



Autism Community Network

Annual Report 2016



Vision, Mission, Values

Vision:

A society where people on the autism spectrum and their families lead full, rich and rewarding lives.

Mission:

The Autism Community Network advances the health and social wellbeing of people with autism, their families and communities by providing:

- Information, support and coordination services for individuals with autism, their parents and carers
- Social skills building programs for children and adults with autism
- Community development programs for disability services and mainstream providers.

Values:

Community - further develop a sense of community between families and the broader community.

Respect - treat everyone with dignity and care.

Integrity - be transparent in all our actions and maintain trust and faith in what we do.

Empowerment - support each other to make well informed choices which improve our quality of life.

Excellence - strive to maintain the highest level of effort and commitment in all that we do.

THE BOARD



Warren Thompson
PRESIDENT



Jane Tzakos
VICE PRESIDENT



Magdalena Oszywa
TREASURER



Elizabeth Diab
DIRECTOR



Richard Goodfellow
DIRECTOR



Terry Lynch
DIRECTOR



Erin Normoyle
DIRECTOR

What we do

Provide support groups for parents and carers

Provide social groups for people with ASDs and their families

Connect peers through social media and forums

Maintain a website full of useful information

Maintain a directory of services recommended by members, not paid advertising

Promote community awareness

Support the work of individuals and groups providing mutual support to others

Our services don't include crisis intervention, accommodation, advocacy, professional medical advice or financial support



President's Report

At the time of writing the A C N is fast approaching one thousand family members across twelve Sydney Groups. We are indebted to our wonderful volunteers without whom we could not conduct the many projects and events for our members.

Our "A C N All Area Gala Day" at Auburn Community Centre brought families from the majority of our groups together for the first time. The event was a major success and provided respite for Carers and fun for the children. The day was funded by Carers NSW and supported by Cumberland Council.

Our founder Steve Drakoulis has had a difficult year with his health and we are pleased to report he has recovered and continuing the work he started back in 2011. Our board has met regularly and the team has taken on extra duties to meet the ever increasing demands.

In conclusion after five years with the A C N: the last three and a half as President it is time to spend more time in the garden. To that end I will not be standing for election at our A G M on the 26 November 2016.

My sincere gratitude to the numerous caring and giving people it has been my pleasure to count as friends in the A C N journey. It is a privilege to have friends of your quality.

Warren Thompson

Manager's Report

The last 12 months have been a rewarding but also a challenging period for ACN.

We have grown to a level that I could never have imagined, a reflection of the level of need in the community, but also in the credibility of this great organization.

We have developed more new partnerships and welcomed quality people into our pool of volunteers. As ACN does not charge for helping people, we rely on volunteers to achieve many of our objectives.

I have battled with health issues and have struggled to keep up with the growing workload, and I do fear about the future if we can't find means to engage more management level support. Finances remain an issue as always for ACN, and we will need to focus on strengthening our situation in that regard.

I must say that despite the challenges, I have been frequently left in awe at the results we have achieved, largely due to the incredible people who've given their energy to bring about support in their local community.

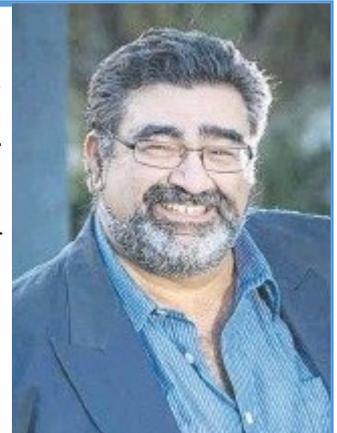
We have also formed more partnerships with other organisations, and together we have seen some amazing things happen for people who struggle.

I want to thank everyone who is involved with ACN, as I often say, I started one support group in 2010, supporting a few local families; I could never have imagined that so many parents, carers, and individuals affected by autism, as well as supporters, would come to work together to now be helping almost 1,000 families throughout Sydney and parts of NSW.

And we have gotten here without any recurrent funding from any government body. Imagine what we could achieve with some real funding.

It remains my great honour to be part of this organisation and continue to contribute to helping families just like my own.

Steve Drakoulis



SPECIAL EVENTS

As a charity, we receive regular offers to help families access special events in the community.

Some of the events members have enjoyed as a result in the past year include:

Dream Night at the Zoo: 110 families got to attend this spectacular annual event at Taronga Zoo.

ACN was able to once again send tickets for 5 families to attend the **Lord Mayor's New Year's Eve picnic.**

Many families received tickets to **Kidsflix Movie Mania Cinema Days**

More families were sent tickets to **Rotary Club Circus** shows through the year.

We provided tickets to the **Special Children's Christmas party** in Rosehill, another of the special events made possible by great organisations supporting us in our community

Tickets were issued to children attending the annual **Lugarno Spring Fair** for free carnival rides

Tickets also issued to kids attending the **Riverwood Fair** courtesy of Club Rivers.

In addition, Auburn Facilitator Lucy Doherty is working with Sydney Olympic Park for ACN to be part of a festival in December. Our members will be presented with an opportunity to attend special events and a picnic together.

ACN put on a Halloween fundraising event for families, an event that brought a lot of fun and colour to the St. George area.



TALKS / PRESENTATIONS & MEDIA

ACN regularly accepts requests to speak about the work that we do and about raising awareness of autism issues and carer needs. It is usually Steve Drakoulis who conducts these talks, which are becoming more frequent.

During 2015-16, the ACN has featured in the following local newspapers:

The Blacktown Advocate

The Blacktown Sun

Autism support group launches



Former State MP for Auburn Barbara Perry joined Auburn Autism Support and Social Group facilitator Lucy Doherty and her daughter Sophie at the group's launch this month.

A STRONG turnout of about 80 people at the official launch of the Auburn Autism Support and Social Group on Saturday, May 7, showed how much it was needed, says the group's facilitator, Lidcombe resi-

The Auburn Review

The St. George and Sutherland Leader

Steve has also been interviewed on the following radio stations

Radio National

2GB

2NBC (St. George)

2SSR (Sutherland)

Steve spoke at Lions Clubs as well as Lions events across a number of regions. He also spoke at Rotary and Probus clubs. He also did presentations for carers across most of our support groups in Sydney.



COMMUNITY ACCESS



Steve Drakoulis was among a group of community representatives invited to attend a meeting at Carers NSW with Mr. John Ajaka in his capacity as the Minister for Disabilities. The meeting was to review the Carers Act for the purpose of updating it and the Minister wanted community consultation. It was an honour for the ACN to be included.



