



# SASY 2021 Annual Report



**SPECIALISED ASSISTANCE SCHOOL FOR YOUTH**

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Endorsed by Chief Executive, David Wild and Chair, Rob Snowdon on 15 March 2022.



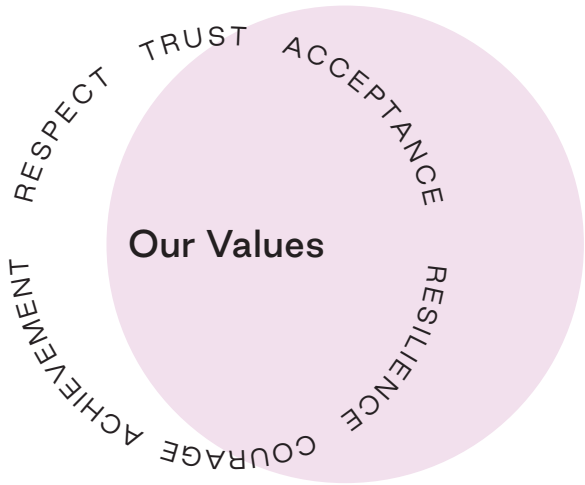
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# Welcome

## Our Vision

To engage with vulnerable and disengaged students who have complex needs, to reignite their interest in education, through holistic learning practices that focus on wellbeing.



RESPECT – For self and others.	TRUST – Be honest, sincere and seek the truth.	RESILIENCE – Care for self and others.
ACHIEVEMENT – Seek to accomplish something worthy and admirable, try hard and pursue excellence.	COURAGE – Act in accordance with principles of moral and ethical conduct, ensure consistency between words and deeds.	ACCEPTANCE – Be aware of others and their cultures, accept diversity within a democratic society, being included and including others.

# Chair Report



Student enrolments reached 158, which is the highest for SASY to date. Enrolments at commencement of the 2022 school year are anticipated to be nearing 200.

We opened new facilities for our students at 25 Chesser Street and substantially completed additional new facilities at 29 Chesser Street, for launch in January 2022.

## Financial Highlights

**\$111K**

Employee Professional Development

**\$1.8M**

Capital Projects (Properties, IT)

**\$164K**

Philanthropic Support

**\$6.2M**

Revenue

**\$3.7M**

Employee Costs

On behalf of the Board, I'm pleased to report 2021 was another very busy and gratifying year at SASY.



**Rob Snowdon**  
Chair, SASY

We continue to be amazed and proud of our students, who, whilst dealing with challenges in their daily lives, achieve positive life-changing outcomes.

SASY is primarily funded by the federal and state departments of education, with additional funding from philanthropic supporters for outreach services, gym equipment, and other programs. We thank the federal and state governments for their funding and recognise and thank major philanthropic partners SA Power Networks, CMV Foundation and Collins Clan Foundation for their ongoing support.

I'd like to thank our staff, led by Chief Executive David Wild.

As I reported in 2020, we are blessed to have wonderful staff at SASY supporting our students. We have a very good culture, and our people deliver to SASY's purpose – "engage with vulnerable and disengaged students, to reignite their interest in learning, with a focus on their wellbeing".

I know our students appreciate the efforts and support from our staff, this is demonstrated regularly through the warmth, positivity, and feedback that our students openly provide.

We have a stable and highly skilled Board and I am proud to be the Chair. Each Director is highly committed to SASY, combines very well as a multi-skilled team and contributes in the business when needed, as well as providing a high level of governance and strategic input. We're indebted to the Directors and thank each for their ongoing contribution to our purpose.

We continue to manage through a covid-impacted environment and hope all stakeholders stay safe.

Looking ahead, 2022 will include a further intake of new staff, growth in student enrolments, increased campus capacity in Chesser Street and tweaking of our methodology in the delivery of positive outcomes for our students (both well-being and learning).



# Our Board

The Board is examining SASY's future direction and is developing a 5 Year plan. Key elements of the plan will include consideration for new campuses, regional and remote relationships, professional development and training, and continuous improvement to ensure we deliver excellent outcomes for our students.



