



Annual Report November 2018





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

Before writing this I reviewed last year's report to the AGM. The report card on our progress since then is largely positive - with one significant frustration. At the time of the last AGM's report we had lost our dedicated office space in Busselton and our staff were working from home and "making do". We were hoping to move into new premises but these hopes have not been realised. We are now pursuing an alternative option with reasonable expectation of being able to secure premises in the near future. Somewhat like the metaphorical duck – there has been a lot of activity going on below the surface with sometimes limited progress visible above the water-line.

In the mean-time we are indebted to our staff and volunteers for their adaptability. We are appreciative of storage space made available at the Rural Clinical School in Busselton for over a year and to the organisers of the Greenbushes Fun Run who chose us as their charity to support this year.

Support from Greg and Kathy Walsh and our success in securing funds from the Department of Communities – Disability Services, for an Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) project on Connecting People With Disabilities To Mainstream Services, has allowed us to employ more staff, and, more importantly, to increase services to individuals and families in need of our support.

We have now opened an office in Bunbury and are planning an increased presence in Margaret River and (to a modest extent) Manjimup.

A long-term interest of mine has been the possibility of expanding into coding for young people on the spectrum. I visited Professor Tele Tan at Curtin University at the beginning of the year to observe their Coder Dojo, and he has connected us with a number of people with experience running these in Bunbury. We have also connected with Coder Dojos in Margaret River and Bunbury, and I am confident that we will be able to form productive partnerships to expand the reach of these.

SWAN enters the 2018/19 year with much to be optimistic about. I am grateful to our staff, my fellow Board members and our volunteers for their efforts over the last year.

Once again, I invite all of you to become involved.

Dr Stephen Cohen
SWAN President



SWAN Volunteers ready for the Guinness World Record Attempt - 'World's Largest Cheese Tasting' in Margaret River



SWAN Secretary, Ronnie Madge as the Easter Bunny



Treasurer's Report

2017/18 has continued to be a challenging time for SWAN. SWAN provides an extremely valuable resource to the south west community, a service which is not provided by others in the region. Part of SWAN's ethos has been to service the gaps for people with autism and their families. These gaps in service provision exist because historically there has been no funding for this. The reality is, there is a demand for these services, whether funded or not.

Total income for the 2017/18 financial year was \$127,284, compared to \$84,828.15 in 2016/17. SWAN had a significant increase in income for 2017/18. Mostly due to an increase in donations received, specifically the generosity of Greg and Kathy Walsh and from Grow Greenbushes Inc through the Greenbushes PINK Fun Run. SWAN continues to look to become self-sufficient, through the undertaking of activities such as YES Program and AutStars, which while funding SWAN also work to meet the needs of members. The first business plan for SWAN was completed in 2017/18, funded by Lotterywest, providing a road map for the organisation's future.

In reviewing SWAN's Profit and Loss Statement for 2017/18, expenditure on people is the biggest expense. This is comprised of SWAN staff and contracted psychologists who dedicate their time to the support of people with autism and their families. All administration work within SWAN is undertaken by volunteers, in addition to those who donate significant time during the year for the benefit of our members.

SWAN received some significant grants through 2017/18 for various projects. While some of these were started in the financial year, such as the Suicide Prevention grant from the Mental Health Commission WA (\$16,063), the majority of the funds have been for a project to be delivered in the 2018/19 year, being an Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) grant from Department of Communities – Disability Services (\$99,599). Unexpended grant funds have been removed from the Profit and Loss and appear as a liability. It is expected these grants will be finalised in the 2018/19 year.

In terms of financial position, as at 30th June 2018, SWAN is in a sound financial position. The bank account balance is \$129,607.09 as at 30th June 2018. This amount is representative of funds SWAN has received for grants to be expended during the 2018/19 year, to the benefit of many in the community. As a Board, ensuring the long-term viability of SWAN is a day to day task.

Grant Avery
SWAN Treasurer

Youth Mental Health First Aid



Busselton Youth Mental Health First Aid training



Busselton Youth Mental Health First Aiders



Bunbury Youth Mental Health First Aiders



Manjimup Youth Mental Health First Aiders with SWAN Coordinator, Mel Jacobson



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 1301 registered SWAN members (up from 1112 registered SWAN members in 2017) living throughout the south west region, 490 people subscribed to our newsletter, 525 members of our closed Facebook group for individuals and families, and 1223 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 would like to sincerely thank our major sponsors, Greg and Kathy Walsh; and would like to thank the following people and organisations for their donations to SWAN:

- Grow Greenbushes Inc
- Sue and Colin Maschette
- Sussex Masonic Lodge
- Australind Primary School
- Wesfarmers Ltd
- Kingston Primary School
- RSM Australia
- Busselton Lions Club
- Margaret River Dairy Company
- Out Loud Developmental Services
- Craven Foods
- Josh Langley
- Duchess Medical Centre
- TAB Busselton
- Busselton Backpackers
- 2 Oceans Tackle
- Friendlies Pharmacy
- Bettenay's Margaret River
- University of the Third Age

We would also like to thank our incredible volunteers, without whom SWAN projects would simply not happen. Our sincere gratitude to Tina Williams, Bryn Guthro, Chris Park, Genevieve Day, Judy Reoch, Jim Kamchevski, Veronica, Carl, James and Ewan Madge, Wayne MacIntosh, Kylie Robinson, Reka Voros, Jonelle Fraser, Giselle and Greg Elson, Liz Martin, Janine Slaven, Lindi Judge, Sam Morgan, Teresa Pool, Jasmine Geddes, Grant, Mitchell and Declan Avery, Dionne Herisson, Claire Philipps, Brad Nugent and many more.

SWAN continues to be a "first port of call" for adults and parents of children undergoing the diagnostic assessment process for autism, or who have recently been diagnosed. In this time when families can feel alone and vulnerable, the opportunity to have a conversation with peers who have experience and compassion can be invaluable. Our relationship with Department of Communities - Disability Services is very well established, with Local Coordinators often referring families to SWAN for support. Therapy providers, education staff and service providers also refer individuals and families to SWAN for information and support.



In 2018 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. We have partnered with Carers WA to host monthly carers morning teas, and with Forrest Personnel to deliver a workshop regarding employment services for people with disability. SWAN have provided four National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Information workshops, with plans to deliver more in the coming months.

Thanks to a Suicide Prevention grant from the Mental Health Commission of WA, Mel Jacobson and Nick Avery are now trained as Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) facilitators, and have delivered this important 2-day training in Busselton, Bunbury and Manjimup. Mel and Nick are available by contract to deliver this training to organisations and schools, and are planning further YMHFA training workshops in 2019.

An Information, Linkages and Capacity Building grant from Department of Communities – Disability Services, SWAN has enabled SWAN to re-employ Holly Wintle as a Coordinator, increasing our support in linking people with disabilities to mainstream services. As part of this grant, SWAN is currently in the process of developing 4 print resources for distribution in 2019. We are now available to support you with information, resources and support to engage with NDIS and mainstream services to best meet your needs, Tuesday to Friday weekly (Wednesdays in Bunbury).

The wonderful generosity of Greg and Kathy Walsh and Grow Greenbushes Inc and their sponsorship of SWAN means that we will again be able to provide the SWAN Christmas Party this year, for the first time since 2015. We hope to see many new families there.

Staff and volunteers continue to work to develop new services and programs to be introduced in 2019, 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

Holly Wintle
Coordinator

Mel Jacobson
Coordinator



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