The Federal Member for Banks, Mr. David Coleman has been a strong advocate for ACN over the years and he has presented us with numerous opportunities to connect with other organisations as well as political leaders. Some of the political leaders we had the pleasure to meet with and briefly share information about the work of ACN included:



Then Prime Minister Mr. Tony Abbott

Prime Minister Mr. Malcolm Turnbull

Federal Treasurer Mr. Scott Morrison

Foreign Minister Ms Julie Bishop



Steve met with the State Emergency Services team at Bankstown who requested a better understanding of autism for when they are responding to emergencies

VOLUNTEERS

ACN relies on volunteers to be able to do much of what we do. As a parent, carer, or individual offers to get involved, the door opens for more support and social opportunities for their community.

In the last year, we have been able to start support groups in Lilyfield and in Auburn, with a kids' art group in Parramatta to follow. None of these could happen without dedicated, community minded people becoming involved.

In addition, others have helped in the office, taking part of the load off Steve Drakoulis with administrative or general office tasks.

We are grateful to all these individuals, a total of 32 across our network whose time and energy allows ACN to exist.

Collectively, we estimate that this group of people has provided in excess of 7140 hours of voluntary contribution through 2015, valued at over \$178,000

32 volunteers assist with a range of tasks including administration, coordinating groups and conducting research.

595 Hrs x 12 months = 7,140 hrs

At \$25 /hr provides \$178,500 worth of unpaid labour

Without which we could not exist.



SPECIAL PROJECTS

Over the years, ACN has enjoyed the opportunity to become involved in special projects to help the community further. Below are some of those we took on in the last year.

NSW Auditors Report on Schools: ACN was approached by the Auditors Office of NSW to assist with part of the process in conducting a performance audit on NSW schools' support of students with disabilities. Their report was tabled directly to State Parliament.



Sensory room Marrickville High: We applied and were granted by NSW Government funds to build a Sensory Room for a high school in Sydney's inner west. Marrickville High School supports many children with autism or other conditions and the availability of this space will help regulate children's moods and behaviours when they are struggling to cope.

Assistance Dogs Australia: This organisation approached ACN to help families with kids on the spectrum receive trained Assistance Dogs. We were able to provide this opportunity for 6 families to start with, with plans for more to follow.



NSW Police: ACN met with NSW Police to discuss how to better educate new police recruits on dealing with individuals on the spectrum. With a letter of support from the Head of the NSW Police Academy a submission has been made for funding to produce a training video.

iPad Kids Communicate update: The Lions Club remains one of ACN's strongest supporters and once again we have been able to use funds donated by Lions to help another 40 children communicate. A total 121 children on the spectrum with significant communication difficulties have now been provided with the Proloquo2Go app on a new mini ipad as part of this program.



The flyer features logos for Carers Australia, NSW Family & Community Services, and Wirrimurri. It includes a photo of a young boy and a woman. Text on the flyer includes: "Building knowledge and skills to make informed choices", "14-18 years old with disability and families & carers", "Near You Feb - July 2016", and the title "Decisions, decisions...". Below the title, it says: "A workshop on Supported Decision Making for young people with disability aged 14-18 years and their families and carers". At the bottom, it provides contact information: "Be part of the first workshop Thursday 4 Feb 2016 10:00am - 2:00pm at Ilawong" and "To reserve your place email sdm@carersnsw.org.au or contact 02 9280 4744".

Supported Living program: ACN worked with Carers NSW to help develop a pilot program for a Supported Living workshop.



Our Members

As at 30 June 2016, ACN membership stood at 929 (Households) families. This was comprised 2,191 registered.

Members Breakdown as at 30 June 2016

All Members

Boys	Girls	Men	Women
799	218	290	881

Members with ASD

Boys	Girls	Men	Women
725	158	114	265

As at end of June 2016 the ACN supported 929 families, comprising of 2191 individuals. This means that 1262 out of 2191 (57.5%) of members are on the spectrum

Membership Geography

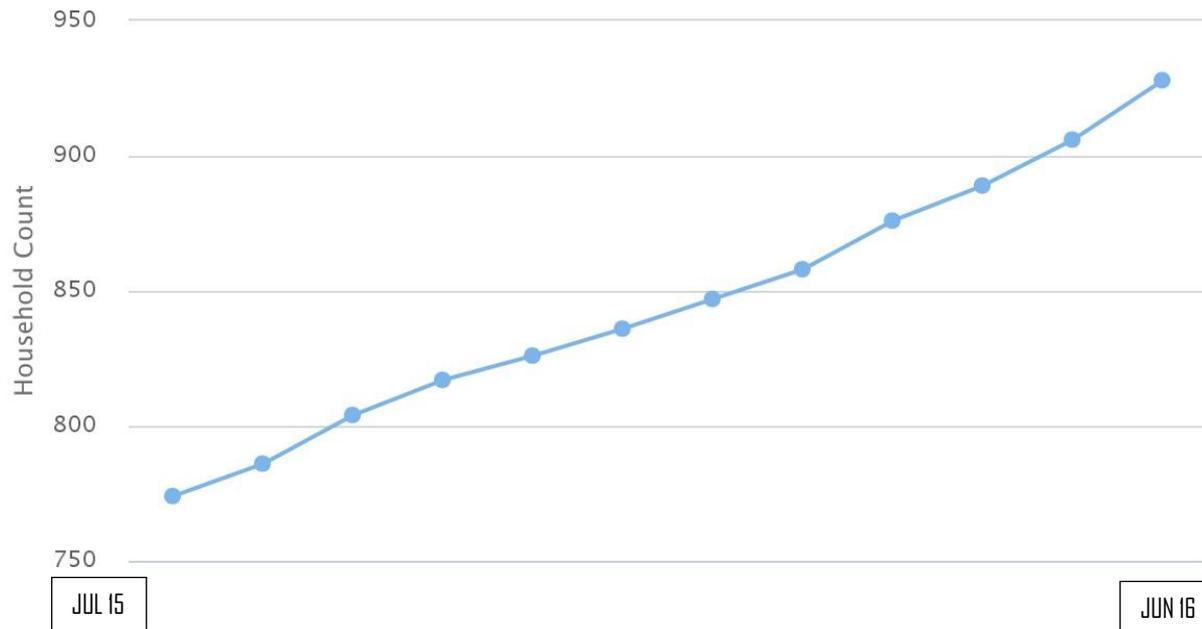
MEMBERS BY REGION

REGION	JUN 16	REGION	JUN 16
Central Coast	6	Northern Sydney	226
Hunter	3	South East Sydney	293
Illawarra Shoalhaven	17	South Western Sydney	82
Murrumbidgee	1	Sydney	109
Nepean Blue Mountains	6	Western Sydney	104

