

SASY

2024
ANNUAL
REPORT

Endorsed by Chief Executive,
Karen Taylor and Board Chair,
Rob Snowdon on 25 April 2025



SPECIALISED ASSISTANCE
SCHOOL FOR YOUTH

03 WELCOME

06 A YEAR IN REVIEW

08 WHAT WE DO

10 CHAIR / CE REPORT

12 OUR BOARD

14 2024 HIGHLIGHTS

18 STUDENT STORIES

20 OUR PEOPLE

22 FINANCIALS

23 OUR JOURNEY

24 OUR PARTNERS & SUPPORTERS

26 THE FUTURE

OUR VISION

To create a caring environment, where disengaged young people, with complex needs, are reconnected through holistic educational experiences that improve wellbeing and reignite their interest in learning.

OUR VALUES

TRUST.
RESPECT.
RESILIENCE.
ACCEPTANCE.
CONNECTION.
CELEBRATION.

Be honest, sincere
and seek the truth.

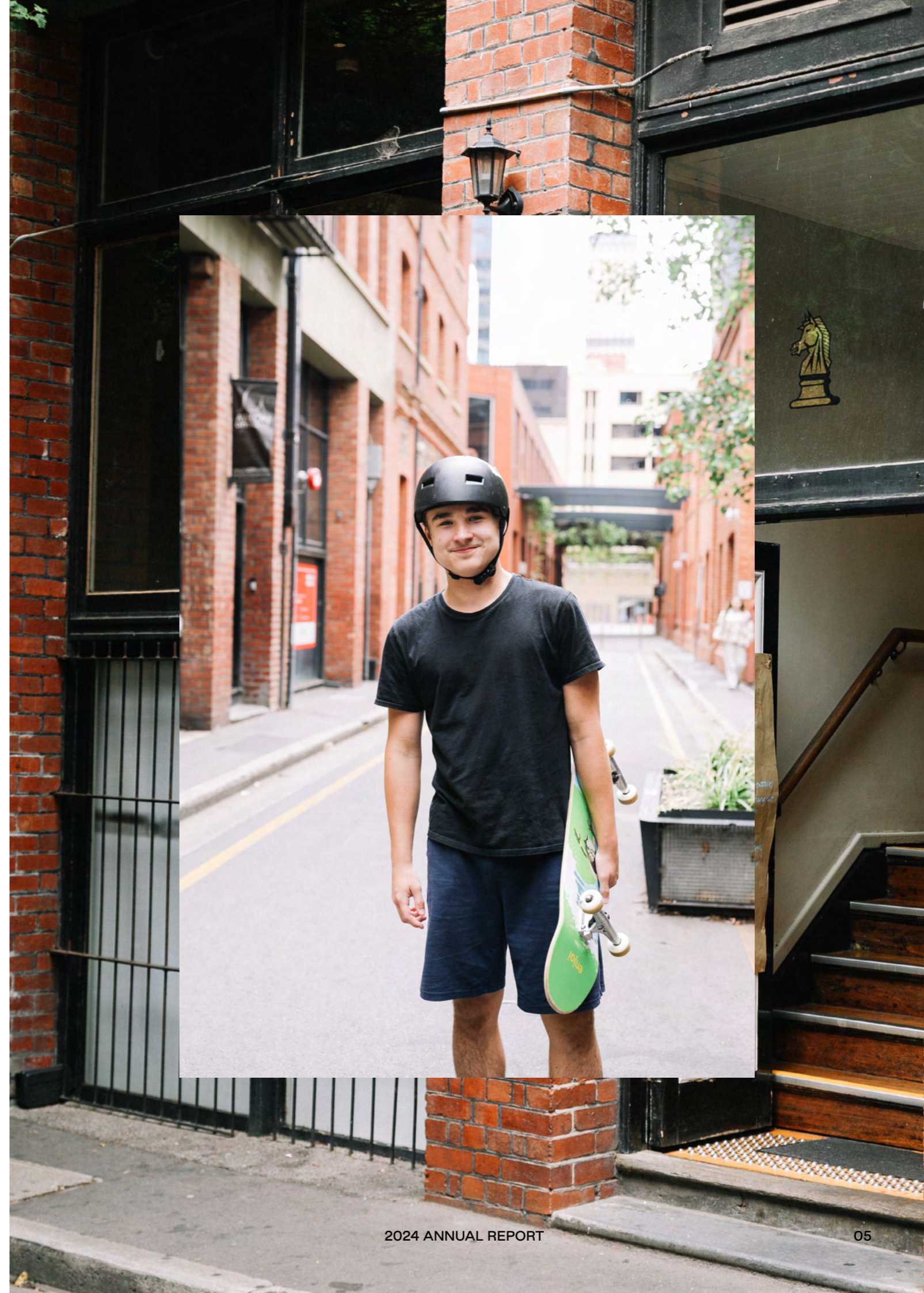
For self and others, including
both character and culture.

