



**WE'RE BETTER  
TOGETHER**

## **AUTISM WEST ANNUAL REPORT 2016**

Providing a better life for people with autism  
and their families | [autismwest.org.au](http://autismwest.org.au)



**autismWest**  
WE'RE BETTER TOGETHER

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# ABOUT AUTISM WEST

**Autism West is a community organisation providing unique opportunities for children, teenagers and young adults with autism to build self-esteem, social skills, independence and confidence.**

At Autism West, we see incredible potential for young people with autism.

Social, supportive and fun, we develop projects *together* that engage, challenge and motivate, teaching skills for *life*.

Using a strength-based approach, our services include a range of social groups for kids and young adults aged 10 to 30 years of age. These are groups where new friendships are made while pursuing activities tailored to members interests, facilitating the learning of new skills such as [computer coding](#), [public speaking](#), and film-making.

Autism West is also a place where families can connect, build trusted support networks and access an array of informational services, including our library, annual symposium, Talk Series events, and TOBY - the first autism therapy app clinically proven worldwide to enhance developmental outcomes.



## Our Vision

A community where young Western Australians with autism are accepted, celebrated and supported.

## Our Mission

To deliver quality services to young Western Australians with autism to enable them to connect successfully with others and the world around them.

## Our Value Proposition

Autism West provides a range of services that empower young people with autism so that they can develop social skills, engage in activities that motivate them and maximise their unique talents and strengths.



# CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

**I am proud that we continue to make a difference in the lives of many people.**

Thank you to the Autism West team for their efforts throughout 2016. Without the dedication, hard work and passion of our Board Members, committees, staff, interns and volunteers, Autism West would not be where it is today.

Some of the key achievements for 2016 were:

- Launching the new Autism West brand, including logo and [website](#)
- Developing a new governance structure, accompanied by relevant policies and procedures
- Building our organisational capacity to operate within the new NDIS space
- Building new partnerships and alliances, whilst nurturing existing ones
- Autism West becoming a formal partner with the Cooperative Research Centre for Living with Autism.

Since appointing a dedicated Operations Manager, the numbers of families accessing our social groups has significantly increased. We have also been able to develop a diverse range of services and activities for youth, specifically tailored to their interests and needs. This has allowed us to provide a voice to individuals with autism whilst enabling us to better understand how to support them. Formal evaluation of our services is now being implemented so that we can continuously improve and ensure we meet our clients' needs.

As we continue to increase our profile and build on community awareness with a focus on a targeted marketing strategy, we look ahead to 2017 and beyond.

One of the challenges for Autism West in 2017 will be to navigate through the new NDIS space, and to build financial sustainably through corporate sponsorship, fundraising activities, grants and government funding.

We are also on the lookout for new accommodation, as our lease at Rocky Bay ends in April 2017. Options for new premises are currently being explored.

I am confident we will continue to build a strong community where young Western Australians with autism are accepted, celebrated and supported, and am excited to see what we will achieve in 2017.





# CEO'S REPORT

**2016 was another busy yet rewarding year for Autism West, and I am privileged to be a part of such a wonderful community organisation with an incredible team of staff, volunteers, interns and members.**

Thank you to the Autism West Board members for their continued support and dedication. I also would like to congratulate Autism West Founder and Board Chairperson, Silvana Gaglia, who is a winner in the 2016 Impact 25 award, the only accolade recognising the most influential people in the Australian social sector. Silvana was recognised for the positive impact she has made within the community as well as her tireless efforts in the area of autism advocacy.

Some of the highlights for Autism West 2016 have been:

- Development and implementation of a new Business Plan and a Marketing and Communications Plan
- Increase of our presence and reach on social media (our Facebook likes have doubled in the last year to 1951 and we have maintained a 5/5 star rating)
- Expansion of our services to north of the river
- Increase of our membership base by 18 percent
- The Autism West 'Rethink Autism' Symposium, held in November
- A visit from Premier Colin Barnett to present us with a cheque from a successful Lotterywest grant
- A visit from Her Excellency the Honourable Kerry Sanderson AC, Governor of Western Australia.



