



Annual Report October 2017



www.swanautism.org.au



Vision

A community where everyone living with Autism is able to live the life they choose.

Mission Statement

To enhance the lives of individuals and families affected by Autism Spectrum Disorders in their own communities by:

- ❖ Providing holistic support to individuals and families
- ❖ Partnering, aligning and collaborating with existing organisations with similar values
- ❖ Sharing our success with other support networks, and pioneering positive change and improved regional services through these meaningful partnerships
- ❖ Creating and improving choice and control in social and respite opportunities
- ❖ Building community participation, inclusion and contribution for all people with disabilities, through improved understanding and acceptance





President's Report

In contrast to last year, the 2017 Annual General Meeting sees SWAN on the cusp of a much brighter future.

At the end of 2016 we faced a very uncertain future. We had completed a project for the Disability Services Commission and further funds were proving impossible to secure. Our premises were not secure and attempts at finding alternative office space were unsuccessful.

At a time of crisis a call for assistance was made, and, to our great relief, we were provided with rent relief by our landlord, Brad Nugent Psychology. In addition, Greg and Kathy Walsh agreed to assist in paying the wages of our staff. This has allowed us to appoint a second staff member in a part-time capacity.

Unfortunately we then discovered that our offices in Kent Street were to be redeveloped and we are as a consequence without an office. The Avery family have allowed their home to become our temporary office.

Once again Mr Walsh has assisted by brokering an arrangement with the Freemason's lodges of Busselton to build offices on their 60 West Street premises. It is hoped that these will be available to occupy in early 2018. In the interim the Rural Clinical School of WA has made available storage space at no charge and Busselton Storage Solutions has provided space in their storage facility at a reduced rate.

When we are located in our new premises it is hoped that we will be able to offer a greater range of services and that we will be able to attract further funding.

I would like to thank our sponsors, volunteers, our staff (Nick and Mel) and my fellow Board members for their efforts during these difficult times.

I would like to extend a very genuine invitation to our members to become involved either at Board level or in whatever capacity they are able.

Dr Stephen Cohen
SWAN President



Kids having fun at the SWAN Christmas Party



Treasurer's Report

2016/17 has been a challenging time for SWAN, with the ongoing financing of the organisation given sharp focus during late 2016. SWAN provides an extremely valuable resource to the community, a service which was not provided by others in the community. The reality is, SWAN's services were not provided because there was not funding available to provide these services, even though the demand was there.

The landscape for SWAN has actually become more challenging. With the introduction of the WA NDIS, there is an expectation in the community that organisations such as SWAN would be funded to deliver the services it provides. However SWAN do not receive government funding, relying on the programs it operates and the generous support of community donations. SWAN also has to compete with many very large organisations, who have full time paid staff, employed solely for the preparation of grant applications, acquittals and the sourcing of government funding. SWAN staff are paid part time, and commit far more hours than they are paid, to maintain a level of support to our increasing number of members and community need.

Total income for the 2016/17 financial year was \$84,828.15, compared to \$82,690 in 2015/16. While the total income is relatively the same, how that income was derived has changed. A significant proportion of income for the 2015/16 year was due to an on-grant from Developmental Disability WA (DDWA) of \$17,187.00 which carried over from 2014/15 year. This on-grant was for the provision of information and support on the WA NDIS/My Way Trial. This money was fully expensed in 2015/16, and no further funding has been granted to SWAN, although SWAN continued to be a leader in the provision of information, support and advocacy to people with disabilities and their families, as they navigate a continually changing system.

Changes in the sources of income to fund SWAN can be identified in the accounts, with an increase in total donations and fundraising. Our thanks to Greg and Kathy Walsh, Brad Nugent and Jasmine Geddes, the Maschette Family, Yallingup Maze, Busselton Masonic Centre, Kingston Primary School, Wesfarmers Ltd, Freedom Bunbury, The Good Guys Busselton, Kent St Bakery and the many others who donated or gave their valuable time to SWAN.

In terms of financial position, as at 30th June 2017, SWAN has minimal liabilities and has capacity to pay these debts. The bank account balance is \$3,735.67 as at 30th June 2017. As a Board, ensuring the long term viability of SWAN is a day to day task.