**Rob Snowdon**  
Chair

Rob is an experienced leader, who has developed his leadership, management and governance skills and experience in a wide range of industries including, electricity and telecommunications infrastructure, sports administration (AFL Port Adelaide & Sydney Swans), industrial property development, boat building, executive management, team leadership, people development and coaching, and corporate finance. In addition to being Chair of SASY, Rob is currently a Director of The Quadriplegic & Paraplegic Association of SA Ltd, Director of the Port Adelaide Football Club and Principal of Rob Snowdon Advisory. Previously, his board appointments included Chair of the Country Fire Service Foundation, Chair of Astera Group and Chair of TAFE Adelaide North Council.



**David Martin**  
Deputy Chair

David Martin is a very experienced Adelaide solicitor and business leader. He has been both Managing Partner and Chair of Partners at prominent Adelaide law firm Finlaysons. He is currently Chair of South Australia's largest aged care provider Southern Cross Care (SA, NT and Vic) Inc [~\$1 billion in assets, >\$200 million in annual revenue, and operations in SA, NT and Victoria]. He is a life member and was formerly President of the Urban Development Institute of Australia SA Inc. Through his leadership roles he has broad strategic, commercial & governance experience, including liaison with Government and acquittal of Government funding. David continues to provide consultancy in Finlaysons' property practice area specialising in property and development law. His expertise includes major projects and infrastructure developments.



**Lloyd Doddridge**  
Treasurer

Lloyd is a CFO & COO of Red Cross Australia with a broad range of transformative commercial skills acquired with global brands such as Penfolds, Lindemans, Rheem, and General Motors. More recently he has worked in strategic financial roles in the Fin-tech and Mar-tech space with both start up and global scale organisations such as Dentsu Aegis. Consistently in his career Lloyd has worked with talented people, who have great ideas but need assistance translating them into the next level of financial and operational success. Colleagues typically view him as being measured, collaborative and ethical with high expectations of performance. His leadership style reflects strong values and respect for the individual.



**Helen Platell**  
Director

Helen is passionate about enabling individuals and organisations to achieve. She has worked in a cross-section of professions, as a lawyer and in real estate investment, and has accumulated thirty years' experience in education, as a teacher, a teacher trainer and as a leader in independent schools, including internationally. In education and in life, she values creative learning with personal, collaborative opportunities to develop oneself and others. Helen believes that in the right environment, anyone can rise to overcome challenges to prosper and learn. She enjoys working with others to build an organisation – through forming a vision to master planning, to practical application and strategic steps towards success. She feels it is a privilege to be working with like-minded professionals to contribute to SASY in providing for vulnerable youth in need.



**Maria La Pietra**  
Director

Thriving in a holistic and collaborative learning environment focused on transition and outcomes, Maria established Specialised Assistance School in Adelaide in 2016 to assist disengaged youth in realising their true potential. She is highly regarded and well networked in her field, as recognised through her relationships and memberships with Australian Vocational Education and Training Professionals Association, Australian Association for Flexible and Inclusive Education, Wellbeing Australia, Australian and New Zealand Mental Health Association, Blue Knot Foundation and the Youth Work Association. Maria is currently completing her PhD. She aims to bring improvement through practical, theoretical and collaborative knowledge, developing evidence-based strategies and recommendations for educators and others in learning environments supporting young people with trauma.



**Dr Joseph Magliaro AM**  
Director

Joseph has practised in clinical and organisational psychology for over 30 years with specific interest in anxiety, mood, and trauma related disorders. In addition to clinical treatment, Joseph has extensive experience in organisational development and individual coaching. Since 1992 he has also provided psychological services to SA Ambulance Service and SA Health. He is a Fellow of the Colleges of Clinical and Organisational Psychology with the Australian Psychological Society & is endorsed as a Clinical and Organisational Psychologist with AHPRA. In 2006 Joseph completed a PhD and in 2011 he was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for services to community health through the provision of psychological intervention and support programs and support to personnel in the emergency services sector. Presently, he is full time in private practice and is Managing Director with Edward Street Psychology in Norwood, SA.



**Sean Kelly**  
Director

The SASY Board welcomed Sean Kelly as a Director at the end of 2020. Sean has extensive experience at Board and Senior Executive levels in Commonwealth and State Governments and the Private Sector, predominantly in the energy industry. His expertise includes business and financial strategy, governance and risk, customer service, people and culture, business transformation and regulation. Sean considers access to education, whether that be trade, vocational or academic as fundamental to an individual's wellbeing and life opportunities. He looks forward to continuing to contribute to SASY's growth and success.