# FUNDRAISING

Our fundraising efforts this year have included:

- Somers' Team Sprint Cup – our annual swim relay event
- Gibb Challenge – endurance cycling event in the Kimberley
- Cocktail Party – hosted by the Shephard family at their home
- Race Around Rottnest – adventure race
- Being part of United Way's 'Small Change for Big Change' campaign



We would also like to acknowledge the Owston family, who has generously offered to auction a dairy cow, Rose, to raise funds for Autism West.

These events have been critical in helping us keep our doors open, and we look forward to successful fundraising again in 2017.



# SOCIAL GROUPS

Autism West continued to offer a variety of [social groups](#) to kids, teenagers and young adults throughout 2016, and the expansion of some of our programs north and south of the river was a resounding success. This highlighted a definitive need for our services across the greater Perth metropolitan area.

The development and implementation of programs with our members continued to be well-received, the approach ensuring each program reflected the diversity, individuality and interests of its members, all whilst promoting positive mental health, increased self-esteem and independence.



In 2016, our social groups included:

- [Awesome Group](#) (Willetton and Mosman Park) – 10-15 years
- [YES Group](#) (Willetton, Mosman Park and Morley) – 13-18 years
- [Step Into Social](#) (SIS - Mosman Park) – 18-30 years
- Creative Skills – 15-25 years
- [Holiday Makers Program](#) (supported by Channel 7 Telethon) - 5-18 years
- [Coding and Lego Robotics](#) – 10-25 years
- [Autism West Speaks Out Program](#) (Public Speaking) – 15-30 years

One of the highlights from this year's programs was the creation of a documentary called *A Slice of Life*, which is currently in post-production. **Watch this space for the launch in 2017!**



# TOBY AUTISM THERAPY APP

*"This is the most incredible app in the iTunes Store for Special Needs children." - Parent*

**TOBY (Therapy Outcomes By You) is an app that was developed by Autism West, Curtin and Deakin universities, and a team of experienced allied health professionals. TOBY allows parents with newly diagnosed children to start early intervention at home and take control of their child's development.**

TOBY has recently been deemed effective following a [2-year clinical trial by Telethon Kids Institute](#). This makes TOBY the first app in the world that has been clinically proven to enhance developmental outcomes.

We continue to see positive growth in sales of the TOBY app and book, with 246 downloads of the app over the past 12 months (total 6,927). The app is being met with positive reviews and has a strong community of followers.

We have also recently updated TOBY 5-7s, which is aimed at providing therapy for early primary school aged children.

## Research Publication Results

TOBY is proud to release the results of a 2 year national study conducted by The Telethon Kids Institute alongside La Trobe, Monash and Deakin Universities.

*"Kids using TOBY showed a significant pattern of increased visual reception (matching skills) at the three month time point".*

**TELETHON  
KIDS  
INSTITUTE**  
Discover. Prevent. Cure.





# AUTISM WEST 'RETHINKING AUTISM' SYMPOSIUM



*“Thank you. A million times thank you! The Symposium has been such a wonderful day and a half of information, support and connections. The staff and volunteers of Autism West and all of the participants should be so very proud.” - Clara*

**The annual [Autism West Symposium](#), Rethinking Autism, was well attended, with wonderful feedback being received from delegates and speakers alike.**

The symposium was opened by the Honourable Donna Faragher, Minister for Disability Services, and we were delighted to host an inspirational line up of international and local speakers including:

- Chris Ulmer, founder of Special Books by Special Kids (USA)
- Judy Brewer, Chair of the Cooperative Research Centre for Living with Autism (Victoria)
- Will Rosewarne, Stakeholders Director at the I CAN Network (Victoria)
- Dr Emma Goodall, Author and Autism Consultant (South Australia)
- Speakers from our Autism West Speaks Out Program.



