



SOCIAL IMPACT STRATEGY

The Autism Community Network (ACN) exists for one reason only. To help carers, children and individuals dealing with the impact of autism spectrum disorders.

Current Situation

Autism affects 1 in 100 children born today. This rate is growing. The impact this can have on our community in the future is immense.

Many families experience isolation and yearn for opportunities to connect with others in their community for mutual support and understanding

Participants

We support families across all of Sydney metropolitan area and parts of NSW. These include parents and carers, children, teens, siblings, and adult individuals on the autism spectrum.

As at February 2016, we have over 850 families registered, comprising of almost 2000 individuals.

Activities

ACN provides :

- Information and support for individuals with autism, parents and carers
- We have carer support groups in Hornsby, Turramurra, Brookvale, Ryde, Hurstville, Belmore, Caringbah, Blacktown, and soon in Leichhardt.
- Regular social groups for families
- Social skills building programs for children including Drama, Fitness, Cooking, Art, Youth club, play groups, and more

Outcomes

- In 2013-14, **612 attendances** were recorded at Support Group meetings
- **996 attendances** were recorded at Social Skills activities
- **34 Members** provided **7,800** hours of voluntary contribution valued at over **\$234,000** and raised a further \$149,330 through grants, fundraising and donations.
- 90% of respondents in our Annual Member Survey said that ACN services were excellent. The other 10% said they were very good.

Impact

850 families who rely on this network have found support, built confidence, developed friendships, and seen their children benefit from our programs.

We've built capacity across communities, developed relationships with other local organisations, and provided access to information for many who previously struggled to cope.