GROWTH BY LGA

LGA	JUN 2016	LGA	JUN 2016	LGA	JUN 2016
Ashfield	6	Auburn	8	Bankstown	46
Blacktown	47	Blue Mountains	4	Botany Bay	8
Burwood	5	Camden	3	Campbelltown	9
Canada Bay	9	Canterbury	57	Fairfield	9
Gosford	5	Hawkesbury	3	Holroyd	9
Hornsby	42	Hurstville	72	Jerilderie	1
Kogarah	17	Ku-ring-gai	21	Lake MacQuarrie	1
Lane Cove	5	Leichhardt	6	Liverpool	15
Maitland	1	Manly	10	Marrickville	10
Mosman	4	Newcastle	1	North Sydney	2
Parramatta	24	Penrith	16	Pittwater	12
Randwick	17	Rockdale	29	Ryde	24
Shellharbour	1	Strathfield	6	Sutherland	134
Sydney	11	The Hills	44	Warringah	50
Waverley	2	Willoughby	12	Wingecarribee	1
Wollondilly	1	Wollongong	16	Woollahra	4
Wyong	1				

Households/Families



ACN FACEBOOK PAGES - REGION BASED PAGES

When a new ACN member joins the network they are invited to join our Secret Status Facebook pages. We have pages based on region, as well as Common Ground interests. Below are the figures showing how many individuals were connected in each region through Facebook for mutual support.

	JUN 16		JUN 16
ACN Bankstown	8	ACN Penrith-Blue Mountains	19
ACN East Sydney	21	ACN Southern Highlands	6
ACN Hills Shire	42	ACN St.George	59
ACN Hornsby	48	ACN Sutherland	89
ACN Hunter	5	ACN Sydney City	11
ACN Illawarra	15	ACN Turrumurra	15
ACN Inner West	41	ACN West	49
ACN Liverpool-MacArthur	23	ACN North Sydney	3
ACN North Sydney	3	ACN Peer to Peer	20
ACN Northern Beaches	61	ACN Public page	932
ACN Northwest	33		

Total Users of ACN Facebook pages by month



ACN East Sydney

Common Ground Groups

The ACN enables families to connect for mutual support through a number of ways we provide for them. These include our Common Ground groups, designed to help people with similar interests or support need to connect. As example, parents with teenage daughters on the spectrum can connect to share information and advice or arrange social opportunities.

Most of these groups are run via our Facebook pages which have secret status to allow privacy.

Language based groups do not have Facebook access but are instead allowed to connect via a regular email with relevant contact details for members of each group provided.



ACN FACEBOOK PAGES - COMMON GROUND GROUPS

As at June 2016

ADD/ADHD	44	NDIS	41
Adult Children	11	Teenage Daughters	15
Anxiety	66	Teens	30
Aspie Friendly Social page	20	Twins	10
Epilepsy	3	Under 7s	77
Home Schooled	19	Women on the Spectrum	10
Indigenous Families	8	Young Daughters	21
More Than One Child	23	Youth and Young Adults	10
Non Verbal	37	Single Mums	5
Primary Aged	87	ACN FACILITATORS	20
Proloquo2Go	42	ACN EXECUTIVE	9
RDI families	9		
GLBTIQ carers	6		



Language or Culture Based Common Ground Groups

- Arabic speaking – 8
- Chinese languages – 19
- Hindi speaking – 11
- Indigenous - 5
- Japanese Speaking – 8
- Korean speaking - 11
- Spanish Speaking – 9
- Vietnamese Speaking – 9

FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES

Bunnings BBQ and cake stalls: From activities running these fundraisers ACN raised almost \$6,950

Shopping Tour: ACN member Melissa Bessenyei ran a shopping tour promoted through us, and from proceeds raised she donated \$428. We thank Melissa from her kind support.

City to Surf: We have raised at the City to Surf \$2,500 from TLC and \$1,000 from Redox (which will be doubled by the company).

Grill'd Miranda kindly presented ACN with a cheque for \$300 from a fundraising activity run through their store.



Donors

The Autism Community Network is a registered charity and Deductible Gift Recipient.

We have, for the last 6 years, been supporting an ever growing network of individuals, parents and carers to create a strong and cohesive community.

While we explore all funding options available to us, like every organisation, we rely on our community to keep us going.

We received **\$16,528.58** in donations during 2015-16 and would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our donors for their generous contribution.

Any donation over \$2 is tax deductible and will help us to continue our support for the autism community in Sydney. There is no donation too small, every bit helps.

To make a donation, please go to the DONATIONS tab on our website www.autismcommunity.org.au

Or make a direct deposit to: Autism Community Network
BSB 062 234 Account 10417253

Or by cheque to: Autism Community Network PO Box 188 Riverwood NSW 2210

ACN SUPPORT GROUPS

Figures have not been available for all meetings provided

INNER WEST

After 5 years of providing a support group for the inner west in Belmore, we saw attendances had declined to the point where we felt this group was no longer needed in the area. As an opportunity arose to offer a group in the Leichhardt LGA, thanks to local ACN member Libbie Doherty, we moved the group to a weeknight once a month at that location.

INNER WEST (LILYFIELD) SUPPORT GROUP

When: First Thursday 7.30 - 9.30 pm

Venue: Whites Creek Cottage - 31 White Street, Lilyfield

Facilitator: Libbie Doherty

Provided By: ACN and Leichhardt Council



2016	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Date	-	-	-	-	5 TH	2 ND
Carers					3	2

BELMORE SUPPORT GROUP

Month	2	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Date	0	8 th	8 th	12 th	17 th	14 th	12 th	9 th	13 th	10 th	14 th	
Carers	5	6	9	2	6	?	-	?	2	0	0	canc

PUNCHBOWL TRAMPOLINING SOCIAL GROUP

A social group once a month for children in the inner west / Bankstown area was introduced, with special rates arranged with Flipout in Punchbowl for our families.

When: First Saturday 10 am to 11.30 am for one hour jumping time

Venue: 5/1618 Canterbury Rd, Punchbowl

Facilitator: Liz Diab

Cost: \$8 per child (carer free)



Month	2	Apr	May	Jun
Date	0	2	19	12 th
pax	6	1	7	20



ACN SUPPORT GROUPS

EASTERN SUBURBS

Our Eastern Suburbs support group folded when we could not get a new volunteer facilitator. After a year however, we were pleased to welcome Ms Lee Elhage who took on the role, and a new group was to commence in the new financial year.