# ANNUAL AUTISM WEST OPEN DAY



**To close out 2016, we held an Open Day at our Mosman Park premises, playing host to approximately 200 people on a beautiful, sunny day in Perth.**

The Open Day was a great opportunity for our members to showcase some of the activities they had been involved in throughout the year, as well as a chance for the wider community to see more of what we do at Autism West.

Thanks to the many volunteers and small businesses who provided support, donations, and other services over the afternoon.



## IN THE MEDIA

**Autism West increased its presence in the media in 2016 with the help of some wonderful supporters and spokespeople. Some of the standouts were:**

- Chris Ulmer's visit to Autism West in November 2016 was [featured on Channel 9 News Perth](#)



**Chris Ulmer at Autism West**

- The Autism West Speaks Out program was featured in [Blooming Minds Mental Health & Wellbeing magazine, October 2016 edition](#)
- Presentation of a Lotterywest grant by Premier Colin Barnett [featured in the Western Suburbs Weekly community newspaper](#)
- Autism West's '*Rethinking Autism – Autism West Annual Symposium 2016*' was [featured in the Echo Newspaper](#)
- Education and the Autism West Symposium was [featured in The West Australian](#)



**Photo courtesy of The West Australian**

- Autism West featured in [a Radio Interview on 720 ABC Perth with Judith Chambers.](#)





# FRIENDS & SUPPORTERS

**Autism West receives no Government funding, relying on community support to deliver its services.**

We are fortunate to have received a number of grants throughout 2016, which have allowed us to:

- Introduce various programs and groups, including Coding and Lego Robotics, the Awesome group, and the Step into Social group
- Continue the Holiday Makers Program, supporting members and families throughout the holiday periods
- Engage a young film-maker to mentor the creation of a documentary by members
- Pilot our Autism West Speaks Out Public Speaking program.

Thank you to our generous donors and supporters, as we would not exist without your ongoing support. Our major supporters throughout 2016 were:

- Allens Lawyers
- Amex Corporation
- Argonaut
- Channel 7 Telethon
- Department of Local Government and Communities
- Department of Social Services
- Flack Foundation
- K&L Gates
- Lotterywest
- Mills Wilson
- Non-Government Centre Support
- Perpetual
- Somers & Partners
- Wesfarmers



Somers & Partners





We are also pleased to have worked with a number of organisations, including:

- Coder Dojo WA
- Creational Consulting
- Curtin University
- DADAA
- Deakin University
- Notre Dame University
- Perth Anime Convention Inc.
- Telethon Kids Institute
- Town of Mosman Park
- United Way



**Premier Colin Barnett & the Autism West Team**



# THE TEAM

## The Autism West Team

Autism West is [led by a committed team](#), including:

Alison Davis, Chief Executive Officer  
Louise Sheehy, Operations Manager  
Gabriella La Bianca, Executive Officer  
Scott Sadler, Administrative Assistant  
Tania Rodwell, TOBY Manager  
Janine Ripper, Marketing Specialist  
Mandy Orso, Bookkeeper

We are also fortunate to have an incredible team of casual staff who facilitate our many social groups, as well as an enthusiastic and committed team of volunteers and interns.

## Autism West Board

The [Autism West Board](#) consists of:

Silvana Gaglia (Chairperson)  
Karl Paganin (Deputy Chairperson)  
Adam Shephard (Treasurer)  
Jennifer Grove  
Nicole Kerr  
Steve Morris  
Andrea Jones

We thank you for your continued support and dedication to Autism West.