# Chief Executive Report



Having completed my first full year as Chief Executive at SASY I am excited to report that it has been a year full of great achievements, adaptive responses to challenges, and growth. I thank our students, staff and stakeholders for all we have created together.

**92.6%**  
Of SASY  
Students Leaving  
In 2021 Went Onto  
Further Work  
And / Or Study

With SASY learning occurring by collaborative design, with wellbeing embed across all areas, and a timetable that focuses on a student's rhythm, we are proud to highlight great 2021 outcomes.

**100%**

Of 2021 SASY  
SACE Graduates  
Have Transitioned  
Into Further Work  
And / Or Study!



NEW SPACE AT 29 CHESSER STREET



David Wild  
Chief Executive

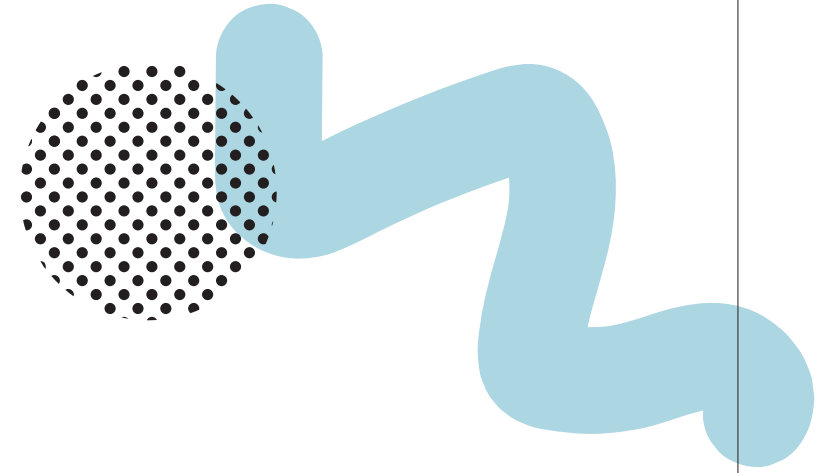
The 2021 Mission Australia Youth Survey report highlights that for Australian youth, 41.9% are either extremely or very worried about mental health and that 46.6% have personally experienced barriers to education. We at SASY are proud to state that we do school differently, directly addressing these worrying statistics to engage vulnerable young people into learning and wellbeing supports.

2021 has been an exciting year of new developments at SASY. In addition to the opening of our third building and refurbishment of our fourth, this year saw the successful roll out of our new 'hub structure', where student placement is not solely based on their age or year level, but instead is driven by their wellbeing needs. Each hub is staffed with a Team Leader, Teachers and Youth Workers, and have successfully worked with students tailoring the learning and activities to their needs.

Yet again I report that the year has been influenced greatly by COVID-19. We have continued to offer great programs despite the safety mitigation adaptations required. Above all the safety of the community is our goal, and we have maintained both a safe and supportive environment during this complex time.

Together with all the SASY staff, Directors, and stakeholders I want to thank the SASY students for a great year. To support disengaged students is why SASY exists, and to see each and every day our students achieving great things is a joy and pleasure to be involved in. Thank you, we are here for you.

With many great things to come, we look forward to working with you in the coming years.





# What We Do

## We Understand

For most children moving from pre-school through to the senior years is a normal rite of passage, however, for the students who arrive at SASY, school has been a negative experience along a road marked by mental health, trauma and disruption. The Australian education system provides an excellent option for most students; however, young people who have experienced trauma or other mental health challenges can encounter a real struggle to fit within the mainstream school system. Traumatic experiences and other mental health challenges can lead to disengagement in school and learning. Research shows that trauma can adversely affect how the brain develops and can impede a child's capacity to concentrate and learn, affecting the rest of their lives.

## Student Wellbeing

SASY students need opportunities in preparing to re-engage into learning and to feel safe and secure. Wellbeing and learning are holistically intertwined throughout all programs, which are personalised, individualised and differentiated to encourage, support and maximise student development in emotional regulation, self-awareness and readiness to learn.

## Our Approach

Hence, through research and practice, SASY has identified a different approach in re-engaging young people. Our holistic pedagogical approach is specifically designed to give students a voice. SASY has implemented a model of learning which encompasses holistic learning, restorative practice, trauma informed practice and an inclusive community.

## A Specialised Team

At SASY, we acknowledge that academic and personal growth best occurs in a safe and supportive environment where physical, emotional, cognitive and behavioural issues are addressed as part of a holistic learning approach.

