Aspect Victoria Northern Advisory Panel
- ▶ Mental Health Practitioners Network - Point Cook Autism Interest Group, Balwyn Autism Interest Group, Northern Autism Interest Group
- ▶ Eastern Disability Services Network
- ▶ Eastern Metropolitan Regions Respite Network

Resources, Projects and Communication

The ASD CCP program was involved with a project run by the Office of the Senior Practitioner around the use of GPS technology and those who elope (abscond).

The ASD CCP took part in reviewing a number of information resources after the arrival of the DSM 5, and providing resources suitable for families and service providers, as well as originating new resources in conjunction with the InfoTeam.

In collaboration with the ASD CCP in the Southern Metropolitan Region, a Metropolitan eNewsletter was launched. This quarterly newsletter assists services that cover the entire metropolitan region to access event, information and resources specific to their local region.

[Opposite: Fiona runs the CoP Forum]

Amaze Knowledge - Registered Training Organisation

Amaze Knowledge is a Vocational Education & Training (VET) provider, and has been registered with the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA), allowing delivery of accredited training within Victoria and Western Australia: the organisation must abide by the VRQA Guidelines and the Australian Qualifications and Training Framework (AQTF) Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration.

In June, Amaze transferred registration to the national regulator in Australia, the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA), allowing delivery of accredited training nationally. Amaze must now comply with requirements of the VET Quality Framework, which includes the Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisation 2012.

Amaze Knowledge conducts all training off site. We are very grateful to The Autism Teaching Institute in Flemington which provided facilities for the Amaze training until December last year. From January 2013, training moved to The Melbourne Multicultural Hub in Elizabeth Street, which offers staff and students close proximity to the Amaze office, the CBD and public transport.

During the 2012-13 year, 71 people attended the training unit, which was run on 7 occasions, including 60 DHS-funded participants via the ASD-CCP program.

Professional Development

This fee-for-service programme provided 50 training opportunities for a variety of different organisations, ranging from a 3 hour general Introduction to ASD, to more tailored

“Very informative, has helped me realise how my clients can process information in so many different ways and how I can now try new ways to communicate effectively with them!”

“Great practical ideas - great to know about the range of therapies/strategies, most of which I can utilise in my practice. Resources helpful also.”

“Gained a good introduction to Autism, the content was very useful and informative for someone with limited understanding in the core areas of mental health. The trainer’s style really suited me. Great mix of information and entertaining presentation.”

specific training lasting anything from 3 hours to 2 days.

Clients included:

- ▶ Sports and Recreation
- ▶ Home and Community Care
- ▶ Education, including Higher Education and Training
- ▶ Day Services and Disability Services
- ▶ Churches & Community Groups
- ▶ Not-for-Profit Organisations
- ▶ Peak Bodies
- ▶ The Health Sector, including Mental Health
- ▶ Culture and Arts
- ▶ Other Registered Training Organisations

The training met the needs of people working with individuals of all ages and abilities on the Autism Spectrum.

Amaze Research Database

The Amaze Research Database links individuals and family members interested in being involved with ASD research, with local researchers undertaking this important work.

The database contains over 500 people and assisted 46 research projects to locate participants during the year.

Annual ASD Research Forum

In November 2012, the ASD Research Community met at Darebin Arts Centre to hear local researchers presenting their current projects, both students and longer term researchers. The forum grew this time to offer two streams to accommodate the number of proposals submitted.

Advertising & Promotion

Amaze provides a number of channels for businesses to promote ASD-related products, services and events, including:

- ▶ The Spectrum Magazine - display and classified advertising,
- ▶ The online calendar for ASD-related events
- ▶ The eSpectrum newsletter
- ▶ Sponsorship and exhibition opportunities at VAC
- ▶ Listings in the Directory of Services

During the year, many businesses have taken advantage of these channels for the benefit of the ASD community.



Our Members

Thank you to everyone who has joined or renewed their membership during the 2012-2013 year - your support helps us to help the ASD community. The more members Amaze has, the greater our influence and our ability to represent the needs of our community.