HORNSBY – KU RING GAI

Hornsby remains a strong community for the ACN. Along with the long running Hornsby evening support group, we have now also introduces a group at Turramurra that caters to carers who can only meet during the day. In addition the Hornsby social day once a month enables families to come together for some relaxed socializing.

HORNSBY EVENING SUPPORT GROUP

When: First Tuesday 7.30 to 9.30 pm

Venue: Hornsby RSL Club— in the Sports Lounge — 4 High Street Hornsby

Facilitator: Caroline Nicholson

2015	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	2016	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Date		4 th	1 st	6 th	3 rd	1 st	Date	N/A	2 nd	1 st	5 th	3 rd	-
Car-ers		9	11		9		Car-ers	N/A		8	7	4	

HORNSBY FAMILY DAY

When: Second Sunday 10.30 to 12.30

Venue: Bobbin Head — in Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park - meet next to the playground on the water's side

Cost: \$11 per car entry—buy your own lunch and drinks

This is run as a social skills group for children with an ASD, their siblings and their entire family. There is a lot to do there, they have a fenced park, bush walks, you can feed the fish, there are BBQ's and a café

TURRAMURRA DAY SUPPORT GROUP

When: 4th Thursday 10.00 a.m. to noon

Venue: Hillview Community Health Centre (Room 22) 1334 Pacific Highway, Turramurra

Facilitator: Rachel Hookway

2016	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Date	-	25 th	24 th	28 th		
Car-ers		8	2	4		



ACN SUPPORT GROUPS

NORTHWEST SYDNEY



Thanks to local mum Andrea Lee, the Ryde area has enjoyed good support services in the past year.

RYDE SUPPORT GROUP

When: Second Thursday 7.30 to 9.30 pm

Venue: Eastwood Rugby Club (John Haynes Room) 146 – 150 Vimiera Road Eastwood

Facilitator: Andrea Lee

RYDE AREA FAMILY DAY

When: Third Saturday 3.00pm to 5.00pm

Venue: Blenheim Park, 16 Blenheim Road North Ryde

Facilitator: Andrea Lee

The Blenheim Park has play areas that suit kids with a wide range of age from toddlers to teenagers as it has sand pits, scooter and bike paths, play equipment suiting a wide age range, flying fox, an enclosed dog park and a remote control car track. .

Check out this website
<http://www.weekendnotes.com/blenheim-park/>

We meet at one of the sheltered pagodas near the toilet facility. Come join other families at the park for a play and a chat.



RYDE AREA ART GROUP

Month	1	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apri	May	Jun
Date	5		28th	24 th	22 nd	16 th	28 th	25 th	24 th			24 th
attend			12	15	19	20	10	8	4			8



When: Fourth Thursday of the month 4.00 -5.45 pm

Venue: Marsfield Community Centre, 1A Trafalgar Place, Marsfield

Facilitator: Cheryl Clarke

This is run as a social skills group for children with an ASD and their siblings are also encouraged to attend. We have painting, drawing and craft activities and a

ACN SUPPORT GROUPS

ST.GEORGE

As a local resident in the St. George district, Founder Steve Drakoulis has remained the Coordinator for this region until now. With the workload increasing on the organisation's management front, long term volunteer Liz Diab was offered the opportunity to take on the role of St. George Coordinator. St.George enjoys more activities than other regions, partly because this is where ACN started, but also due to the large amount of volunteers who have been willing to step forward.

ST. GEORGE HURSTVILLE SUPPORT GROUP

Funding was provided through Club Grants for a new evening support group to commence in this area the group was also targeting the Chinese community, with a translator as part of the program. Despite promoting the group through Chinese organisations and media, unfortunately the numbers remained low.

Provided By: Club Central
 When: Third Thursday 7.30-9.30 pm
 Venue: Club Central Hurstville - 214 Park Rd & Cross Street, Hurstville
 Facilitator: Steve Drakoulis
 Mandarin & Cantonese translators provided.

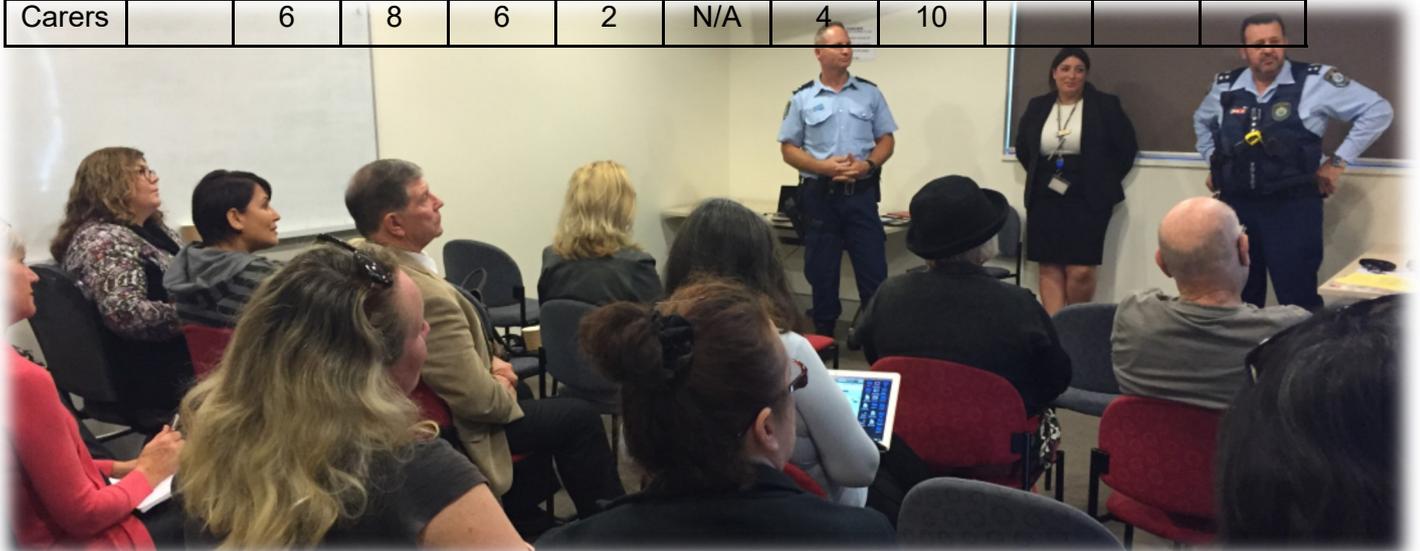
Month	20	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	2016	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Date	15	10 th	8 th	19 th	10 th		11 th	10 th	14 th	sick	14 th
Carers		5	2	3	1		2	4	6		2