All staff encourage students to be active learners and to address issues which negatively affect their learning. Individual intervention strategy plans assist staff response to de-escalate disruptive or harmful behaviours. Our students are supported by SASY staff, an on-site psychologist and external providers to develop skills in self-regulation of emotional states and behaviours which have the potential to risk harm to self or others.

SASY is founded on the principle that all young people are capable of making positive changes in their lives. We believe that all students at SASY have the right to:

Ciao!

Have a voice.

Learn in a non-threatening, supportive and accepting environment.

Actively engage in their learning.

Fair and equitable assessment practices.

Have their needs, backgrounds, perspectives and interests reflected in learning programs.

Negotiate their learning activities in collaboration with their support partners.

Negotiated, monitored and reviewed Individual Learning Plans (ILPs).

Develop a positive sense of self as independent and interdependent individuals.

Personalised transition support.

The opportunity to develop critical and creative thinking.

Collaborative & proactive engagement opportunities with local community & SASY partners.

Case management support.



# 2021 Highlights

Balancing the ongoing global pandemic requirements, including remaining open as an essential site for at-risk youth.

47

New Enrolments

5

Year 12 Graduates

14

New Staff Hired

7

Students Moved Onto  
Higher Education

20

Students Returned To  
Mainstream Schooling

27

Students Moved  
Into Work

7

Students Achieved  
VET Certificates  
Contributing to SACE  
Stages 1 & 2

8

Apprenticeships

In 2021 SASY delivered a variety of programs to our students, all with a focus on re-engaging them in learning through wellbeing and areas that interest them as individuals.

## Puff 'n' Pass Podcast

This podcast was part of the Australian Government's Local Drug and Action Team (LDAT) program initiative for young people in Adelaide's CBD, in collaboration with Adelaide City Council, Connected Self and St John Youth Service. A group of SASY students joined the team and have participated in various community focussed events, learning about the prevalence of alcohol and other drugs in the local community and particularly amongst young people. In 2020 and early 2021, the students were busy writing and recording their podcast, named "Puff 'n' Pass," a podcast by youth for youth.

These young people have started an important conversation that aims to educate and diminish stigma surrounding alcohol and other drug issues in the community and particularly with young people. The series features organic conversations by the team around their own personal experiences with substances, topics suggested by listeners and current issues. Topics include the Australian culture of alcohol use and abuse, party drugs and recreational drug use, and where to find support and resources.



With already 17.6k followers on TikTok and 500+ subscribers on YouTube, the podcast was publicly launched in Term 3 onto major streaming platforms such as Apple, Spotify and Amazon. These young people are spreading their message of harm minimisation and education to the masses and it has been incredible to see their journey so far.



# 2021 Highlights

A number of notable highlights were enjoyed during 2021 including welcoming new staff and students, the launch of new SASY programs and excellent student outcomes.



Outdoor Adventure Program Partnership With Operation Flinders



First SASY Sports Team (Ice Hockey)



First Student Podcast Went Live



Commencement Of Outreach Program



First SASY Training Event For The Education Sector



Alumni Program Launched



2020 Student Graduation Event



Christmas Eve Lunch For Disengaged Students



Market Stall Where Students Sold Products Made At SASY

SASY students had the opportunity to engage in an incredibly wide variety of learning opportunities within their own Hubs and working across the school including Mind & Body, Japanese, Life Hacks, Passion Project & Roller Skating.

## Learning Highlights

Young people continued to engage in a variety of regular programs that included 'Labs 'n' Life' Labrador training program, Basketball 'B'Ball with Big T,' and Ice Factor ice skating with great success.

SASY's Adventure Program presented students with the opportunity to participate in a wide variety of activities such as stand-up paddle boarding, kayaking, bouldering, hiking, rock climbing, Tree Climb and Mega Adventure.

Through the programs offered at SASY our young people were able to make real world connections through their learning and meet challenges head on in a supportive and safe environment that helps to build self-esteem and resilience.

## Make It Sell It

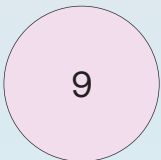
2021 saw the introduction of an entrepreneurial SACE Business Innovation subject where SASY's young people develop, pitch and actualise a small, arts-based business to take to market. This year's pilot program for Make It Sell It has seen an evolving group of SASY students develop a brand and identity named 'Surreal Harmony.'