Improved Membership Categories

Amaze Membership underwent some major changes in 2012-13, beginning the year with the launch of new membership categories to better reflect the needs of the different groups.

Education Membership categories were introduced to provide for individual teachers or teacher's aides, small schools, larger schools and educational institutes such as universities or schools with multiple campuses.

Professional Membership categories were extended to include individual and organisation options and Individual Membership was overhauled.

Two year membership options were introduced as well as an option to pay by direct debit.

At the same time, benefits for members were improved with adjustments made to suit the different member types.

The Spectrum Magazine

The Spectrum committee is a cross-functional team, with staff from all departments sharing their knowledge and expertise across a range of aspects of ASD.

During 2012-13, themes for the four issues were 'A Healthy Mind', 'The Trials of Change', 'ASD and the Five Senses' and 'Getting on Well in Life'.

Each issue aims to provide content for individuals and families, people working in the education field, and practitioners and other professionals associated with ASD.

The cover features the artwork of an individual with ASD and we are very grateful to all those individuals who have allowed us to display their work. We are very proud to share it with the ASD community.

Classified and display advertising continued to play an important part in covering some of the costs of production.

Feedback indicates that the Spectrum magazine continues to be widely read and appreciated.

Amaze ASD Library

The 2012-13 year saw a full-time librarian in the Amaze ASD Library allowing visitors to speak to a professional between 9.30am and 4.30pm every week day.

During the year, the library loaned around 1500 items, or around 30 per week. The resources continue to have a high collection turnover rate, higher than a typical public library, as the collection is small relative to the number of loans made.

Funds from the 1000 Books Campaign (which finished at the end of the previous year) were used to continue to add to the collection with multiple copies of popular titles, new titles, DVDs and professional resources, including a reference copy of the DSM-5.

The top 5 most popular items were each borrowed between 23 and 24 times during the year.

The Library now has its own iPad for visitors to use to check out a range of apps for ASD before purchasing their own copy.

During the year, contacts were made with a number of libraries to help them develop resources for the ASD community across Victoria, and we intend to continue this in the new financial year.

Intensive Information & Counselling

Many members took advantage of the free access to counselling sessions with our highly qualified family counsellors who specialise in ASD related issues. For many people, it is the first time that they have been able to open up about their issues, whether it be as an individual with ASD or as a parent with a recent diagnosis for their child, and the feedback is reflective of the value of this service.

This team also runs the monthly Family Information Sessions for members. As well as hearing about topics such as puberty, sibling issues, anxiety and school issues, individuals and parents can meet and get to know one another.

The membership team continues to seek value for members through special offers, free tickets to events and access to products or services of interest to members. A membership survey in early 2013 provided very useful insight into what members wish for and we are working on a number of initiatives for the new year.



To our supporters...

Thank you!



Whilst Amaze received funding from DHS, DEECD and FaHCSIA for some of our services, there are many other things that we do that could not be done without the generous support of donors and fundraisers.

Thank you to everyone who supported Amaze during the 2012-13 year - your support, whether it be financial or other, is essential to the existence of the organisation.

We have received support in the form of donations, fundraising, volunteering, support in kind and cheques out of the blue.

Your gifts of time, talents and money are all gratefully received and appreciated.

Philanthropic Trusts/Grants

Amaze was very grateful to receive the following funding from philanthropic sources during 2012-2013:

- ▶ Norman, Mavis & Graeme Waters Perpetual Trust
- ▶ Vera & William Houston Memorial Trust - 3 year grant to develop a program of parenting skills for parents with ASD

Fundraising

Amaze was the grateful recipient of funds from:

- ▶ Giants of the Bay swimmers in Australia's longest open water swim, who raised just over \$18,000
- ▶ Richard Bird, our knight in shining armour, who took part in a variety of fun runs in support of Amaze
- ▶ Andrew Payne who ran 100km in 'Oscar's 100' and raised over \$11,000
- ▶ Everyone who took part in Run Melbourne, The Melbourne Marathon Festival, Around the Bay in a Day and the City2Sea races
- ▶ Grant Siedle who made a valiant attempt at crossing the English Channel
- ▶ The New Melbourne Browncoats who donated \$6,000 from their annual fundraiser
- ▶ The many retail outlets who have had a fundraising pot on their counters throughout the year
- ▶ Individuals who have taken a tray of merchandise to sell
- ▶ All others, too numerous to mention, who have supported Amaze throughout the year