Care for self and others as we
build our capacity to try new things.

Respect and welcome
others' diversity.

Nurture authentic relationships to
self, others, and our environment.

Share opportunities, possibilities, voices,
grow community and bring joy.



A YEAR IN REVIEW



STUDENT OUTCOMES

Feeling Better Since Starting at SASY	90%
Making Progress Towards Learning Goals	89%
Making Progress Towards Wellbeing Goals	95%
SACE Graduates Transitioning Into Work/Study	100%
Students Moved Into Work/Further Study	78%
SACE Graduates	19
New Enrolments	66
Apprenticeships	4

WHAT WE DO

The Specialised Assistance School for Youth (SASY) is a fee free independent secondary Special Assistance School (SAS) operating specifically for disengaged young people who have complex needs between the ages of 13 and 25.

We offer a safe place for young people to reignite their learning through Holistic Practices that support their health and social emotional wellbeing as the pre-cursor to personal growth and community engagement.

SASY is innovative in its practice, flexible and responsive in its delivery, and focuses on providing an environment which enables young people to recognise and achieve their potential. Through research and practice, SASY's unique approach to reconnecting young people to learning is made up of the following four components we call Holistic Practice: holistic learning, restorative practice, trauma informed practice, and an inclusive community.

SASY recognises that wellbeing influences learning, and meaningful learning enhances wellbeing, which is why education and wellbeing are deeply intertwined throughout all programs.

We believe that all young people have the right to learn and to be supported with personalised care, fair assessment, collaborative and individual learning programs, practice critical and creative thinking, find their voice, and actively engage in the community as an individual with a positive sense of self.

We acknowledge that academic and personal growth best occurs in a safe and supportive environment where physical, emotional, cognitive and behavioural development is supported as part of a holistic learning approach.



Dear SASY Community,

We are pleased to share the 2024 Annual Report for the Specialised Assistance School for Youth (SASY).

2024 had many highlights, including the publication of SASY's second Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), camps to many locations including Second Valley, Port Elliot, Limestone Coast (Robe, Mount Gambier and Naracoorte), Port Lincoln and our first ever interstate trips to Queensland and Victoria. We held our graduation ceremony at Adelaide Town Hall, the SASY Band performed at The Jade and our ice hockey team The SASY Assassins won multiple awards throughout the year. An absolute highlight was the annual Celebrate showcase event which again demonstrated the incredible achievements of our young people and staff. Record numbers of SACE, TAFE, University and employment goals were achieved by our young people. These examples are just some of the many achievements seen throughout 2024 that demonstrate the depths of success and impact that SASY has had this year.

We recognise that success looks different for every young person at SASY and are proud of all young people who have moved through SASY this year. Whether that was trying a program for the first time, meeting new people, achieving SACE, making a friend, gaining employment, completing subject work, or simply just showing up at school after a period of being at home, we extend our congratulations to all SASY students and acknowledge the challenges that must be overcome to get here today.

We also acknowledge the incredible passion and commitment of our staff, who have supported our students' education and well-being. They have offered engaging and personalised programs and support to all students and meet them where they are at, day to day. This requires enormous adaptability and planning, and we are grateful for their care, skills, and positive impact.

We thank our Board, who have guided and effectively governed our school, and the Senior Leadership Team, who have led our staff through a year of significant growth and change. Together, they have continued to ensure that we operate with integrity, ethics, with a best for student approach, a deep commitment to SASY values and a clear strategy for years ahead.