Grant Avery
SWAN Treasurer



Moving Day Goodbye to 39 Kent Street Busselton



Down tools for lunch break, courtesy of the generous people at Kent St Bakery.



Admin Volunteer Tina & young helper Amalia



Secretary & volunteer, Ronnie



Moving Day

Goodbye to 39 Kent Street Busselton



Coordinator Mel with volunteers Giselle & Clare



Tina & Dulcie sorting resource boxes



Jarrod, Greg, Luke, Giselle and Ronnie taking a short break



Staff Report

At our first AGM in 2013, SWAN had 57 families formally registered as members, with 176 people subscribed to our newsletter, 228 members of our closed Facebook group, and 236 people following the SWAN public Facebook page. Today we have 1112 registered SWAN members living throughout the south west region, 453 people subscribed to our newsletter, 477 members of our closed Facebook group for individuals and families, and 1007 people following the SWAN public Facebook page. Such growth is a continuing testament to the efforts of SWAN volunteers and the need for support within our community.

On behalf of SWAN members, we are pleased to thank our sponsors, Greg and Kathy Walsh, Yallingup Maze, Sue and Colin Maschette, the Busselton Masonic Centre for their very generous support. We would also like to thank our incredible volunteers, without whom SWAN projects would simply not happen. Our sincere gratitude to Tina Williams, Chris Park, Mel Jacobson, Genevieve Day, Judy Reoch, Jim Kamchevski, Veronica, Carl, James and Ewan Madge, Giselle, Greg and Jarrod Elson, Liz Martin, Janine Slaven, Clare, Nathan and Luke Gibellini, Holly Wintle, Amanda Witham, Lindi Judge, Natalie Thomson, Lisa Engstrom, Sam Morgan, Kathy Dickson, Teresa Pool, Jasmine Geddes, Grant, Mitchell and Declan Avery, Stevie Thomas, Dionne Herisson, Dulcie Bridges, Claire Philipps, Sandy Winkle, Shane Talbot, Cherie Kane, Nicolette and Vaughan Ransley, Annie Cohen, Brad Nugent and many more. Our gratitude also to Intelife for their continued support of YES Program groups in Busselton.

SWAN continues to be a “first port of call” for families who have a family member undergoing the diagnostic assessment process. In this time when families can feel alone and vulnerable, simple conversation with peers who have experience and compassion is invaluable. Our relationship with Disability Services Commission (DSC) is now well established, with Local Coordinators often referring families to SWAN for support. Therapy providers and education staff also refer individuals and families to SWAN for information and support.

In 2017 SWAN are providing three YES Program groups for teens and young adults aged 13-25yrs, and two AutStars groups for children in grades 1-7. SWAN also delivered two important training workshops, *Understanding & Promoting Positive Behaviours* facilitated by Dr Felicity Adams from Child Matters, and *Youth Mental Health First Aid* facilitated by TMF Training Solutions, funded by a Pay It Forward grant from ConnectGroups.

The Autism in Rural Communities Research project, a collaboration between Curtin University, Val Lishman Health Research Foundation and SWAN is now completed, with researchers now analysing data ready for publication. The final report is due on 30th November 2017.



Thanks to a grant from Lotterywest, SWAN's business plan is now complete, and available on our website. SWAN staff are currently preparing the organisation to register as an endorsed provider with Department for Communities – Disability Services for WA NDIS, in addition to applying for funding grants to increase our services. In collaboration with Greg and Kathy Walsh and members of Sussex Masonic Lodge, we are preparing for the development of our new, purpose-built premises at 60 West St Busselton, and look forward to meeting many of you and providing an increased level of support and service in 2018.

Staff and volunteers work to develop new services and programs to be introduced in 2018, as part of our efforts to fill service gaps for our members. We continue to grow to meet the needs of our members, and look forward to a bright future for people with autism and their families living in the south west region of Western Australia.

Nick Avery
Programs Manager

Mel Jacobson
Coordinator



Attendees at SWAN's Youth Mental Health First Aid proudly displaying their certificates



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