Ongoing Support

We are very grateful for the long-term support from the following people:

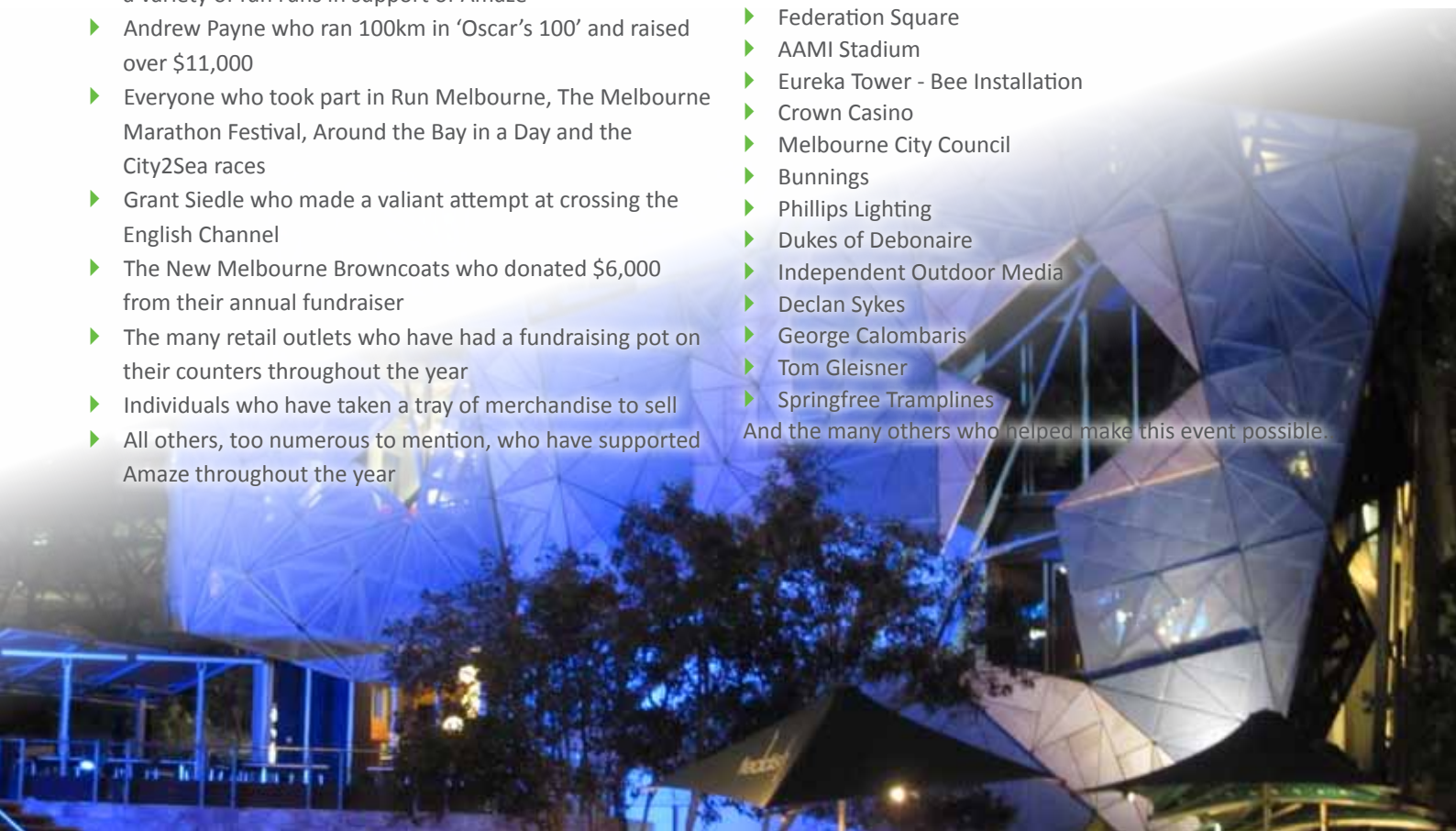
- ▶ Professor Margot Prior AO, for her continued Patronage of the organisation
- ▶ Members of Amaze's Professional Research Associates Group who provide input into our annual Research Forum
- ▶ Val Spence and Dr Lawrie Bartak for their continued assistance with the Amaze Certification program
- ▶ Prof. Tony Attwood, Prof. Tony Charman, Charlene Tait and Nigel Vernon who have continued to act as thought leaders to the Amaze Knowledge RTO
- ▶ Deloitte who have supported the organisation on their Impact Day for the last four years
- ▶ The Monash Volunteer Centre who has directed volunteers to us
- ▶ The many support groups all around the state who provide a wonderful service to individuals and families living with ASD

