

ANNUAL REPORT 2017

MISSINGSCHOOL INCORPORATED

INTRODUCTION

Across Australia, thousands of children with serious medical conditions are at home or in hospital, missing school. MissingSchool is dedicated to bridging the educational and social gaps experienced by these kids and, often, their siblings by advocating for continuing connection to their regular school.

As the first organisation in Australia with a primary focus on keeping seriously sick kids connected to their schools, MissingSchool:

-
- *supports families with research, resources, strategies and helpful connections*
 - *raises awareness on the issue to inform the efforts of governments, educators, and health professionals*
 - *researches on embedding systems using best practice models and enabling technology*
 - *raises funds to achieve these objectives*
-

MissingSchool takes the view that school is a kid's community. Connection to their community can alleviate the stress and anxiety of illness, promote resilience and optimism, and support seriously sick kids to remain positively engaged in learning and life. This important connection reminds seriously sick kids that there is more to who they are than being sick.

MissingSchool recognises chronic school absence for kids relating to illnesses such as: Arthritis, Asthma, Blood Disorders, Brain Injury, Burns, Cancer, Crohn's Disease, Cystic Fibrosis, Diabetes, Eating Disorders, Epilepsy, Heart/Liver/Kidney Disease, Injury and Transplants. There are more illnesses than these. MissingSchool will continue our efforts in identifying the range of medical circumstances that lead to significant school absence.



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

MissingSchool's advocacy and activities are guided by these principles:

STUDENT CENTRED. Placing kids at the forefront of a **PARTNERING** approach.

LIVED EXPERIENCE. Recognising lived experience as **PARTICIPATORY** evidence.

SOUND EVIDENCE. Employing research and evaluation for **RESPONSIVE** practice.

SYSTEMIC SOLUTIONS. Leveraging the capability in systems for **STRATEGIC** outcomes.

ETHICS BASED. Ensuring that objectives, processes, and activities **SAFEGUARD** people.

MissingSchool maintains a commitment to applying these principles in getting seriously sick kids what matters most to them in their schooling. Importantly, we must do this by protecting the data of our subscribers and the interactions we have with kids and families. This means we are often unable to publicly share many of the challenging stories we hear. Those we do share are enabled with the full knowledge and consent of kids and their guardians, including the right to withdraw their consent at any time.

Incorporated in the ACT, MissingSchool is a volunteer-led registered charity, and we are endorsed by the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission as a Deductible Gift Recipient.

SUPPORTING FAMILIES

RESOURCES, STRATEGIES AND HELPFUL CONNECTIONS

FAMILY VOICE FIRST

We are committed to telling the story of sick kids and their families to create change in education and health systems across Australia. To move comprehensively towards this objective, we want to work with kids' illness groups across Australia to draw out evidence and amplify advocacy from a range of illness and family perspectives. In support of this we have compiled a list of over 600 relevant organisations and people. Going forward, we will be engaging these organisations and people through regular communication, partnerships, evidence exchange, and joint advocacy to mobilise awareness, support, and action on the issue.



RESOURCES AND STRATEGIES

Progress across the year placed sick kids, their siblings and families at the forefront of our advocacy by:

- developing a theory of change problem map by applying a governance and policy hierarchy and methodology to frame and detail the problem, that STUDENTS WITH SERIOUS ILLNESS IN AUSTRALIA EXPERIENCE EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION WHEN THEY ARE ABSENT FROM THEIR REGULAR SCHOOLS
- guiding and reviewing an Australian-first Commonwealth government research effort on school connection for seriously sick kids through consultation, information sharing and advice as a critical friend
- redeveloping the MissingSchool website to make it easier for families to find and access information, research, representations and activities on the right of sick kids to education and related advocacy
- representing the issue to politicians, research bodies, education and health practitioners, government bodies, relevant organisations, corporates and funders
- nurturing strategic partnerships in Australia and internationally
- researching approaches and forging relationships in six overseas countries: Finland, Sweden, Netherlands, Belgium, United Kingdom and Canada
- awareness raising and advocacy through formal submissions, and
- applying for funding for resources, strategies and helpful connections.