SASY would not be where it is without the support and generosity of its stakeholders, partners and broader network. To those who have funded our programs, provided advice or support, or engaged with our students and staff this year, thank you for enriching our school offerings. SASY is a community, and one we are proud of.

We look forward towards SASY's next chapter of growth, which aims to help more young people. We plan to expand our presence in Adelaide, enrol more students, offer more programs and supports, and build strong partnerships that provide opportunities for our students in their chosen pathways, whatever that looks like.

We believe that every young person deserves a chance to thrive, and we will keep working to make that happen.

We invite you to read this report and learn more about our school in 2024. We hope that you will join us in celebrating the work of SASY.

Thanks again to our community, and we look forward to 2025!

Rob Snowdon
Chair

Karen Taylor
Chief Executive

2024 FIGURES

Revenue	\$9.9M	Employee Professional Development	\$305K
Employee Costs	\$6.0M	Philanthropic & Corporate Support	\$35K
Capital Projects (Properties, IT)	\$239K		

OUR BOARD

The Board continues to consider future options and the growing demand for schools such as SASY, to support disengaged young people.



Dr Maria La Pietra PhD
Founding Director • 2016 -Present

Thriving in a holistic and collaborative learning environment focused on transition and outcomes, Maria co-founded SASY 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 & Training Professionals Association, Australian Association for Flexible and Inclusive Education, Wellbeing Australia, Australian & New Zealand Mental Health Association, Blue Knot Foundation and the Youth Work Association.

Maria 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.



Rob Snowdon OAM
Chair • 2019 -Present

Rob is an experienced Chair, Director and leader, who has developed his leadership, management and governance skills and experience in a wide range of industries.

He has spent nearly 40 years in senior management and leadership roles and has been involved with or on boards for over 25 years. Rob has vast experience in both not-for-profit and for-profit organisations and has been heavily involved with various charities for many years.

Rob is currently a Director of The Quadriplegic & Paraplegic Association of SA, a Director of Port Adelaide Football Club, Chair of Power Community Limited and is the past Chair of both the Country Fire Service Foundation and the Astera Group. He is the Principal of Rob Snowdon Advisory, which provides advice to various organisations and individuals and is an AICD Company Director's course graduate.

Rob was also awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in the 2024 King's Birthday Honours for services to the community, and to Australian rules football.



David Martin
Deputy Chair • 2020 -Present

David Martin, Consultant at (and former Managing Partner of) Finlaysons Lawyers, specialises in property and development law, aged care and retirement villages.

His experience extends to both very large and small operators, and to both 'for profit' and 'not for profit' operators. David has played a key role in landmark projects across South Australia and nationally.

In addition to his legal expertise, David possesses wide general commercial knowledge and expertise, and a deep understanding of governance, risk and compliance.

David is currently the Chairman of the Board of Southern Cross Care (SA, NT & Vic) Inc (SCC), the largest aged care provider in South Australia, and has been a valued member of that Board for over 10 years. He is also a member of several of the SCC Board's Subcommittees.



Helen Platell
Director • 2020 -Present

Helen is an Education specialist and Solicitor with extensive knowledge in Education Law from a broad base of experience in the industry. As a former School Principal, Teacher, Parent and current School Board Director, she has dealt with educational compliance issues, employment, governance and policy development. She brings a no fuss practical approach to the SASY Board with wellbeing as an essential core value.

Helen is a Teacher and School Administrator of more than 20 years. She completed a Juris Doctor from Notre Dame University Fremantle, a Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice with distinction from The Australian National University and was admitted as a legal practitioner to the Supreme Court of Western Australia in 2016.

Helen currently works at DFG LEGAL WA in Family Law particularly on children's matters. She enjoys helping others find opportunities when facing challenges and supports individual choice.



Lloyd Doddridge
Treasurer • 2020 -Present

Lloyd is currently the Chief Operating & Financial Officer with the Australian Red Cross, and in 2024 was the Chief of Future Directions.

He has a range of transformative strategic commercial skills acquired with globally recognised brands such as Penfolds and GM and strategic financial roles in global Media and Communications.

A career working both in Australia and internationally he has dedicated his skills to supporting talented people create successful organisations.

As a senior leader, he is viewed as measured, collaborative and ethical whilst holding high expectations of performance in complex environments. His leadership style reflects strong values and respect for the individual.