Light it up Blue - World Autism Awareness Day

Amaze is very grateful to the individuals and organisations who supported the World Autism Awareness Day event and the Light it up blue campaign, including:

- ▶ City West Water
- ▶ Federation Square
- ▶ AAMI Stadium
- ▶ Eureka Tower - Bee Installation
- ▶ Crown Casino
- ▶ Melbourne City Council
- ▶ Bunnings
- ▶ Phillips Lighting
- ▶ Dukes of Debonaire
- ▶ Independent Outdoor Media
- ▶ Declan Sykes
- ▶ George Calombaris
- ▶ Tom Gleisner
- ▶ Springfree Trampolines

And the many others who helped make this event possible.





“It was amazingly comforting to realise his behaviour was both normal and expected...”

I am the partner of a man who has a 17-year old son with Aspergers. His son lives in northern Queensland with his mother and family. He is a very well-behaved and polite boy. Because of the distance, my partner only sees his son for a few weeks a year but speaks to him regularly, almost every day.

Because we don't live with his son and don't have a lot of first hand experience with him (except for what is relayed to us from his mum and sister), and he usually behaves quite well when he is staying with us, it's really difficult to gauge how to deal with him during his 'melt-downs' and to fully comprehend how Aspergers determines so many things in his day to day life.

After a particularly bad 'melt-down' in Queensland and one that required my partner to deal with him via the phone, I consulted the internet to find some sort of organisation who could give us an insight into what causes him so much intense anxiety, anger, moodiness and his obsessive nature.

I emailed Amaze and received a response the next day and she organised for us to have a meeting with her. The meeting was invaluable. Despite what we all can read on the internet and the amount of literature that my partner and I had read, it was amazingly comforting and such a relief to realise that my partner's son's behaviour was both normal and expected under the circumstances.

She was more than willing to speak with my partner's ex-wife in Queensland if she desired and she followed up with us regularly via email as to our progress. We became a financial member of Amaze and I have enjoyed receiving both the regular magazine and emails.

We still have a long way to go and I know that my partner, his ex-wife and I are concerned about their son's future with work, university, relationships and so on. However, it is a great comfort to know that there is an organisation we can contact if we need some more advice.

Anna

To our Volunteers...

Thank you!

Over 2012-13, the volunteer database topped 200 people who we can call on to help when needed.

In August, around 60 volunteers put their hands up to assist with running VAC 2012 in Melbourne and at the eight venues around Victoria: this assistance helps keep costs under control so that ticket prices remain affordable.

In November we welcomed a team from Deloitte for their annual 'Impact Day'. Deloitte has supported Amaze every year for the past 4 years by providing a team of around 8-10 people to assist with a variety of tasks.

Also in November, the Forest Hill Lion's Club voted to donate half the proceeds from their annual Christmas raffle to Amaze, and we were delighted to have 25 volunteers taking a turn to sell raffle tickets at the Forest Hill Shopping Centre with the Lion's Club members.

In April, for World Autism Awareness Day, around 80 volunteers assisted as marshalls, collectors, activity coordinators and in a variety of other roles, helping ensure a successful and safe event for all those attending.

