



ANNUAL REPORT 2019 – 2020



About AAA



Information



Education



Inclusion



Awareness

**At Autism Awareness Australia,
our goal is simple:**

to improve the lives of all
Australians on the autism
spectrum and the families
who love them.

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

Since we began in 2007, we've proudly delivered the majority of our events and programs free to families across the country. We're not a huge organisation and we're not government funded.

Simply put, we are a small team who are committed to improving the lives of all Australians on the autism spectrum, and the families who love them.

A note from our CEO

A note from our CEO, Nicole Rogerson

It's fair to say, this year took a turn!

This year started on an incredibly positive note, with Autism Awareness Australia being awarded a Department Social Services ILC grant for a collaboration with Amaze in Victoria. This funding allowed us to start building our Autism: What Next? Project, which is a free digital toolkit, a central hub to help individuals and families navigate the first year following an autism diagnosis. This project is being co-designed with a team autistic adults, parents of children with autism as well as some of Australia's most respected clinicians in the field. The project enabled us to launch our Autism: What Next? National Survey which had over 1000 responses from the community. Those findings helped us to develop the kinds of supports that are needed for individuals and families at the time of diagnosis.

We were able to continue our advocacy work this year by appearing at the Senate Select Committee on autism, as well as my role as an advisor on the Mental Health Commissions, Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy. In May, I was incredibly proud to be asked to introduce the Australian Story which featured the story of talented artist Tim Sharp and his mother Judy.

The great plot twist of 2020 was of course COVID. The pandemic had an enormous impact on the autism community, which led to our COVID-19 video series. We were able to bring together some of Australia's best clinicians and experts to deliver a video series discussing the issues we knew families were facing with young children. I am so very proud of the AAA team managing this incredible workload, working from home and all the juggling that was involved.

A great, if somewhat unusual year!



2019-20 Highlights



Covid-19 video series

Much like the rest of the world, Covid-19 threw our community into a tailspin.

We were faced with some very scary and confusing times, difficult for us all, but even more so for individuals with autism, their parents/carers and families. The changes to routines, school closures, the impact on work, unavailability of foods/products, self-isolation, the constant overload of information... With so much uncertainty, confusion and misinformation out there, we wanted to help. We compiled the best autism specific resources, tools and credible information in one place to make managing life during the crisis a little easier for our ASD community. We interviewed parents and experts in the field and created a video series, covering topics such as:

- The impact of Covid-19 on the autism community
- Helping fussy eaters
- Tips for successful home-schooling
- Successful telehealth sessions
- Transitioning back to school
- Managing school refusal
- Helping young autistic adults stay connected
- NDIS plan changes
- Ways to support children during challenging times
- Managing anxiety as a family
- And more...

2019-20 Highlights



Guest presented Australian Story on Tim and Judy Sharp

Introduced by our CEO, Nicole Rogerson

When Tim Sharp was three, his mother Judy was told he had severe autism and should be put in an institution. Judy refused to write him off, believing he had a place in the world. Judy nurtured Tim's gift for drawing and quirky eye for detail. At age 11, he created "Laser Beak Man", an alter ego superhero character, whose adventures Tim turned into vibrant works of art. 25 years later, Laser Beak Man has taken Tim all over the world with international art exhibitions and a puppet stage show at the Sydney Opera House. Australian Story first met Tim Sharp when he was a schoolboy. Now, 16 years later, the next chapter in the epic tale of a mother who moved mountains for a son who had a gift that only she could see.

Tabitha joins AAA board

Tabitha Pearson is a seasoned executive, with experience across a number of industries, including banking, legal, retail and hospitality.

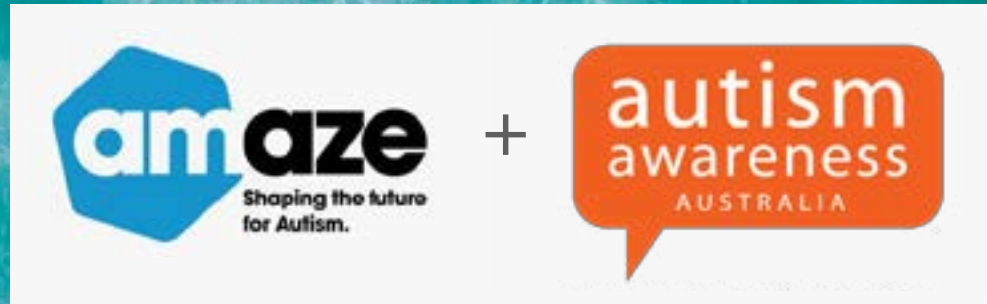
Tabitha is the Chief People and Transformation Officer at G8 Education, a listed Child Care provider. She is an advocate for change and inclusion and is passionate about providing opportunities for those less able or fortunate.

As a mother of 2 boys, Tabitha and her husband are striving to raise amazing men, who are not afraid to speak out for others who cannot do so for themselves. Her youngest son is on the spectrum and she understands the daily challenge that families face, and the need for a supportive community of professionals, friends and family to achieve the best results.

Tabitha is very excited to be part of Autism Awareness Australia, so she can further support families and those on the Autism Spectrum through their journey.



2019-20 Highlights



We won the ILC with Amaze to create Autism...What Next?

Autism: What Next? A free digital toolkit, a central hub to help individuals and families navigate the first year following an autism diagnosis. Designed and developed by teams of people with lived experience including autistic adults, parents of children with autism and some of Australia's leading clinicians working in the field.

Autism: What Next? is funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services, in partnership with Amaze.