Dr Joseph Magliaro AM PhD FCCLP FCOP
Director • 2020 -Present

Dr Magliaro gained registration with the South Australian Psychological Board in 1990. In 2006 Dr Magliaro completed his doctoral dissertation at the University of South Australia.

Dr Joseph Magliaro is a full member of the Australia Psychological Society and a Fellow of both the College of Clinical Psychologists and the College of Organisational Psychologists.

In June 2011 Dr Magliaro was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in the Queen's Birthday Honours for services to community health through the provision of psychological intervention and support programs and support to personnel in the emergency services.

In 2020, Dr Magliaro was appointed to the Board of Directors of Specialised Assistance School for Youth (SASY), with the specific focus to working collaboratively within SASY and developing strategies to address the mental health of SASY young people.

Dr Magliaro in 2023 was awarded the Australian National Emergency Medal for the provision of mental health services during the 2019-2020 Bushfires and the COVID pandemic.



Sean Kelly
Director • 2020 -Present

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 is a fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and considers access to education, whether that be trade, vocational or academic as fundamental to an individual's wellbeing and life opportunities.



Carolyn Grantskalns
Director • 2024 -Present

Carolyn joined the Board of Directors at Specialised Assistance School for Youth (SASY) in 2024. Carolyn has extensive experience in the education sector and has had a significant impact on the industry during her time as an educator, Principal, leader and Board Member of multiple organisations.

She is currently the Presiding Member of the Teacher Registration Board of SA, a Trustee of the History Trust of SA, Chair of Suneden Specialist School Board, a Council member of the St Peter's Cathedral Council, a Fellow of the Australian College of Educational Leaders and a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. SASY is privileged and proud to have a prolific leader and expert join the Board.

SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED SUBJECT HIGHLIGHTS	
EIF	39
English	20
Numeracy	21
AIF	8
Students Achieving VET Certificate Contributing to SACE	20
Students Who Have Completed Short Training Courses	55

Lab Rats is a Middle School science program, catering to both Connect and Inspire young people. Lab Rats is all about making science learning fun and accessible, no matter who you are. There are zero expectations regarding scientific knowledge or skills, mistakes are encouraged and celebrated, and because science is all around us, any and all questions and thoughts are welcome.

Literally: anything goes!



2024 HIGHLIGHTS

LAB RATS

The only requirement we ask of young people is they come in with an open mind and some curiosity. Since its inception in Semester 2 2024, Lab Rats has seen 27 of our Middle School young people attend sessions, learning about topics such as soil science, forensics, anatomy, and flight. Each session starts with some theory, where young people are introduced to the science, why it’s important, and how it’s relevant to their own lives. We then move into a practical where they can apply what they’ve just learnt and explore the concepts in an experiential way. We finish up with a brief reflection and discussion about what evidence we’ve found to support what we know.

Some of the practicals we’ve done this year included building simple catapults, identifying different chemicals, burning metals to see what colour the flames turn, dissecting cow eyes, building terrariums, and having a go at molecular gastronomy.

There is no right or wrong way to learn science. It’s simply about exploring the world and our universe. And young people can do that in whatever way makes sense to them!

“I enjoyed the freedom to choose what I learn, and Lab Rats is fun. I liked doing weird experiments.”

– Jordan

“It was very thrilling and intriguing. The staff made it fun, and I loved being there and having a great time. I just enjoyed learning new things!”

– Hope

“The staff are really nice, and it was fun to learn more about Science! The group work was fun, and I got to know people that I didn’t normally work with. My highlight was the eyeball dissection because it was interesting. I didn’t know the eye had blue stuff in it and that cows have similar eyes to us.”

– Sreya

MURAL MADNESS

Mural Madness was a new program developed in 2024 across Middle and Senior School as a Cross-Hub, collaborative program aligning with curriculum and SACE requirements. The program was created to build on SASY’s established connection with local health food store Foods for Life, and to nurture and grow the important role that visual art plays in the learning and wellbeing development of our young people.

The business owners of Foods for Life have supported our Senior Art and Photography students for the past 2 years by providing a central CBD location for our annual SALA Exhibition, where young people proudly display their artwork for public consumption. Foods for Life were keen to commission a mural for their external rear wall facing Coromandel Place, adjacent French and Chesser St and approached SASY to undertake the works. This would provide the class with their first opportunity to experience being artists in a ‘real world’ environment and see their work on display in a public space, right near SASY.