We have also been fortunate to have a number of volunteers help us in the office with administrative tasks either on a one-off or a regular basis.

Without the assistance of volunteers, we would not be able to run many of these events or complete these tasks. Their support and hard work is of ever increasing importance and value to Amaze and we are extremely grateful to them.

[Below: Volunteers Elaine and Danielle]



To our donors...

Thank you!



During the 2012-2013 year, Amaze received donations from many private individuals and organisations:

- ▶ New members and renewing members who included a donation with their membership fees
- ▶ Gifts in memoriam from individuals and families

- ▶ Gifts in their will (bequests)

- ▶ Gifts in celebration of marriages and special birthdays

Thank you to everyone who supported Amaze by making a donation. Below is a list of individuals and organisations who supported Amaze during the year.

Individual Donors

Emma Stirling
Emmanuel Marin
Erin Davie
Euan Kilpatrick
Evi Wisel
Family Hartwig
Fleur Lyburn
Frances Huxham
Freda Bishop
G Blobel
Garry Dickson
George Duncan
Gino Corsini
Glenn Wilson
Graeme Ilbery
Grant Siedle
Gwenda Ruwoldt
Haig Mansourian
Heather Hallett
Helen Stanyer
Helen Tatsis
Helen Wilkinson
Henry Quek
Howard Gibson
Hung Pham
I & H McDonald
Ian & Bronwyn Myers
J & B Weeks
J & N Whelan
Jan Tanner
Janet Akers
Janine Cottom
Jaqui Lucas
Jennifer Drake
Jo Moxon
Jodi Cammarano
Jodie Faralla
John & Sheryle Byron
John Anderson
John Dale
John Scott
John Van Der Meer
Joseph Roth
Joseph Yardin
Josephine Canals
Julia Romaniotis
Justin Castelan
Karen Maree
Kenny
Kate Mathias

Kate Romaniotis
Kathleen Moate
Kathryn Vankuyk
Ken Lehmann
Kosta Kagiarios
Leigh Hunt
Linda Andrews
Lisa Cozens
Liz Launder
LM Evans
Louise Corney
M Antolini
Maiko O'Reilly
Maree Schapendonk
Margaret Attwood
Margaret Butt
Margaret Swallow
Marie Goodall
Mark Rowe
Mary Whelan
MB Williamson
Melissa Hinder
Michael Collins
Michel Hermence
Michelle Borowski
Michelle Reichenberg
Mim Roberts
Monica Clarke
Mr & Mrs Buckingham
Mr & Mrs Fredericks/
Kristof
Mr & Mrs Miliankos-King
Mr Burgess
Myra Tyrrell
N Kiker
N Spruyt
N&D Bowden
Nick Borradaile
Noni Davis
Pam Jensen
Paola Parigi
Patricia Forbes
Patricia Varga
Paul Gibney
Paul McCallum
Paul Merco
Pauline Cocks &

Family

Peter & Helen Johns
Peter & Mary Palezza
Pip Else
R Artini
RA Amarant
Raymond Garrata
Rebecca Rose
Renate Kendall
Rev E Alfred
Rick Bierens
Rita Brizzi
Rob & Jenny Cherubin
Rob Boschetti
Rob McLeigh
Robyn Batey
Robyn Wilson
Rosa Feng-Yin Lin-Chen
Rosalie Mauseth
Ruby Talbot
Russell Rowe
Sally & Alan Baker
Sally-Anne Jones
Salwa Aly
Sandra McDonald
Sarah Cannon
Seegi Quek
Silvana & Elio Micheli
Slav & Tina Racuniga
Stacey McLeod
Steven McVicar
Su Stimming
Sue Barron
Sue Heffernan
Suzanne Will
Tania & Chris Boon
Tania Hawthorne
Val Henderson
Venetia Papalaskaris
Walter Sartori
Warren Gibson
Warren May
Wendy Sammells