HELPFUL CONNECTIONS

We continue to maintain the MissingSchool website as a vehicle for communicating our mission, objectives, information and resources.

General subscribers increased from 283 to 311 across the year, without a campaign. Subscribers are people who visit the MissingSchool website and elect to receive information and updates from us by email.

We support our advocacy and outreach efforts by maintaining a Facebook presence. We have not developed a social media campaign, but use the Facebook page to post updates and messages which we advertise through targeted paid advertising. At the end of the reporting period, MissingSchool's Facebook page had 424 likes.



RAISING AWARENESS

INFORMING GOVERNMENTS, EDUCATORS, AND HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

REPRESENTATIONS, CONSULTATIONS AND SUBMISSIONS

We made representations to and held consultations with Commonwealth, State and Territory politicians and officers on school connection for seriously sick kids.

MissingSchool also:

- discussed an approach to tabling the issue with the Secretary of the Education Council under COAG
- engaged with all major party candidates prior to the ACT Election
- had the opportunity of a private audience with the Governor General to present the issue
- sought and achieved agreement from ACT Education Minister and Directorate to participate in small-scale trial of telepresence robot technology to connect sick kids to school when they are absent
- represented the issue by interview to the ACT Students with Disability Resource Allocation consultation led by former Discrimination Commissioner, Graeme Innes
- pursued renewed connection with Commonwealth Education Minister Birmingham's office
- submitted to ACT Students with Disability Resource Allocation Review, and
- continued contribution to and role on ACT Education Disability Education Reference Group, national Health-Education-Learners-Parents Committee (including informing the development of the H.E.L.P. Conference held in September 2017), and Sydney Children's Hospital Kids' Cancer Centre Parent Advisory Committee.

CONFERENCES AND PRESENTATIONS

MissingSchool appreciates the opportunity to participate in the conferences and presentations. These provide valuable opportunities and connections while sharing MissingSchool's advocacy work.



- presented at ACT Council of Australian Social Services Annual Conference – August 2016
- presented at ACT Education and Training Directorate staff forum on keeping seriously sick kids connected - August 2016
- presented at Sunday Assembly Canberra – December 2016
- requested for Keynote presentation at H.E.L.P. Conference
- presented at National Youth Health Conference – July 2017
- abstract submitted for The Inclusive Education Summit – June 2017

MEDIA

CHURCHILL FELLOWSHIP

National media coverage followed the announcement of 2016 Australian Churchill Fellows – MissingSchool's chair was on the list. The Churchill Fellowship is playing a vital role in raising awareness of the issue, and investigating the systems and solutions for education connection for seriously sick kids across six countries (Finland, Sweden, Netherlands, Belgium, United Kingdom, and Canada). The media coverage raised awareness of the issue and the work of MissingSchool, along with the anticipation of what the research can yield.

- 30 November 2016 – Prime 7: Eight Territorians among 2016 Churchill fellows
- 30 November 2016 – The Age: Eight Canberrans among 2016 Churchill fellows
- 30 November 2016 – The Sydney Morning Herald: Eight Canberrans among 2016 Churchill fellows
- 30 November 2016 – The Canberra Times: Eight Canberrans among 2016 Churchill fellows
- 30 November 2016 – Media Net: 106 Aussies are going global to explore new opportunities for Australia
- 30 November 2016 – ABC (via Afternoons): Churchill Fellowship awardee Megan Gilmour
- 18 December 2016 - Radio 2CC Canberra

COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT FUNDED RESEARCH

- 9 March 2017 – The Age: Trying to keep seriously sick kids in touch with schoolwork – and peers



- 9 March 2017 – The Sydney Morning Herald: Trying to keep seriously sick kids in touch with schoolwork – and peers
- 9 March 2017 – The Canberra Times: Trying to keep seriously sick kids in touch with schoolwork – and peers
- 11 March 2017 – The Advertiser: Not worth educating? The challenge facing seriously sick kids
- 12 March 2017 – The Age: The Invisibles; Critically ill kids miss a lot of school but noone is taking responsibility for their education [Full Page Print Press]