SASY students signed up for the task of consulting, designing and painting the mural, which was underpinned by imitating a real-world scenario of client / artist engagement. The collaborative and social nature of the visual arts in addition to putting young people at the centre of their learning were key drivers in designing the program sequence.

Young people brainstormed ideas based on the client’s criteria and ‘pitched’ them to the Foods for Life team, being involved in every stage from concept development, client consultation and finally, installation over a 5-day period in Term 1.

Adelaide City Council was also a collaborator, providing a list of requirements and OH&S guidelines that must be met. This offered our young people perspective of the considerations for public works and provided them with experience communicating with Government bodies. This mural can now be seen in Coromandel Place, where it showcases bright fruits and vegetables and the sun beams down on it in the afternoons.

Back by popular demand, the Mural Madness program also re-emerged in Term 3, this time with internal SASY offices as the locations for murals. Three offices in 27 Chesser Street, belonging to Senior Leadership were the focus of this project.

Over Semester 2, students worked with 3 very different ‘clients’ and 3 very different design processes. This culminated in 3 weeks of installation which required commitment, collaboration, teamwork, compromises and stamina! The three murals were all representative of the individual clientele and are now permanent artworks on display in our Senior Leadership office area!

Some of the key outcomes from this program were an improved sense of belonging and visibility within the local community, increased sense of pride, recognition and achievement, honing creative skills and increasing capacity to the ‘next level,’ reconnection to learning, connection with peers and staff, and the ability for students to see themselves as integral members of a group with a common goal. Not to mention, the amazing art works produced by the Mural Madness program!

IN A SNAPSHOT	
Brainstorming Workshops Attended By Art Students	17
Client Consultations	7
Site Visits (To Exterior & Interior Locations)	8
Murals	4
Young People Consistently Engaged With School	7
Litres of Acrylic Paint	30L
Consistent Engagement & Attendance Improvement	75%
Creative Problems Solved	100s

STUDENT STORIES.

It helped me develop a better mindset and helped me see the better in things rather than the bad in things.

— Sreya

At primary school, I felt lost & disconnected. I often avoided going because I didn't have good relationships with the staff, which made me feel misunderstood and unsupported.

Everything changed when I joined SASY. The staff here are incredibly understanding and patient. They took the time to get to know me and helped me achieve my goals, including obtaining the SACE points needed to complete my Cert III in Stable Hand. The staff members at SASY respect and trust my thoughts and feelings. I can confidently confide in them, knowing I will not be judged. This has made a world of difference in my life.

Not only have I found support from the staff, but I've also made some amazing connections with other students. These friendships have given me a sense of belonging and community that I never had before.

Thanks to SASY, I now look forward to the future with hope and confidence. I am grateful for the positive impact this school has had on my life, and I am excited to continue growing and achieving my dreams.

— Ruby

Before SASY, I was disengaged from school, and had no routine. Now I have some routine and structure back in my life, which I really enjoy. SASY has helped me explore different courses and build up my skills. It's helped me achieve personal goals as well, such as wanting to come to school everyday.

— Krystal

When I started at SASY I wasn't thinking about my future, but I wasn't motivated, it was only a dream. But now I have an open mind about my goals and future with basketball, nutrition, and fitness. I feel like I have more opportunities here at SASY than other schools and I can focus on what I want to do. Everything seems pretty achievable now rather than a dream.

— Will

SASY helped me reconnect with school, I made some really good friends, I love the fitness and sport options that this school offers, and I also enjoy the food that Zac cooks for us all. I have noticed that my wellbeing has improved. I enjoy coming to school, I want to come to school even when I am sick. Love the programs that are on offer, they are so interactive and fun, they are really good. And schoolwork here doesn't feel like a chore, and I am really looked after.

— SASY Student

SASY has completely changed my life and helped me grow so much as a person, it took me from a horrible time in my life where I felt hopeless to a place where I finally have hope, motivation and goals I'm working towards while being surrounded by people who care about me.