ST. GEORGE INFORMATION DAY

Following consistently low attendance numbers, management at the Kingsgrove Community Aid Centre advised us that they would not continue funding a monthly support group there. We have enjoyed a strong relationship with KCAC over the last 5 years and hope that we will be able to find other programs to work on together for the community. Guest speakers monthly

Provided By: Kingsgrove Community Aid Centre
 When: Second Thursday 10.00 am to 12pm
 Venue: Kingsgrove Community Aid Centre—30 Morgan Street
 Facilitator: Steve Drakoulis

Month	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Date	hols	13 th	10 th	8 th	5 th	10 th	11 th	10 th	hols		
Carers		6	8	6	2	N/A	4	10			



ACN SUPPORT GROUPS



ST. GEORGE FAMILY DAY

Meeting on the last Sunday of each month in Kingsgrove, children play while parents relax together. This was one of the first social groups we introduced 5 years ago and continues well to this day.

The park has an enclosed playground, bbq facilities and suitable areas to bring bikes and scooters along.

When: Last Sunday 10.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.

Venue: Smith Park—30 Morgan Street Kingsgrove (behind Kingsgrove Community Centre)

Note: Parents or carers must remain on site to supervise their children.



ST. GEORGE COOKING CLUB

Kids learn cooking skills and have fun while their parent or carer can watch them getting right into all the fun. We aim to give as many children an opportunity so new kids will be given priority each month. Carers also enjoy the opportunity to connect and share information.

When: 2nd and 4th Tuesday 4.00 to 6.00 pm

Venue: Hurstville City Pensioners Bowling

Club - 2a Percival Street, Penshurst (Cnr King Georges Road) at Penshurst.

Facilitator: Liz Diab.

ST. GEORGE KIDS ART GROUP

Our first and longest running social group. Children on the spectrum and their siblings enjoy an inclusive, no pressure environment where they can get creative or make friends. Their carers can relax while chatting and sharing information.

When: 1st & 3rd Monday 4.00 to 5.30 pm

Venue: George River Life Care—in rooms upstairs—23 Stanley Street, Peakhurst

Facilitator: Liz Diab

Provided By: Georges River Life Care



Month	FEB 16	FEB	MAR	MAR	APR	APR	MAY	MAY	JUNE
Date	5 th	19 th	4 th	18 th	1 st	15 th			17 th
Kids			9						13
Month	JULY 15	JULY	AUG	AUG	SEP	SEP	OCT	OCT	NOV
Date	-	17 th	7 th	21 st	4 th	18 th	-	16 th	6 th
Kids	-	11	9		12		-		1

ACN SUPPORT GROUPS

ST. GEORGE FITABILITY CLUB

Perhaps the most popular group we have ever provided; each week during school term children on the spectrum are able to participate in gym activities.

Provided By: Club Rivers

When: Weekly Wednesday 4.15 to 5.15 pm

Venue: Hurstville Aquatic Leisure Centre King Georges & Forest Road, Hurstville

Host: Warren Thompson.

We aim to give children with autism an opportunity each school term to participate in a fitness program run by the team at the Hurstville Aquatic Centre.

Month	JULY 15	JULY	JULY	JULY	AU- GUST	AU- GUST	AU- GUST	AU- GUST	SEP	SEP	SEP	SEP
Date	hols	15 th	22 nd	29 th	5 th	12 th	19 th	26 th	2nd	9 th	16 th	
Kids		16	16	16	16	12					8	
Month	OCT	OCT	OCT	OCT	NOV	NOV	NOV	NOV	DEC	DEC	DEC	DEC
Date	7 th	14 th	21 st	28 th	4 th	11 th	18 th	25 th	2 nd	9 th	16 th	-
Kids		17	16	14	16	18	17	13	14	17	11	-
Month	FEB 16	FEB	FEB	FEB	MAR	MAR	MAR	MAR	MAR	APR	APR	APR
Date	3rd	10 th	17 th	24 th	2 nd	9 th	16 th	23 rd	30 th	6 th	13 th	20 th
Kids	18	19			15	17	12	11	11	12	13	11
Month	APR	MAY	MAY	MAY	JUNE	JUNE	JUNE	JUNE				
Date	27 th		15 th		7 th	14 th	22 nd	28 th				
Kids	10				13	11	15					



ACN SUPPORT GROUPS

ST.GEORGE YOUTH CLUB

This is a social group for teens between 13 and 21 years old who have high functioning autism
 We have seen friendships develop and children enjoy a calm, fun social opportunity.

Provided By: ACN and Georges River Life Care

When: 2nd and 4th Friday 4.00 to 5.30 pm

Venue: George River Life Care (rooms upstairs) 23 Stanley Street, Peakhurst

Facilitator: Geoff Marks



2016	FEB	FEB	MAR	MAR	APR	APR	MAY	MAY	JUN	JUN
Date	12 th	26 th	11 th	Easter		8 th		27 th	10 th	24 th
Kids	9	5	7			5		7	7	8
2015	JUL	JUL	AUG	AUG	SEP	SEP	OCT	OCT	NOV	NOV
Date		24 th	14 th	28 th	11 th	25 th	9 th	23 rd	13 th	27 th
Kids		14	9	7	8		5	3	5	3

Bully Proof Kids

The Bully Proof Kidz Taekwondo program ran again this year in the St. George area. We had hoped to also duplicate it in Sutherland, however numbers were low in that district and it could not go ahead.

The 10 week program again proved a great success and some of the children who participated have chosen to continue in United Taekwondo's mainstream classes.

The program focuses on building confidence, social skills and fitness, with secondary focus on self-defense. By the end of the program, every one of the participants, ranging from age 6 to 17, graduated to the next level yellow belt.

This is all made possible by United Taekwondo, who offer the program at very little cost to our families. .



ACN SUPPORT GROUPS

SUTHERLAND SHIRE

The Sutherland Shire represents the highest amount of families registered with the ACN, however, we struggle to get volunteers. As a result we have been unable to introduce more activities in that area.

SUTHERLAND SHIRE EVENING SUPPORT GROUP

This support group has been running for 4 years now and is attended by local carers.