ORGANISATIONAL LINKAGES

MissingSchool recognises the following linkages in our work with organisations in Australia and overseas, including:

- ACT Council of Australian Social Services
- ACT Parents and Citizens Council, Australian Capital Territory
- Allergy and Anaphylaxis Australia
- Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy
- Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth
- Arthritis Australia
- Arthritis NSW
- Association for the Wellbeing of Children in Healthcare
- Bendigo Bank
- Brain Tumour Alliance
- Braver Stronger Smarter
- Carers Australia
- Children's Cancer Website
- Children's Healthcare Australasia
- Children with Disability
- Cure Starts Now
- Data 61
- Health Consumers NSW



- H.E.L.P. Alliance
- HOPE Europe
- Hospital Schools and organisations in Finland, Sweden, Netherlands, Belgium, United Kingdom and Canada
- Hospital Education Services, South Australia
- Kids' Cancer Centre Parent Advisory Council (Sydney Children's Hospital)
- Leading Learning 4 All
- Mater Hospital Special School, Queensland
- No Matter What
- Paediatrics at the Canberra Hospital, Australian Capital Territory
- Queensland Health
- Rare Voices
- Ronald McDonald House Charities
- Royal Children's Hospital Brisbane
- Royal Children's Hospital Education Institute, Victoria
- School of Special Education Needs, Western Australia
- Siblings Australia
- St George Foundation
- Telethon Kids Institute
- Telstra Foundation
- VGo Telepresence Robots
- Victoria Institute, Melbourne
- Westmead Children's Hospital School, New South Wales
- Winston Churchill Memorial Trust Australia

We continue to liaise with parents, and health and education practitioners who wish to tell their stories and who want to fill the gap in information and advice on how to keep kids in their care connected to their schools.



RESEARCHING

BEST PRACTICE MODELS AND ENABLING TECHNOLOGY

THEORY OF CHANGE

In June, 2016, MissingSchool commenced the development of its Theory of Change for the problem of school connection for seriously sick kids, and in late 2016, MissingSchool articulated a systems governance framework/policy hierarchy to support the mapping process. The governance framework covers education, health and family perspectives through legislation, principles of law, policy, standards, measurement, procedures, guidelines and practice.

The Theory of Change maps the context of the problem of school disconnection for seriously sick kids from the problem itself, down through governance levels of causes, to root causes. The problem map went through many iterations and was developed to its current format in June, 2017.

MissingSchool will now develop a complementary solution map to focus on multiple solution pathways and interventions that build evaluable evidence for the change. The Theory of Change work will continue into the next reporting period.

COMMONWEALTH DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION REPORT

MissingSchool participated in guiding and reviewing Australian-first Commonwealth government research on school connection for seriously sick kids through consultation on the ARACY Project Advisory Group (PAG) and as a critical friend. MissingSchool also provided ARACY with access to our evaluation work on a Theory of Change and a governance and policy hierarchy for systems change to prevent educational and social disadvantage for students who are absent from school due to illness or injury.

MissingSchool briefed the Commonwealth Department of Education and Training on a suggested approach and methodology for the report, which was produced by ARACY. MissingSchool also introduced the Department to the telepresence robot option and facilitated a meeting with an Australian telepresence robot manufacturer.

CODE FOR AUSTRALIA

Code for Australia is based on the belief that the problems we face cannot be solved unless a greater number and diversity of people become involved. It brings citizens, government and industry together to collaboratively solve social issues. MissingSchool participated in Code for Australia, worked on the concept and practice pitched for the telepresence robot pilot. Following this, MissingSchool



pitched for funding for the telepresence robot pilot to an audience at Canberra Innovation Network's First Wednesday Connect.

TELSTRA IMAGINARIUM FOR HUMAN CENTRED DESIGN

MissingSchool was successful in its application to the Telstra Imaginarium and participated in a six-day program between May-August 2016. This Not For Profit initiative, to improve the lives of young people in Australia, provided mentoring by industry experts and social innovation thought leaders in human centred design. It provided the opportunity to create and test with rapid prototyping, delve into user experience and gain insight into how to manage a digital project. School connection for seriously sick kids was investigated in a team setting at the Imaginarium. This study informed the conceptualisation of the national telepresence robot pilot.