## Ambassadors

We thank our wonderful Autism West Ambassadors:

Michael Malone  
Professor Lyn Beazley  
Paula Smith, Autism West Speaks Out Ambassador

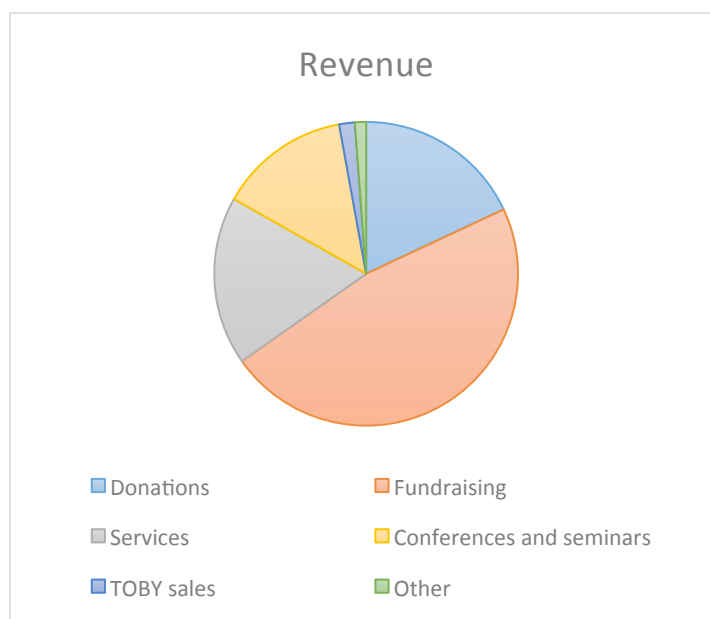


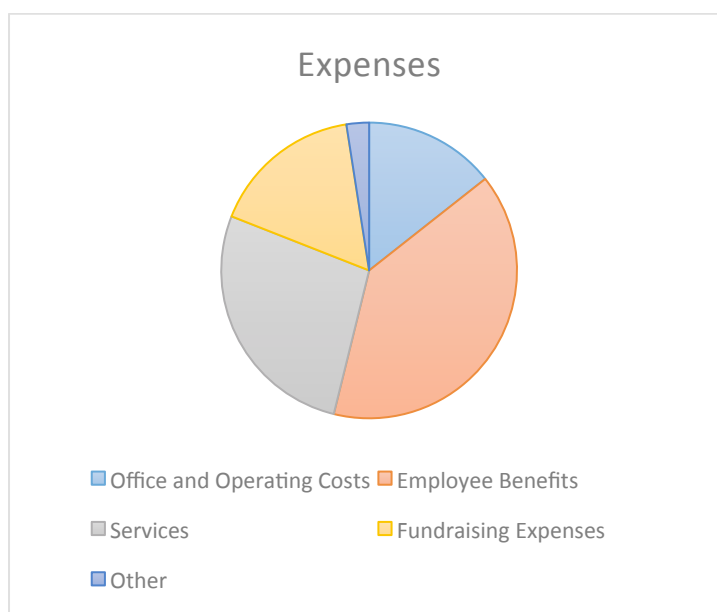
## 2015-2016 FINANCIAL INFORMATION

**Autism West finished the year in a strong position**, with working capital of \$357,900, an increase on the previous year of 7%. Our revenue increased by 26% from the previous year. Our expenses also increased by a similar amount as we continue to expand our services.

Autism West receives no Government operational funding, and it continues to fund its operations through fundraising, donations, sponsorship, project grants and service fees. Financial sustainability is a key focus area for the organisation, and the Board has worked on diversification of revenue streams to ensure greater stability for the organisation.

Operating Results	2015-2016	2014-2015
Revenue	\$664,765	\$529,203
Expenses	\$639,163	\$508,562
Profit/Loss	\$25,602	\$20,641





Working Capital	2015-2016	2014-2015
<b>Total Assets (Current and Non-Current)</b>	\$394,069	\$435,622
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	\$36,169	\$103,324
<b>Working Capital</b>	\$357,900	\$332,298

Autism West looks forward to continuing to strengthen its financial position in 2017.





## 2017 AND BEYOND

### **2017 will be a year for consolidation, change and growth.**

As we busily work on our application to become a registered NDIS service provider, we are also on the lookout for new sponsors, partners and premises, with various options and relationships currently being explored.

We are especially excited about the formation of a Youth Advisory Board in 2017, which will provide a stronger voice to our young members, as well as the many projects and activities we have planned with our groups throughout 2017. We have a talented membership base, who will only continue to shine in 2017.



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