Organisational Donors

Alfred Nuttall Kindergarten
All Natural Advantage
Aon Charitable Foundation
Australian Health Service Alliance
AustVending Pty Ltd
Autistic Family Support Association
Balios Pty Ltd
Barristers Logistics
Bimbo Deluxe
CAF Charities Aid Foundation
Emerald Fruit Barn
Estate of Beatrice Louise Glascodine
Ethical Buying
Footprint Books
Gunnensen (Feed the Addiction Charity Fund)
International CEO Forum
Intimo
Ligeti Partners
Lion's Club McCrae & District
Lion's Club of Forest Hill
Luther College
Magistrates Court of Victoria
Matching Gifts - Westpac Group
Melbourne OPC Social Club Charity Account
Melbourne Welsh Church
Methodist Ladies College
Mobile Ice Creams
Moorabbin Timber Pty Ltd
Moore & Stephens Melbourne Pty Ltd Trust Account
MWH Australia
New Melbourne Browncoats Inc.
Norman, Mavis & Graeme Waters Perp Charitable Trust
Old Orchard PS
Order of the Eastern Star - Kew Chapter No. 90
Oz Dev Inc
Parkdale Primary School
Quiksilver
Ritchie Stores Pty Ltd
Ten For Ten Australia
The Bouverie Centre
The Redemptorists Majellan Publications
United Way
Village Homewares
VMIA
Wesfarmers Limited
Whitfield and District Golf Club
Wonderland Play & Party Centre

Thank you to all others who made a donation to support the work of the organisation.

The Amaze Staff

During 2012-13, Amaze has continued to be staffed by a group of highly dedicated people who have a wide range of skills and qualifications, as well as a desire to help the ASD community.

All staff have the opportunity to be involved with projects outside of their main area of work and this has the dual advantage of enabling the organisation to deliver more than it otherwise could, and giving staff the opportunity to learn and experience areas of work that they might not otherwise be involved in.



Autism Advisor Program & Family Counselling

The Autism Advisor team has continued under the management of Lia Castorina. This year Carla Stagles has been appointed to the Team Leader role to provide day to day support for the team.

Staff include Eliza Skinner, Kym Phillips, Pia Wrafter, Rhiannon Memery, Claudia Piscitelli, Kelly Tucker, Christina Hamblin, Liz Alexander and Jaron Vince.

Members of this team have also worked on the TherapyConnect resource with Rhiannon Memery heading the project.

From early in the year, Lia took over management of the Family Counselling Service, with Stacey Aroutzidis, Jo White and Pia Wrafter.



Marketing, Communications, Membership & Information

Fran Ludgate has continued to manage the Marketing & Communications team, which includes Cath Pettitt, reception/membership, Maria Moren, membership/library and Emily Kilsby, marketing.

During the early part of the year, the RTO and Information Service were separated to allow the Amaze Knowledge staff to focus on the training requirements and the InfoTeam members on the InfoLine. Fran took over management of the Information Team, which has seen a lot of change over the year.

We said good bye to Shawn Stevenson and Leah Lonsdale after Christmas, and to James Keith in April. Christina Hamblin joined us at the beginning of the year and Sasha Lilford rejoined Amaze for the third time in March. Late in the year, the team was completed with Katie Greig and Janet Bailie. As the InfoTeam role is a very demanding one, the staff are all part time: this new strategy gives us a great range of expertise and knowledge whilst maintaining good working conditions.



Early Days, Amaze Certification Service, Supporting Differences & Projects

Melissa Webster took over the management of Amaze Certification at the beginning of the 2013 financial year with Christina Jasem and Leah Lonsdale working with her. She also took on management of the Early Days Program, staffed by Mary Keith and Jen Bearham for the first half of the year and by Mary and a panel of providers for the second half of the year. This is a new model of staffing that enables the organisation to employ skilled people across Victoria and reduce the amount of travel required by the team.

At the beginning of the year, Sarah Law joined the Amaze team to manage two USB projects providing ASD knowledge to the education sector.

Supporting Differences is run by Amaze on behalf of the Department for Education and Early Childhood and was staffed during the year by Christina Jasem, Nichole Deane and Joanna Hastwell.



Finance

Finance is managed by Adnan Sert with part time assistance from Tamara Varughese.