AWN National Survey

In June 2020, we launched a survey to inform the development and design of our digital toolkit called Autism...What Next? The survey was designed to hear from three groups – parents & carers of autistic children, autistic adults and autistic parents with autistic children.

Over 950 respondents told us about their diagnosis experiences and what features and information they would want from the toolkit which will help inform this project and make the process easier for families and individuals in the future.



2019-20 Highlights



InvisAbility training continued

Our tailored training workshops continued in 2019. We helped further educate a range of organisations such as corporates, public venues and schools throughout the year including Macquarie Bank, Newcastle Museum and Cherrybrook Technology High.

InvisAbility

AUStism 2020 postponed due to COVID

COVID really knocked our AUStism events about. We had a large panel of fabulous speakers for events in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane, only to be faced with cancellation after cancellation.

In lieu of our live AUStism events, we hosted an online panel discussion for World Autism Awareness Day 2020, featuring Chris Bonello (Autistic Not Weird), Barb Cook (Neurodivergent author & speaker), Charmaine Fraser (autism mum and Director of Aurora Coordination) and Nicole Rogerson (Autism Awareness Australia).

The panel discussed the important topic of transitioning into adulthood and the planning and supports required to help autistic adults thrive.



Advocacy & media highlights



Australia's first peoples experiences of autism

We were proud to attend the launch of the first major report into autism and Australia's first peoples "We Look After Our Own Mob". An important piece of research that is long overdue.



Select Senate Committee on autism

Services, Supports and life outcomes for autistic people in Australia. We called for community collaboration into our submission to the senate committee enquiry.



Children's Mental Health & Wellbeing Strategy

Our CEO was invited into the Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy - Expert Advisory Group from 2019.



Love On The Spectrum

We consulted with Northern Pictures on the production of Love on The Spectrum – a show about seven young adults on the autism spectrum who dive headfirst into the dating pool, exploring the unpredictable world of love and relationships.

Our board



Nicole Rogerson
CEO

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

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

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



Sally Collins
Director

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

At work, Sally has been a vocal advocate for gender diversity and inclusion and also workplace flexibility. She was recognised as the 2016 recipient of the Financial Executive Women (FEW) Positive Progression of Women award.

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



Melanie Carrier
Director

An accomplished Director in Marketing and Advertising, Melanie set her career aside to care for her third child who was diagnosed with autism in 2003. At the time, services were scarce and prognosis was grim. Melanie tirelessly researched best practices for her son.

Melanie and her family have volunteered for events such as Light it up Blue, City2Surf, Surfers Healing and have held their own fundraising boot camps. It was therefore a natural extension for Melanie to join our board and continue to advocate for families like hers, help increase awareness and build upon the many amazing programs and events.

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



Tabitha Pearson
Director

Tabitha is a seasoned executive, with experience across a number of industries, including banking, legal, retail and hospitality.

Tabitha is currently the Chief People and Transformation Officer at G8 Education, a listed Child Care provider. She is an advocate for change and inclusion and is passionate about providing opportunities for those less able or fortunate.

As a mother of 2 boys, Tabitha and her husband are striving to raise amazing men, who are not afraid to speak out for others who cannot do so for themselves. Her youngest son is on the spectrum and she understands the daily challenge that families face, and the need for a supportive community of professionals, friends and family to achieve the best results.

Financials

Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

INCOME	2020	2019
Donations	122,525	125,304
Training	16,450	1,750
Product sales	-	75
Special events	12,924	16,088
Sponsorship and grants	299,601	236,169
Interest received	857	1,366
Total revenue	452,357	380,752
EXPENSES	2020	2019
Advertising and marketing	598	3,118
Employment benefit expenses	153,751	181,554
Event expenses	11,739	80,584
Event related travel expenses	11,368	10,296
Donations collection expenses	2436	4,878
Postage and shipping expenses	235	625
Administration expenses	135,837	86,021
Total Expenses	315,964	367,076
Profit before tax	136,393	136,676
Income tax expense	0	0
Other comprehensive income	0	0
Total comprehensive income for the year	136,393	136,676

Financials

Statement of Financial Position

CURRENT ASSETS	2020	2019
Cash and cash equivalents	233,461	71,686
Trade and other receivables	0	1
Total current assets	233,461	71,687
NON CURRENT ASSETS	2020	2019
Property, plant and equipment	3,482	2,148
Total non current assets	3,482	2,148
Total assets	236,944	73,835
CURRENT LIABILITIES	2020	2019
Trade and other payables	34,316	7,382
Other liabilities	0	0
Employee benefits	18,869	19,090
Total current liabilities	53,185	26,472
Total liabilities	53,185	26,472
NET ASSETS	183,759	47,363
EQUITY	2020	2019
Retained earnings	183,759	47,363
Total equity	183,759	47,363

A black and white photograph of a person with short hair, wearing a dark long-sleeved shirt and a watch, playing a piano. The person is shown from the side, looking down at the keys. The piano is a dark-colored upright model.

Financials

Statement of Cash Flows		
CASH FLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES	2020	2019
Receipts from donations, sponsorships and grants	422,127	125,304
Receipts from special events and training	29,374	17,838
Receipts from product sales	0	75
Interest received	857	1,366
Payments to suppliers and employees	-287,770	-358,485
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	164,588	-213,902
CASH FLOW FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES	2020	2019
Payments from plant and equipment	-2,814	-3,799
Proceeds received on disposal of plant and equipment	0	6,244
Net cash used in investing activities	-2,814	2,445
Net increase/decrease in cash and cash equivalents	161,775	-211,457
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year	71,686	283,143
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year	233,461	71,686



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awareness
AUSTRALIA

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