DISCOVERY OF APPROACHES IN AUSTRALIA AND OVERSEAS

MissingSchool's Chair is a 2016 Churchill Fellowship awardee who travelled overseas to explore school connection for seriously sick kids, and bring back new knowledge for the benefit of Australian communities.

The benefits include potentially greater academic and social connection for improving physical, social, emotional, economic and mental health outcomes for sick kids now and in the future.

The Fellowship study explored new models and education systems that can inform and influence policy and practice in Australia. It included visits to Finland, Sweden, Netherlands, Belgium, United Kingdom and Canada in May and June, 2016. The report will be published on the Churchill Foundation and MissingSchool websites.

DEVELOPED A WORKING PAPER ON DATA COLLECTION

MissingSchool acknowledges and thanks Gina Meyers and Tony Barnett for preparing the working paper *DATA COLLECTION: WHAT DATA DO WE NEED?* Kids with a significant illness or injury may experience an extended absence from school. Alternatively, some illnesses or injuries may lead to an accumulation of many short absences over the course of the school year/life. When schools fail to recognise the accumulation of such absences, they fail to recognise that the student may not be receiving appropriate support. This working paper will be developed and used for advocacy on national, state and territory, and school data collection considerations for this context.

ADVOCACY FOR COMMONWEALTH FUNDING TO TABLE RESEARCH

The advocacy following the national launch of *SCHOOL CONNECTION FOR SERIOUSLY SICK KIDS: WHO ARE THEY, HOW DO WE KNOW WHAT WORKS, AND WHOSE JOB IS IT?* resulted in the Commonwealth Government commissioning a follow-on research project from ARACY to the value of \$100,000. The purpose of this research is to respond to the findings of the first report, to investigate responsibilities and to raise issues of policy and practice to galvanise greater attention to the matter from states and territories.



MissingSchool participated in the Project Advisory Group, acted as a critical friend and guided the approach and methodology with a governance framework and policy hierarchy.

The report was finalised in June 2017, and is expected to be publicly released by the Commonwealth Government.

MAPPING CHILDREN'S ILLNESS GROUPS

MissingSchool will increase its outreach and engagement with children's illness groups to better understand the challenges of school absence and connection through a range of illness perspectives. We have researched children's illness groups in Australia and their contact details. We are developing a methodology and strategy for an advocacy collaboration.

ENABLING TECHNOLOGY

MissingSchool engaged in further discussions, consultation and development of telepresence robots as a solution to school connection for seriously sick and injured kids. This included further development of a working proposal for a national pilot of telepresence robot technology and investigation of funding sources, potential partners and discussions with government (including the introduction of the concept and robot manufacturer to the Commonwealth Education Department).

RAISING FUNDS

ACHIEVING OBJECTIVES SUSTAINABLY AND BY MOBILISING PUBLIC SUPPORT

GRANTS AND DONATIONS

MissingSchool received donations of \$13,988 during the year while not actively seeking donations from the public.

GOOGLE IMPACT CHALLENGE AUSTRALIA

In June 2015, MissingSchool developed a proposal for submission to the 2016 Google Impact Challenge Australia, which offered a substantial prize pool of up to \$750,000. The proposal was to set up an Australian-first telepresence robot pilot in the Australian Capital Territory. In the reporting period, MissingSchool developed the proposal concept and proposal, and set up a partnership including VGo Robots (USA), ARACY as an evaluation partner, and Dentsu Mitchell as a media partner. We garnered political support for the proposal and support from ACT Education. MissingSchool was shortlisted but not successful in this application.



NAVITAS

The Navitas Education Trust was established to support education projects in communities where a little can go a long way. MissingSchool submitted an application for a 36-month telepresence robot pilot but was not successful.

AMP TOMORROW FUND FOR ILLNESS ALLIANCE

AMP's Tomorrow Makers come from all walks of life and locations, abilities and interests. They share the determination to make a positive impact on the community. MissingSchool submitted an application to the fund but was not successful.