Amaze Knowledge, Registered Training Organisation (RTO)

During the early part of the year, the RTO and Information Service were separated and the RTO team is now headed up by Joanne Templeton, with support from Fiona Ransley and Grace Miano.

ASD Case Consultant Practitioner (CCP) Program

Fiona Ransley is the ASD CCP for the North West Metro and Eastern Metro areas, running meetings, forums and training events for ASD practitioners across those areas.

Below: some of the staff from Amaze outside the office in Drummond Street. From left: Fran, Leah, Emily, Joanne, Sarah, Tamara, Kym, Rhiannon, Christina H, Maria, Grace, Pia, Kelly, Eliza, Cath, Carla, Adnan. Missing from photo: Murray, Stacey, Christina J, Jaron, Katie, Liz, Lia, Fiona, Mary.



Directors' Report

Autism Victoria Incorporated

ABN 15 600 724 949

Your directors present this report to the members of Autism Victoria Incorporated for the year ended 30 June 2013.

Directors

The names of each person who has been a director during the year and to the date of this report are:

Name	Date appointed	Date of cessation	Number of meetings attended	Number of meetings eligible to attend
Michelle Carson (Chair)	17 Nov 08		11	14
Anne Mustow	23 Nov 11		9	9
Graeme Wickenden	17 Nov 08		12	14
Ursula Smith	23 Nov 11		13	14
Prof Bruce Tonge	28 Nov 12		9	14
Dennis Crowley	17 Nov 08	28 Nov 12	5	6
Elizabeth Renn	23 Nov 11	1 Oct 12	1	3
Catherine Wyatt	24 Nov 10		11	14
Craig Shallard	24 Nov 10	28 Nov 12	1	6
Julie Abeynaike	28 Nov 12		8	9
Shannon Eeles	28 Nov 12		8	9
Katrina Jane Williams	28 Nov 12		4	9
Jane Evans (secondment)	27 Feb 13		4	5

No director receives any remuneration, directly or indirectly, for serving as a director of Autism Victoria.

Principal Activities

The principal activities of Autism Victoria during the financial year were to engage in activities that may directly or indirectly benefit, enhance or enrich the lives of people who have an Autism Spectrum disorder and their families or carers. This includes providing advice, support and advocacy and acting as an authoritative and independent expert on issues relating to autism.

There were no significant changes in the nature of the principal activities during the year.

Operating Result

The operating result for the year was a surplus of \$271,386 (2012 surplus \$5,965).

Review of Operations

Significant features of the year's operations have been:

- Total revenue for 2012/13 was \$3,485,712 (2012 \$2,366,944)
- Government grants for the year totalled \$2,378,445 (2012 \$1,672,164)
- Donations received were \$198,895 (2012 \$362,341)
- Total operating expenditure was \$3,214,326 (2012 \$2,360,979)
- Salaries and on costs amounted to \$2,050,513 (2012 \$1,625,194)

Indemnity and Insurance of Directors and Auditors

During the financial year, the Department of Human Services met all the costs of insuring all Directors, past and present, against liabilities for costs and expenses incurred by them in defending any legal proceedings arising out of their conduct while acting in the capacity of Director of Autism Victoria.

During the financial year, Autism Victoria has not paid a premium to insure the auditors against liabilities for costs and expenses incurred by them in defending any legal proceedings arising out of their conduct whilst acting in the capacity of auditors of Autism Victoria.

Events Subsequent to Balance Date

On 21st August 2013 Autism Victoria director Ursula Smith passed away. Ursula was a director of Autism Victoria since November 2011 and chaired the Board's Social Policy and Research Committee.

There were no other events of a material nature subsequent to Balance Date.

Environmental Issues

Autism Victoria has assessed whether there are any particular or significant environmental regulations which apply. It has determined that the risk of non-compliance is low and has not identified any compliance breaches during the period.

Directors' Benefits

No director of Autism Victoria has, since the end of the previous financial year, received or become entitled to receive a benefit by reason of a contract made by Autism Victoria or related corporation with a director or with a firm of which they are a member or with a company in which they have a substantial financial interest.