The students produced a variety of handmade items to sell such as jewellery, screen-printed clothing, stationery and pottery. The project has gone through extensive planning, including the development of a name, logo, and branding. This culminated in a successful funding pitch to SASY leadership at the end of Term One.

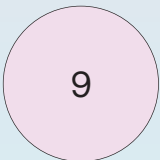
Students had the opportunity to sell their products to the public on two occasions, at the Chesser Street Food Festival and Ebenezer Night Markets. They also set up shop in the Reception area of the school which proved popular with staff! Students had the opportunity to put into practice the business skills they gained throughout the subject and display their real world learning.

The students learnt skills such as money handling, customer service, branding and promotion, budgeting and business planning, as well as refining their artistic expression and creation. This program exceeded expectations this year and it has been a pleasure to watch Surreal Harmony blossom and gain a following.

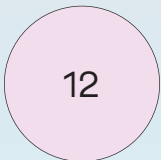
## SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED SUBJECT HIGHLIGHTS



Research Project



Personal Learning Plan



Numeracy



Literacy



# Student Stories

## Having a tough day or week?

Specialised Assistance School for Youth... you mean an extended family! I was a student at SASY for 4 years, where I successfully completed my SACE pathway as well as 3 and a half separate certificates.

Before enrolling as a student at SASY I honestly couldn't tell you what I wanted to do in the future, let alone what I'd be doing next week. Thanks to the amazing support network at SASY including Youth Workers, Teachers and admin staff, I was able to find my career pathway. I knew after all the amazing support I received that I wanted to be a support worker for youth or for anyone who is struggling, and since graduating, I've done just that.

If I was to meet a young person who was struggling with the stress of school, and they were looking for other options I would recommend SASY without a doubt.



Having a tough day or week? SASY is a very safe, non judgemental place. They have a chill out room, where you can just sit and relax. Feeling agitated or angry? Have a kick or punch on the boxing bags! The best part about SASY is every staff member is happy to sit and chat with you about what's going on, or even just to sit down for a friendly chat.

Thank you again to all the staff that helped me over the years, I will always be forever grateful.

Kellcie, SASY Graduate, 2020



Hear the difference SASY is making in our students' lives, in their own words.

I never thought I would have an opportunity to complete my SACE. In 2018 I was kicked out of my previous school. My sister was a student at SASY, and she helped me to arrange a meeting. I was told a staff member would take me under their wing, and they did.

The first little while at SASY wasn't easy, but soon I learnt coping mechanisms and how to calm myself. It's been a long hard 4 years but I am now getting to where I want to be, and I honestly believe I wouldn't be the person I am today if it wasn't for the staff and students at SASY.

Maria, SASY Student, 2021



## Learnt coping mechanisms and how to calm myself.



# Our Students

## Student Needs

Our students typically come to us as disengaged youth with complex issues such as trauma, poor mental health, homelessness, family breakdowns, substance abuse, financial instability, learning difficulties or other life experiences that act as barriers to successful engagement in traditional school settings.

When students enrol at SASY, they develop an individual learning plan with staff to set goals and identify areas that the young person may need support in. Due to the high needs of our students and the significant planning required to ensure every student is individually catered for, SASY has limited intake to once per term. In extenuating circumstances we can enrol students outside of this timeline but this is ascertained on a case by case basis.

## Attendance

We know that our students have difficulties engaging at school due to a range of complex issues. Thus, we have implemented modified timetables that support our students in their individual circumstances and reflects that re-engagement is a slow and ongoing process. Our Teaching and Support staff monitor attendance daily and absenteeism is personally followed up by staff, with some students identified for additional support with internal case management or Outreach Services. Our average student attendance rate was 49.8% in 2021. We are cognisant of the impact of trauma and mental health issues on attendance and our staff are proactive in supporting and developing resilience and readiness for learning in our students.

## Curriculum

Students at SASY complete their ACARA accredited middle school curriculum subjects, before progressing to SACE Stage 1 and 2 subjects such as Research Project, Personal Learning Project, Essential English and Essential Maths. Students can also undertake modified SACE which allows them to complete Stage 1 and 2 with the extra support they need.


Students are also given the opportunity to complete external vocational certificates that provide SACE credits, which not only helps their pathway to graduating school and entering tertiary education but equips them with real-life skills and experiences that are valuable to employment. In addition to VET opportunities, some students participate in work experience and School Based Apprenticeship and Traineeship (SBAT).