When: Third Tuesday 7.30 to 9.30 pm
 Venue: Tradies Club Caringbah - Level 1, in the bar.
 28 - 30 Banksia Road, Caringbah
 Facilitator: Steve Drakoulis



Month	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Date	28 th	18 th	15 th	20 th	17 th	-	16 th	15 th	19 th	17 th	sick
Carers	6	?	2	canc	?	-	3	4	5	7	

SUTHERLAND FIT & FRIENDLY CLUB

Thanks to Club Grants funding, we provide children with autism and their siblings an opportunity each school term to participate in a fun play environment in a popular play centre. This is ideal for children with higher needs who may not otherwise have the ability to participate in other more structured ACN programs.

When: Weekly Wednesdays 4.00 to 5.30 pm
 Venue: Fun4Kids Unit 4, 778-786 Old Illawara Rd Menai
 Host: Megan Shuttleworth.
 For ACN kids 3 to 13.



SUTHERLAND SHIRE TRAMPOLINING PLAY DAY

When: First Sunday 10.00 to 11.00 am
 Venue: Flipout Caringbah - 12 Parraweena Road Caringbah
 Facilitator: Alex or Judy from the ACN
 Cost: \$8 hour special rate per child (must say you are ACN members). All families pay own costs to venue

Carer can participate free if you advise venue that child has disability.

A chance for the kids to have some fun while parents socialise together



SUTHERLAND SHIRE DAY SUPPORT GROUP

Thanks to local mum Alex Baltins, the Sutherland Shire was able to have a daytime support group for a period during the year. But as is the nature of being a volunteer, and especially a carer of a child on the spectrum, the challenges and demands on our lives often restrict us from continuing to give our time as we would like. This is typical of many good people in our community. This group eventually folded due to our inability to find a volunteer facilitator to continue it.



ACN SUPPORT GROUPS

CITY OF SYDNEY

While initially funding was provided for a support group in the CBD, low attendances previously led us to believe that the community would be better served by a regular social opportunity in the city. With the support of the clubs who provided the grant, we initiated a fortnightly day out for ACN families during the year.

SYDNEY SOCIAL GROUP

When: First Sunday and Third Saturday each month 10.30 am
Venue: Meet at prearranged locations within the City of Sydney area.
Facilitator: Liz Diab
Provided By: City of Sydney
Families meet each time to experience a social outing together.
Cost: Each pay own expenses

Month	FEB	FEB	MAR	MAR	APR	APR	MAY	MAY	JUN	JUN
Date	-	-	6 th	19 th	3 rd	23 rd	1 st		19 th	
Car-ers	-	7	4	5	4	2	RAIN		2	
Kids		10	6	8	7	4	CANC		8	

WESTERN SYDNEY

Western Sydney is the ACN's fastest growing region. With the wonderful help of local mum Briana Blackett, and supported by local area partner organisation Junaya Family Development Services, and Blacktown Council, ACNN now provides support for the region.

WESTERN SUBURBS SUPPORT GROUP (BLACKTOWN)

When: First Wednesday 10 am to Noon
Venue: Sargent's Centre in Blacktown 9-13 First Ave, Blacktown.
Facilitator: Briana Blackett
Provided By: Junaya

Month	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Feb	Mar	Apri	May	Jun
Date	5 th	2 nd	7 th	4 th	2 nd	3 rd	2 nd	6 th	4 th	1 st
Carers	NA	4	3			4	6	9	6	11

AUBURN SUPPORT & SOCIAL GROUP

Local mum Lucy Doherty stepped forward to help ACNN provide a support group in the Auburn area. As a result, we have formed a partnership with then Auburn, now Cumberland council, who provide a free venue for a monthly support and social group.

Provided By: Auburn Council
When: Second Saturday 2.00 to 4.00pm
Venue: Auburn Centre for Community, 44A Macquarie Rd, Auburn
Facilitator: Lucy Doherty



PARRAMATTA KIDS ART GROUP

Late in the financial year, the Lions Club of Parramatta provided funding to support children with autism in their local area. They also provided a venue at no cost. As a result, a social skills art group was created to start in July 2016.

When: Last Thursday 4.00 to 5.30 pm
Venue: The Den, 42a Ross st Parramatta
Facilitator: Belinda Tabbaa
Provided By: ACN and Lions Club of Parramatta



School Holiday programs

Experience has shown us that during school holidays attendance at our regular support groups drops significantly. Instead of running those we instead offer different social opportunities for our members, across different regions of Sydney. Typical events we offer include:

- Laser Tag
- Rock climbing
- Ten Pin Bowling
- Play days
- Swimming
- Movie Day

These are offered mainly in the St.George, Sutherland, Hornby, Inner West, and Northern Beaches areas. Ability to run holiday events is reliant on availability of volunteers within each area.



ACN SUPPORT GROUPS

NORTHERN BEACHES

The ACN has been providing a monthly support group for the Northern Beaches thanks to local mum Judi Huxedurp. While the group itself is well attended each month, we have always struggled to find more volunteers in the area to help start other activities. A monthly social day was discontinued following consistently low interest in the area. We hope to secure funding in the future to establish themed social groups for children such as an art group or fitness club.

NORTHERN BEACHES SUPPORT GROUP

When: Third Thursday 7.30 to 9.30 pm

Venue: Manly - Warringah Rugby Leagues Club — corner Federal Parade & Pittwater Road Brookvale

Facilitator: Judi Huxedurp



MILESTONES

We exceeded 900 families registered for support through this network during 2016

The ACN relocated to our new office at Illawong, having outgrown the space in our original Riverwood location. We were honored to once again have Mr. John Ajaka, in his capacity as the Minister for disabilities, formally open the new office. Also in attendance to mark this special occasion, were Ms Eleni Petinos, NSW Member for Miranda, Mr. Mark Coure, NSW Member for Oatley, the Mayor of Sutherland, Mr. Carmelo Pesci, as well as Councillors Steve Simpson and John Riad.