Court Proceedings

There have been no applications for leave of Court to bring proceedings on behalf of Autism Victoria or intervene in any proceedings to which Autism Victoria is a party for the purpose of taking responsibility on behalf of Autism Victoria for all or any part of those proceedings. Autism Victoria was not a party to any such proceedings during the year.

Indemnity and Insurance of Directors and Auditors

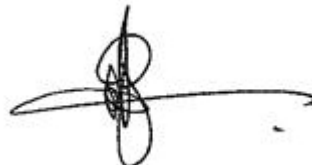
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During the financial year, Autism Victoria has not paid a premium to insure the auditors against liabilities for costs and expenses incurred by them in defending any legal proceedings arising out of their conduct whilst acting in the capacity of auditors of Autism Victoria.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Directors.



Michele Carson
Chairperson



Graeme Wickenden
Treasurer

Date: 3 October 2013

Date: 3 October 2013

Autism Victoria Inc

ABN: 15 600 724 949

Independent Audit Report to the members of Autism Victoria Inc

Report on the Financial Report

We have audited the accompanying financial report of Autism Victoria Inc, which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2013, the statement of income and expenditure and other comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, notes comprising a summary of significant accounting policies, other explanatory notes, and the certification by members of the board on the annual statements giving a true and fair view of the financial position of the association.

Directors' Responsibility for the Financial Report

The director of the association is responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards – Reduced Disclosure Requirements and the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 and for such internal control as the committee determines is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Those standards require that we comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial report. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgement, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial report 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. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial report.

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

Opinion

In our opinion, the financial report of Autism Victoria Inc is in accordance with the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (VIC), including:

- i. giving a true and fair view of the association's financial position as at 30 June 2013 and of its performance for the year ended on that date; and
- ii complying with Australian Accounting Standards - Reduced Disclosure Requirements.

Saward Dawson Chartered Accountants



Tim Flowers
Partner

Blackburn VIC

Date: 3 October 2013

Financial Summary



Statement of Income & Expenditure & Other Comprehensive Income

For the year ended 30 June 2013

Revenue	2013	2012
State & Federal Government Grants	2,378,445	1,672,164
Donations & Fundraising Income	198,895	362,341
Member Subscriptions	92,810	66,968
Interest Received	65,961	70,016
Conference Income	415,301	-
Goods, Services & Other income	334,300	195,455
Total Revenue	3,485,712	2,366,944
Expenditure		
Cost of Goods Sold	27,816	21,830
Employee Benefits Expense	2,050,513	1,625,194
Service Delivery Expenses	497,927	167,879
Consulting Expenses	154,084	10,897
Operating Lease Expenses	95,188	84,747
Fundraising Expenses	44,596	181,158
Depreciation Expense	34,537	36,346
Bad Debts	3,046	-
Property Expenses	26,027	22,910
Other Expenses	280,592	210,018
Total Expenditure	3,214,326	2,360,979
Surplus for the year	271,386	5,965
Other Comprehensive Income	-	-
Total Comprehensive Income for the Year	271,386	5,965

Statement of Financial Position

As at 30 June 2013

Assets	2013	2012
Cash and Cash Equivalents	1,272,843	1,573,799
Trade and Other Receivables	14,077	60,336
Inventories	18,022	2,342
Other Current Assets	114,829	169,738
Total Current Assets	1,419,771	1,806,215
Property, Plant and Equipment	154,595	100,486
Total Non-Current Assets	154,595	100,486
Total Assets	1,574,366	1,906,701
Liabilities		
Trade and Other Payables	142,717	240,635
Other Liabilities	91,820	609,430
Provisions	94,841	85,994
Total Current Liabilities	329,378	936,059
Long-term Provisions	35,573	32,613
Total Non-Current Liabilities	35,573	32,613
Total Liabilities	364,951	968,672
Net Assets	1,209,415	938,029
Equity		
Retained Earnings	1,209,415	938,029
Total Equity	1,209,415	938,029

Note: audited financial statements are available at www.amaze.org.au

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