Our 2021 cohort was comprised of a total of 158 students, with 8 SACE subjects being offered to our senior students.

## Student Characteristics


4

Indigenous




93

Female




60

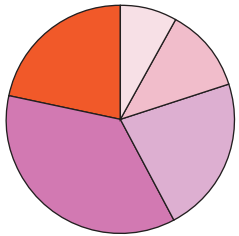
Male



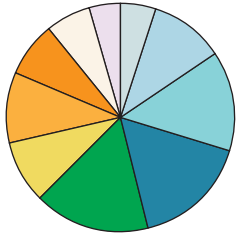
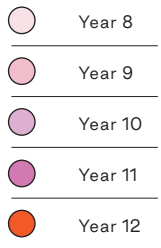
5

Non Binary





Year Levels



Student Ages





# Our Campus

The majority of our cohort access public transportation which means a central location is critical to ensuring maximum accessibility for our students, both existing and prospective.



The absence of fees at SASY ensures that any young person can have equitable access to a secondary education and achieve their learning goals such as SACE completion or a pathway to employment without financial barriers.



Our catchment isn't limited by zoning and our students come from all over Adelaide, with a slight bias in intake from lower socio-economic geographic areas such as outer northern and southern suburbs.



## Campus Growth

At the beginning of 2021, we launched our newly refurbished \$1.1m building, 25 Chesser Street. This site joined our two existing buildings, 27 and 30 Chesser Street. The new state-of the-art STEAM building was made possible thanks to funding from the State Government. The STEAM building houses our IT Hub, Art Space and Science Space, all with leading-edge equipment including 3D printers, high-tech robotics equipment and videography equipment which will support SASY's transition to project-based learning.

During 2021, SASY made additional major capital contributions to refurbish our newly leased fourth building, 29 Chesser Street, which will be opened in early 2022. Made possible by Government funding, this \$1.5m investment will offer our students access to sensory rooms, a kitchen, a health and wellbeing centre and breakout spaces for study and relaxation. The building will also house one of our four Hubs, making room in 30 Chesser for a new gym set to be completed in 2022. We are excited to see what next year has in store for us!

## Adelaide CBD



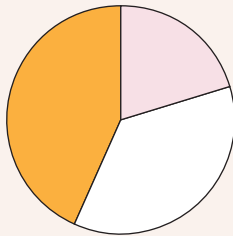


# Our Team

The team at SASY has continued to grow throughout the year.



## 2021 SASY Team Composition



	Administrative Staff (Including 2 Senior Managers)	20%
	Teaching Staff	37%
	Youth Workers / Support Staff (Including 1 Senior Manager)	43%

## Team Development

In 2021 we welcomed 14 new staff including a specialised IT Manager, multiple Teachers and Youth Workers, and introduced the new role of Student Support Officer to further aid our young people in the classroom.

We focussed heavily on staff professional development and invested in training relevant to our cohort of students, such as mental health, trauma theory and managing behavioural emergencies.

In 2021, SASY implemented four Hubs; Connect, Inspire, Ignite and Empower. These teams were devised to better address student needs in a format that enabled smaller groups with increased teacher to student ratios and spaces that suited the learning needs of that cohort.

Four Team Leaders and four Senior Teachers were appointed for each Hub and despite a challenging year, all four teams excelled.

Each Hub achieved their own sense of community and belonging between their staff and students, implemented their own 'rhythm' timetable to suit the needs of their young people, and provided more predictability and stability during the school day.

2022 will continue the Hub system with more focus on cross-hub activities and structured programs.





# Our Partners

## Partnerships

Throughout 2021 SASY has had ongoing partnerships with various key organisations, which we would also like to thank, as their contributions have enabled SASY's positive impact to grow:

- The Association of Independent Schools of South Australia
- Edward Street Psychology
- Connected Self
- TABOO Period Products
- Adelaide University Sport

AISSA leads, supports, represents and advocates for the independent school sector in South Australia and provides SASY with advice and guidance in a variety areas, assisting our Senior Leadership Team in operational matters.

Edward Street Psychology provide our on-site psychological services and an EAP for our staff, whilst Connected Self provided our staff with professional development.

In 2021, SASY formed a new partnership with TABOO to ensure our students have equitable access to sanitary products at school, free of charge.