Financial Statement 2016

Autism Community Network Balance Sheet

Assets 30 Jun 16

Accounts Receivable	\$2,172.10
Bond	\$588.00
Cash on Hand	\$550.00
Deposit Paid	\$420.00
Furniture & Equipment	\$2,005.16
Furniture & Equipment Accum. Depr.	-\$2,005.16
Inventory	\$12.26

Leaders Program Hurstville \$39.80
 Leaders Program Hurstville; Erin Normoyle; -\$100.00

PayPal Account	\$5,369.22
Society Cheque Account	\$79,542.68
Tax Paid on Purchases	\$1,382.32

Together program; Auburn SG;	\$44.50
Together program; Blacktown2 SG;	-\$294.00
Together program; Eastern Suburbs SG;	\$244.50
Together program; Eastern Suburbs2 SG;	\$244.50
Together program; Inner West SG;	\$244.50
Together program; Inner West2 SG;	\$244.50
Together Program; Northern Beaches SG;	\$94.50
Together program; Ryde SG;	\$91.04
Together program; St George SG;	\$244.50

Together program; Sutherland SG;	\$244.50
Together program; Sutherland2 SG;	\$244.50
Together Program; Sydney City SG;	\$244.50
Together Program; Sydney City2 SG;	\$244.50
Together program; Turrumurra SG;	\$244.50
Together program; Turrumurra2 SG;	\$244.50
Visa Card (ED)	\$96.45
VISA Card (SD)	\$215.78
Total Assets	\$91,814.15

Liabilities 30 Jun 16

Accounts Payable	\$14,275.40
Employee PAYG Payable	\$1,676.00
Employee SGC Super Payable	\$1,029.98
Tax Collected from Sales	\$4,244.81
Total Liabilities	\$1,226.19
Net Assets	\$70,587.96

Equity 30 Jun 16

Current Earnings	\$25,001.05
Retained Earnings	\$45,586.91
Total Equity	\$70,587.96

Auditor's Report
 Attached

Autism Community Network Profit & Loss Summary

Profit & Loss Summary - Saasu <https://secure.saasu.com/a/reports/profitlosssummary>

Employee SGC Super	\$4,075.64	3.33%
Entertainment	\$18.16	0.01%
Equipment	\$2,532.10	2.07%
Fundraising	\$2,703.91	2.21%
Gifts	\$430.34	0.35%
Insurance	\$1,732.43	1.41%
Internet	\$481.92	0.39%
IT	\$7,762.51	6.34%
Marketing	\$78.93	0.06%
Materials	\$424.57	0.35%
Office Supplies	\$1,314.14	1.07%
Parking	\$57.45	0.05%
Postage	\$503.17	0.41%
Printing	\$618.13	0.50%
Rent	\$3,852.15	3.14%
Telephone	\$1,886.67	1.54%
Travel	\$1,581.21	1.29%
Venue hire	\$4,034.54	3.29%
Water	\$31.51	0.03%
Workers Compensation	\$532.82	0.43%

Expense Total	\$96,608.30	78.87%
Operating Profit	\$25,874.45	21.12%
Other Income		
Interest Income	\$23.06	0.02%
Other Income Total	\$23.06	0.02%
Other Expense		
Other Expense Total	0.00	0.00%
Net Profit	\$25,897.51	21.14%

Gross Profit = Income - Cost of Sales Operating Profit = Gross Profit - Expenses
 Net Profit = Operating Profit + Other Income - Other Expenses

Please note that this report shows amounts excluding tax.

INCOME STATEMENT

Revenue/Receipts	
Government Grants	\$18,685
Donations and bequests	\$88,101
Other revenue/receipts	\$15,701
Total revenue/receipts	\$122,487
Other income (for example, gains)	\$23
Total income/receipts	\$122,510
Expenses/Payments	
Employee expenses/payments	\$52,238
Other expenses/payments	\$44,294
Total expenses/payments	\$96,532
Net surplus/(deficit)	\$25,978

BALANCE SHEET extract

Total assets	\$91,809
Total liabilities	\$21,146
Net Assets/Liabilities	\$70,663

Autism Community Network Profit & Loss Summary

Income 01 Jul 15 to 30 Jun 16

% Performance vs Total Income		
Donations	\$36,206.07	29.56%
Fundraising	\$11,392.30	9.30%
Membership fees	\$3.50	0.00%
Philanthropy	\$51,898.54	42.37%
Sales	\$4,305.93	3.52%
State Govt Grants	\$18,685.62	15.25%
Income Total	\$122,491.96	100.00%
Cost of Sales		
Stock	\$9.21	0.01%
Cost Of Sales Total	\$9.21	0.01%
Gross Profit	\$122,482.75	99.99%

Expense

Accounting Fees	\$1,000.00	0.82%
Administration	\$152.26	0.12%
Advertising	\$150.00	0.12%
Bank Fees	\$518.97	0.42%
Catering	\$1,805.34	1.47%
Contractors	\$9,691.00	7.91%
Electricity	\$474.22	0.39%
Employee Annual Leave Pay	\$3,097.60	2.53%
Employee Annual Leave Pay Leave		
Loaded	\$542.08	0.44%
Employee Base Pay	\$44,524.53	36.35%

Income statement and balance sheet extract

Income statement for small charities	
Revenue/receipts	
Government grants	\$18,685
Donations and bequests	\$88,101
Other revenue/receipts	\$15,701
Total revenue/receipts (a + b + c)	\$122,487
Other income, if applicable	\$23
Total income/receipts (d + e)	\$ 122,510
Expenses/payments	
Employee expenses/payments	\$52,238
Grants and donations made for use in Australia	\$0
Grants and donations made for use outside Australia	\$0
Other expenses/payments	\$44,294
Total expenses/payments (g + i + j + k)	\$96,532
Net surplus/deficit (f - l)	\$25,973
Balance sheet	
t. Total assets	\$91,809
y. Total liabilities	\$21,146
z. Net assets/liabilities (t - y)	\$70,663

Business Planning 2015-2017

Our Business Plan 2015-2017 was adopted by the Board 26 June 2014.

Key areas of focus

Key areas of focus during 2015-2017 are:

Secure government and philanthropic funding to ensure financial viability and enable expansion

Develop fundraising program to meet unfunded costs and build cash reserves

Engage 3 staff to deliver core service functions

Develop services to assist other autism user groups in supporting their communities

Build and promote training program for mainstream and disability specific organisations

Develop QS and IT systems to support business expansion

Due to the loss of key personnel Claudia Walters (resigned) and Timothy Walters (deceased) the previously listed key area focus below has been suspended while we consolidate and restructure aspects of our operation.

Replicate the delivery model to 14 new communities across NSW

FEEDBACK



FROM MEMBERS

The following comments are feedback taken from our 2016 Members' survey which we conducted in mid-2016. While they are overwhelmingly positive, the criticisms show how desperate families are for more opportunities across all regions.