I admire the staff, values and general holistic environment of SASY so much that I would seriously consider coming back to work here or somewhere similar. That concept has been one of my main inspirations for my future education and career: something along the lines of specialised education focused on young people with complex mental health issues and neurodivergence who can't cope in a mainstream environment – because I am so impressed by how well it is done here, and I wish more kids with similar problems to mine could experience SASY rather than struggling in mainstream until they force themselves to mask and try to cope, or drop out, etc.

Generally, I don't know where I would be without SASY and I am so grateful for everything I have got to experience here and all the ways it has helped me heal and flourish as a person.

— Lawrence

Since coming to SASY and joining Ice Factor, every area of my life has improved dramatically. I went from hating everything and seeing no future for myself, fast forward to now I feel as though I'm valued and super duper happy!

— Aliesha, Middle School 2024





OUR PEOPLE



Student Ages

13 Years Old
14 Years Old
15 Years Old
16 Years Old
17 Years Old
18 Years Old
19 Years Old
20 Years Old
21 Years Old
22+ Years Old



Year Levels

Year 8
Year 9
Year 10
Year 11
Year 12

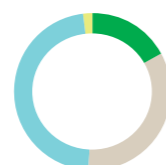
DEMOGRAPHICS

First Nations	10
Female	122
Male	61
Non Binary	22

STAFF

Our staff work side by side with young people, each playing a pivotal role in the varying stages of a young person's life at SASY.

Our team is made up of Youth Workers, Teachers and Administrative Staff. SASY employs qualified, registered Teachers who work within the AITSL teaching standards. Our high level of Teachers and Youth Workers on the floor is what makes SASY unique and enables our team to provide a high level of wraparound support to our young people.



2024 Team Demographics

Administrative Staff
Teaching Staff
Youth Workers/Support Staff
First Nations Staff

RECRUITMENT

New Staff Hired in 2024

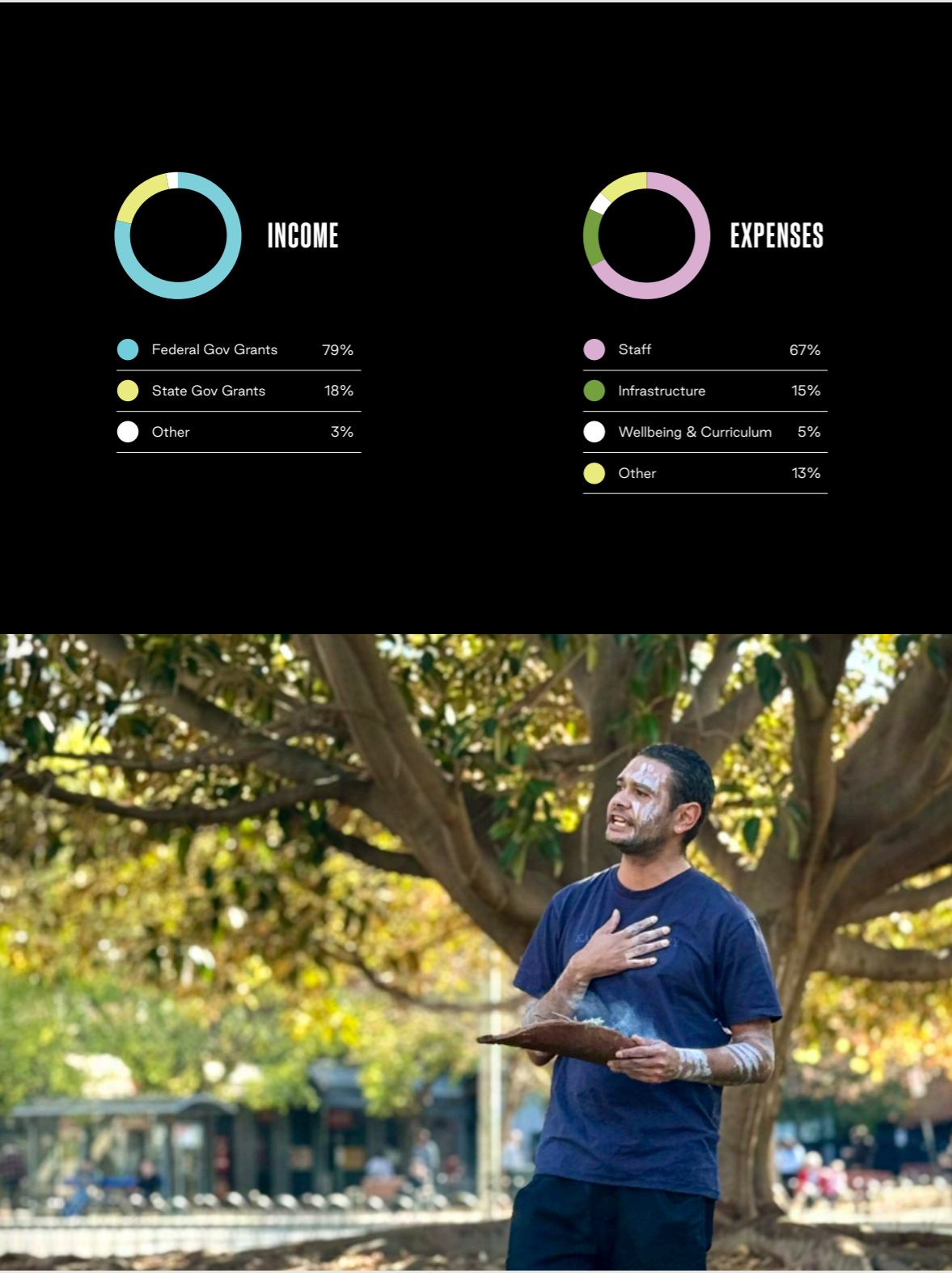
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STUDENTS