SASY also partnered with Adelaide University Sport to provide our students with access to sport equipment, speciality sport areas and free-space areas at the University of Adelaide.



**Australian Government**  
Department of Education, Skills and Employment



**Government of South Australia**  
Department for Education

EDWARD STREET PSYCHOLOGY  
CLINICAL ♦ ORGANISATIONAL ♦ WELLNESS



# Our Supporters

## Core Funding

Commonwealth and State Government funding are an invaluable resource to SASY. With this funding, we have been able to provide our students with a range of programs and additional assistance that support them to engage, learn and connect with their community.

## Additional Funding

2021 was the first year that SASY received philanthropic and corporate funding from external parties. These donations support SASY to offer specific programs to students that are not possible through Government funding alone, however are paramount to the growth of our school.

SASY was fortunate enough to receive multiple donations throughout the year and would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the following organisations:

- SA Power Networks
- CMV Foundation
- The Collins Clan Foundation



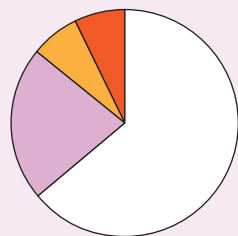
OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF 25 CHESSER STREET  
BY HONOURABLE JOHN GARDNER MP





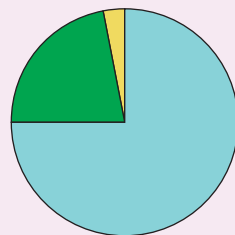
# Financials

## 2021 Expenses Breakdown



○	Staff	64%
●	Infrastructure	22%
●	Wellbeing & Curriculum	7%
●	Other	7%

## 2021 Income Breakdown



●	Federal Government Grants	75%
●	State Government Grants	22%
●	Other	3%

## SASY In The Advertiser

28 NEWS | Sunday, December 6, 2020

advertiser.com.au

# Little school steaming ahead

RACHEL MOORE

## Friends think outside box and reap rewards

A FORMER florist and a once hairdresser – who decided on a major career changes – have now helped hundreds of vulnerable young people finish their high school education.

Maria La Pietra and Rosie Stavrou, who have been friends since primary school, helped found the Specialised Assistance School for Youth (SASY), with Nic Pellegrini, in 2016.

Success for the little-known independent school on Chesser Street, in the CBD, has been rapid.

It grew from 18 to 130 students in its first three years and, next year, will have 160 students.

This week, the school has opened a \$1.1m state-of-the-art centre for science, technology,

engineering, art and maths (STEAM) centre.

The three-storey centre, in a converted heritage building, houses leading-edge equipment, including 3D printers, drones and hi-tech robotics tools.

The school, which does not charge fees, is the first of its type in SA.

It supports students in Years 8 to 12 who have trauma and mental-health issues, aiming to reignite their interest in education through holistic learning practices that focus on wellbeing.

"Every student deserves an education, people they feel safe with and a place where they feel they belong," Ms La Pietra



SASY founders Nic Pellegrini, Maria La Pietra and Rosie Stavrou with student Jai Chapman. Picture: Michael Marschall

said. "To see the students come in quite anxious and then, by the time they leave, they are like different people and they are really proud of themselves."

Ms La Pietra never finished high school herself, choosing instead to take up a career in hairdressing.

"But I always wanted to help young people," she said.

After having her children, she completed a Bachelor of Social Science.

It was while working in a private practice as a counsellor for young people that she noticed a gap in their support, and decided to start a registered training organisation.

She roped in her long-time friend, Mrs Stavrou, a former florist, as well as Mr Pellegrini.

At the suggestion of the Education Department, the RTO morphed into SASY.

The founders are proud of their achievements.

"I feel very proud; it's good to be a part of these students' lives," Mrs Stavrou said.

The trio all still work at the school.

Jai Chapman, who has just finished Year 12, said the school "saved my life".

"I don't know where I would be without the place – it's given me purpose," Mr Chapman said.

Mr Chapman, 26, will next year be employed by the school as a youth worker.

SASY chief executive David Wild said the school was funded solely from state and federal government money.

"Unfortunately, research reveals disengagement from school often turns into an intergenerational pattern, which is why it's important to provide a place to re-engage these students," Mr Wild said.

"Our new STEAM building will not only enhance students' ability to learn but, importantly, help reignite their interest in education."

SASY is doing things differently and people are talking about the positive outcomes for young people.