- I think the Autism Community Network is wonderful and want to see it grow and do what I can to help out
- You provide amazing services but none are available in my area. Not your fault but every newsletter makes me very depressed because I can't access anything. I have 4 ASD boys and no one knows how hard that is. I feel totally alone.
- Can the parent support groups sometimes start a bit earlier?
- Thank you very much
- Even though my son is 19 now and the support group meeting time didn't suit me I always read the newsletter to see where i can help out and am really happy that ACN is there for families to use and get the support and help needed. I have benefited a lot from ACN and got to know and form friendships with other wonderful people so i hope it continues its services and I'm still a member and always interested in seeing how things are going. Thank you for the great work you're doing
- Thanks for all the effort and support you provide. The ACN is awesome and irreplaceable. I'm not sure how our family would cope without you.
- My son is in high school the activities seem to be more directed for the younger groups.
- Thanks Steve for such great service
- Perhaps could focus more on facilitating greater inclusion of kids with asd in mainstream society, rather than segregation
- Create more opportunities to seek committed people to help run ACN activities.
- Thank you for your ongoing support & guidance
- If we can have more NDIS information, would be great! There are lots organisation run information for it and in my experience, My choice matters have quite updated one.
- There aren't many activities on for my child's age (12) in the inner west. No opportunities to meet kids like him. There's not many opportunities to form connections with other parents either. He would have loved the bully proof kids or cooking programs but there was no point in registering him for them as they were in southern Sydney and we would never have been able to get there in time. Not much support for people in the inner west. Activities seem to be mainly available to people who live in Southern Sydney, not much for any other region.
- ACN is excellent
- Keep up the good work!
- Steve and the ACN do an amazing job! You came along just when I needed you most (when my second son was also diagnosed with ASD). Thank you.
- Can drama be on a week night? This helped my child socially.

THE COMMUNITY HAS NOTICED US AND OUR TEAM'S EFFORTS RECOGNISED

2016 ACN Vice President Jane Tzakos received St. George Community Volunteer Award



2016 ACN Board Member and volunteer Terry Lynch recognized at the Banks Community Awards

2016 ACN Treasurer Magdalena Oszywa received St. George Community Volunteer Award

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2015 ACN President Warren Thompson received Banks Volunteer of the Year Award



2015 ACN Director Terry Lynch received St. George Community Volunteer Award

2015 ACN Founder Steve Drakoulis nominated for Pride of Australia Award

2015 ACN Founder Steve Drakoulis nominated for ASPECT Volunteer Award

2014 ACN Volunteer Liz Diab received St. George Community Volunteer Award

2014 ACN Founder Steve Drakoulis awarded International Association of Lions Clubs Medal of Merit

2014 ACN Founder Steve Drakoulis nominated for NSW Disability Industry Innovation Award.

2014 ACN Founder Steve Drakoulis nominated for Pride of Australia Award



RESEARCH PROJECTS

We recognize that change comes with new knowledge. It has therefore been our policy to always support where possible credible research on issues related to autism. We are regularly contacted by individuals from universities and other institutes to help promote research projects. A page has been created on our website and members informed whenever new projects are posed there.

In addition ACN Projects Claudia Walters has been working with Professor Stewart Einfeld to instigate a research project on the role of the gut on ASD.

ACN PARTNERS & SUPPORTERS

2016 has seen us continue to develop strong relationships with other community groups. We are grateful to all our partners in helping us bring support to so many people.

99 on York: Funding enabled ACN to run a social group for families 2015-16 for carers coming to the city of Sydney area.

3 Bridges Community: Our partner in providing venue support for local families to access social and support groups in St. George

Allseasons Fruit Market: Suppliers of resources to help our fundraising

Assistance Dogs Australia: Provide trained companion dogs to people with disabilities and have worked with us to do this for families with children on the spectrum.

Blacktown City Council: Partners in providing support services for families in its local area.

Blue Fit - Hurstville Aquatic Centre: Working together to provide the Fitability program for ASD children in the southern areas of Sydney.

Bunnings Rockdale: Presenting us with opportunities each year to fund raise through their BBQ facilities

Carers Australia NSW: We are proud to work with Carers Australia on projects assisting the community

City Tattersalls Club: Funding our Sydney city family social days in 2015-16

City of Sydney RSL Club: Funding our Sydney city family social days in 2015-16

Club Central Hurstville Menai: Funding our 2015-16 Carers Support group in Hurstville

Club Rivers: Funding for our Fitability program in Penshurst, and our Children's social skills art group in Peakhurst, Club Rivers have been supporting the local community for 3 years now.

Cumberland Council: Our partnership with Cumberland Council allows us to bring support to the local community and to work on more projects to benefit families dealing with ASD

Eastwood Rugby Club: Supporting carers in the Parramatta and Ryde LGAs with a venue for us to run a monthly support group

Funtime 4 Kidz: Working with ACN to provide weekly fun and fitness for children in the Sutherland Shire

Georges River Life Care: Supporting children with autism through their own programs as well as providing free space and facilities for our Art group Youth Club. GRLC also supports ACN with school holiday activities and other services for our members.

Hornsby RSL: Funding support for their local community



ACN PARTNERS & SUPPORTERS

Junaya Family Development Services: Our partner in providing support groups for families in the Blacktown LGA



Leichhardt Council: A partner in providing an autism support group to its local community, through the use of council property for meetings and events.



Australian Lions Foundation: The generous support of Lions Clubs throughout NSW has enabled us to provide over 150 families with iPads and assistive technology to help non verbal children with ASD to communicate.



Kingsgrove Community Aid Centre: Working with ACN to provide autism support for families in St. George



Lions Club of Lugarno: A longtime partner of ACN, this wonderful club have been there alongside us whenever we have wanted to support our local community.



Lions Club of Parramatta

Lions Club of Parramatta: Families in Sydney's west are able to bring their children to a social skills art club thanks to generous support by the Lions Club of Parramatta



Little Tastes Café: Regularly supporting ACN with our fundraising activities through donations of their delicious cakes



Luke Priddis Foundation: Our partner in providing support for families in the Penrith and Blue Mountains areas.



Manly-Warringah Leagues Club: Generously provide space for our monthly support group to meet on the northern beaches



Parramatta Council: Thanks to a grant provided by council ACN was able to provide a social group for families in the area.

Pop Graphic Design: Supporting ACN with our design needs



Pop Design & Print
www.popgraphics.com.au

Sutherland Shire Council We are privileged to enjoy the support of our local council and through it our main office is based in one of its facilities



Together Program - Carers NSW: We acknowledge the annual support from the Together program which enables us to provide programs for carers throughout all our regions



United Taekwondo: Working with ACN to provide opportunities for children on the spectrum



Zakumi Consulting: We are grateful for the specialist advice and support of Zakumi Consulting