Our students typically come to us disengaged with complex challenges such as trauma, 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.

Young people come to us at varying stages of life and we meet them where they are at. We recognise that positive wellbeing is the precursor to personal and academic growth, and focus on establishing a safe environment where students feel supported and connected first.





SINCE 2016



OUR JOURNEY.

8 YEARS
500 YOUNG PEOPLE
70 SACE GRADUATES
100s OF MEANINGFUL PATHWAYS

CORE FUNDING

As a fee-free school, 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 support that enable them to engage, learn and connect.



DONATIONS

SASY has been privileged to receive philanthropic and corporate donations from external parties this year. These contributions allow our school to offer extracurricular supports to our students that aren't possible through Government funding alone, but are vital to continuing the high level of holistic care and opportunities that we provide. SASY would like to extend a heart felt thank you to the following organisations:



OUR PARTNERS + SUPPORTERS

KEY PARTNERS

Throughout 2024, SASY had ongoing key partnerships with multiple organisations who we would like to thank, as their contributions have enabled SASY's positive impact to grow:



IN-KIND DONATIONS

We also received generous in-kind donations from members of our community, and in particular we would like to acknowledge:



Having 19 students graduate, and 78% of leavers engage in positive pathways such as further work or study from the 2024 cohort are incredible achievements for our young people. They have overcome insurmountable challenges to achieve these successes, and this milestone is indicative of the resilience, hard work, determination and growth that our young people have shown this year.

SASY is on the cusp of exciting new opportunities as we head into our ninth year. As we look to the future, SASY aims to broaden its reach and re-engage more South Australian young people in education and reignite their interest in learning.

THE FUTURE

The Future Is Young People.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

FINANCIAL STABILITY

Optimise eligible funding and establish new partnerships. Effectively and ethically manage and maximise our resources to grow our impact for young people.

ENHANCE PEOPLE AND CULTURE

Embody our vision and values to attract, develop and retain staff in a safe and caring workplace.

POSITIVE STUDENT OUTCOMES

To reconnect young people in need, developing holistic wellbeing, lifelong learners, and reigniting one's meaning and purpose.

EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

Manage risk and compliance and deliver best practice Board and organisational governance.

GROWTH

Work towards establishing SASY as a multi-site school across Adelaide metro, addressing more students in need.

SPECIALISED ASSISTANCE SCHOOL FOR YOUTH

30 CHESSER STREET, ADELAIDE, SA 5000
P (08) 8227 0823 | F (08) 8227 0200
WWW.SASY.SA.EDU.AU | @SASYSCHOOL

We acknowledge the Kaurna people as the traditional custodians of the lands and waters of the Adelaide region and we pay respect to Elders past and present.