2/15/2021

SKATING THROUGH SCHOOL - The Advertiser, 2/15/2021



Angelina Barrage, 19, enjoys her studies, including skateboard artwork, at Adelaide's Specialised Assistance School for Youth. Picture: Mike Burton

CLARE PEDDIE

LEARNING is hitching a ride on the back of a skateboard at Adelaide's school for vulnerable and disengaged young people.

The Specialised Assistance School for Youth (SASY) on Chesser Street is experimenting with project-based learning, as chief executive David Wild explains.

"We don't have classrooms and we don't have lessons, per se, we have open learning spaces where students can come in and follow their own interests," he said.

"We build and scaffold their learning around a chosen interest area, be it skateboarding, or

environmental change, or science and CSI (crime scene investigation) or even computer gaming.

"So the young person feels like that they're engaging in the project, primarily, but it's actually subject-based learning that underpins it."

Mr Wild said the skateboard project could easily incorporate learning in as many as six subjects, from the mathematics of budgeting to buy the skateboard, through to the technology behind building it, the laws of physics that come into play when skating it, as well as the PE or fitness that comes with that type of physical activity. And then there's the option of

“The world is black and white and SASY brings colour and character”

ANGELINA BARRAGE

exploring photography, filming and painting (multimedia, art and design), plus English to write up a report.

Student Angelina Barrage, 19, is proud of her completed original skateboard design and has positive feelings about the school's influence on her life.

"I like SASY because the world is black and white and SASY brings colour and character," she said.

A new \$1.1m centre launched on Thursday, housing equipment such as 3D printers, hi-tech robotics and videography gear, will support the school's transition to project-based learning.

The fee-free, independent, not-for-profit, alternative secondary education space for vulnerable and disengaged young people is

the only SA school in the New Tech Network, which was originally conceived in the US.

New Tech Network Australia director Brad Scanlon says he wants to change the way students see school, so they see learning as a useful tool rather than simply something that they have to do.

"Where teachers can integrate their subjects, make them streamlined and make them more realistic, that's how the world operates and that's what we really aim for," he said.

"But schools still do teach the curriculum. They still do teach the fundamentals of mathematics and English and all of the other subjects."



# Our Journey

## A Brief History of SASY



**2017**

106 Students enrolled.

First cohort of SACE graduates.

**2019**

145 Students enrolled.

SASY refurbished 30 Chesser Street.

Lease and refurbishment of 27 Chesser Street.

**2021**

158 Students enrolled.

44 Staff employed.

Lease and refurbishment of our fourth building, 29 Chesser Street.

Commenced SASY's Reconciliation Action Plan and commitment to a safe and equitable space for all Australians.

Development of The SASY Way.

START

FUTURE

**2016**

16 Students enrolled.

SASY was established at 30 Chesser Street.

Received Special Assistance School registration.

Building was officially opened by Hon. Martin Haese on 6 May 2016.

**2018**

134 Students enrolled.

First SASY Formal for students.



**2020**

123 Students enrolled.

Appointment of Chief Executive.

**FUTURE**

200 Student places confirmed for 2022.

12 New staff positions confirmed for 2022.

Launch of our fourth building, 29 Chesser Street.

Refurbishment of gymnasium in 30 Chesser Street basement.

Refurbishment of kitchen at 29 Chesser Street.





# The Future

## The Future Is Young People

Having 5 students graduate from the 2021 cohort gives us great excitement about the future. SASY is proud to have played a role in their success, but ultimately, we are proud of them and are cognisant of what they have endured to achieve this.

SASY is on the cusp of a range of exciting new opportunities. In the years to come this unique school will bring its innovative education model to more young people who are not engaged with traditional schooling.



### Strategic Priorities

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY –  
Including attracting grants and working with donors.

ENHANCE PEOPLE & CULTURE –  
Including the development and documentation of The SASY Way, and the launch of our first Reconciliation Action Plan.

POSITIVE STUDENT OUTCOMES –  
Including growing our Alumni Program and Parent Nights.

EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE –  
Including a time of consolidation after recent growth.

GROWTH –  
Including exploring additional campuses and increased professional development offerings.

The future looks bright.





We acknowledge the Kurna people as the traditional custodians of the lands and waters of the Adelaide region and we pay respect to elders past, present and emerging.

## **SPECIALISED ASSISTANCE SCHOOL FOR YOUTH**

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