ST.GEORGE FOUNDATION

MissingSchool wrote, pitched and secured the St.George Foundation's new Inspire Grant of up to \$600,000 over three years which supports innovative interventions that change the course of children's lives. MissingSchool was awarded the grant to run a national telepresence robot pilot, using a systems approach. The pilot will place telepresence robots in willing schools to demonstrate that continuous two-way connection is possible between seriously sick kids and their classrooms when they are absent, missing school.

St.George Foundation funded MissingSchool's research, released in 2015, which revealed a gap in education provision and prompted the first Commonwealth-funded research into the issue for sick kids. The telepresence robots will be a proof of concept for the solution, and commenced in the ACT in September 2017 before national rollout.

PRO BONO CONTRIBUTIONS

MissingSchool acknowledges that we have been able to achieve a lot with very little because we have attracted high value contributions in pro bono work. These have primarily been provided by the volunteer Management Committee, with the support of others. Examples include administrative support from Mia Gilmour, pro bono inputs from education consultant, Jenny Lavoipierre, pro bono bookkeeping services from Casey Taueki, reduced fees for Theory of Change consultation with Sarah Jones, and discounted pricing from Neucode for website development and Adelle Chang for website design. MissingSchool acknowledges with gratitude the power of these contributions in assisting our achievements.

FUNDING STRATEGY

MissingSchool continues to operate on lean principles, and favours seeking high impact grants for strategic initiatives directed to achieving core initiatives. Operational funding continues to be supported by generous donors and we intend to pursue operational funding initiatives over the next two financial years.



PEOPLE

We continue to be managed by people working on a fully volunteer basis. Volunteer staffing for the 2017 year approximated two full-time equivalent staff.

MissingSchool has been able to achieve so much, with so little funding because of the high-level skills that have been applied to the effort through our volunteers.

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

In 2017, MissingSchool operated with a team of four part-time volunteers who maintained a focus on completing ongoing activities. These activities include: quarterly meetings, advising on research commissioned by the Australian Government; advocacy and development of submissions; seeking funding for the national telepresence robot pilot; and researching through the Churchill Fellowship.

Our management committee draws an understanding of MissingSchool's objectives from personal experience, and backs that up with evidence from relevant research, and practical action.

MEGAN GILMOUR – CHAIR



MEGAN JACKSON – SECRETARY



CATHY NELL – PUBLIC OFFICER



HUGH DIXON – TREASURER



MEMBERSHIP

MissingSchool retains six formally enrolled members. Awareness resulting from major achievements in the period have increased that number and details will be reported in the following period. Continuing growth of MissingSchool's membership – including membership by organisations – remains an ongoing objective.

MissingSchool's membership continues to be open to parents and carers of seriously sick kids and others who are interested in achieving sustained school connection for seriously sick kids and their school-aged siblings.

OPERATIONS

STATUTORY REPORTING

MissingSchool maintained our statutory reporting obligations with the Office of Regulatory Services in the ACT, and the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

In January 2016, MissingSchool developed and agreed a high-level strategic plan. The strategic plan was supported by a detailed workplan for 2016, however, many of the activities have extended beyond that timeframe. The strategic plan and workplan were reviewed in January 2017 for outcomes and it was decided to continue with that plan until a review in January 2018.

STRENGTHENING OUR GOVERNANCE

MissingSchool is committed to good governance, and we are continuing to work on improving our processes and approaches as we grow. In the reporting period, we strengthened our governance in the following ways:

- moved to cloud-based accounting in Xero which involved a significant transition of data from 2012 in to the new system so the Management Committee has real time visibility and access to financial records.
- established Confluence cloud-based wiki for a centralised and shared filing system, an ongoing transition.
- redesigned and launched the new website for greater transparency and public access to our information, activities and results.
- achieved a place in the 'national interest' PANDORA archive, for preservation by the National Library of Australia.



ENDURING VISION

MissingSchool's imagined future is that today's "radical notion" of continuous school connection for seriously sick kids is something that will someday be taken for granted. A time when all kids with serious health conditions receive full support from their schools as a matter of course and MissingSchool is a thing of the past.

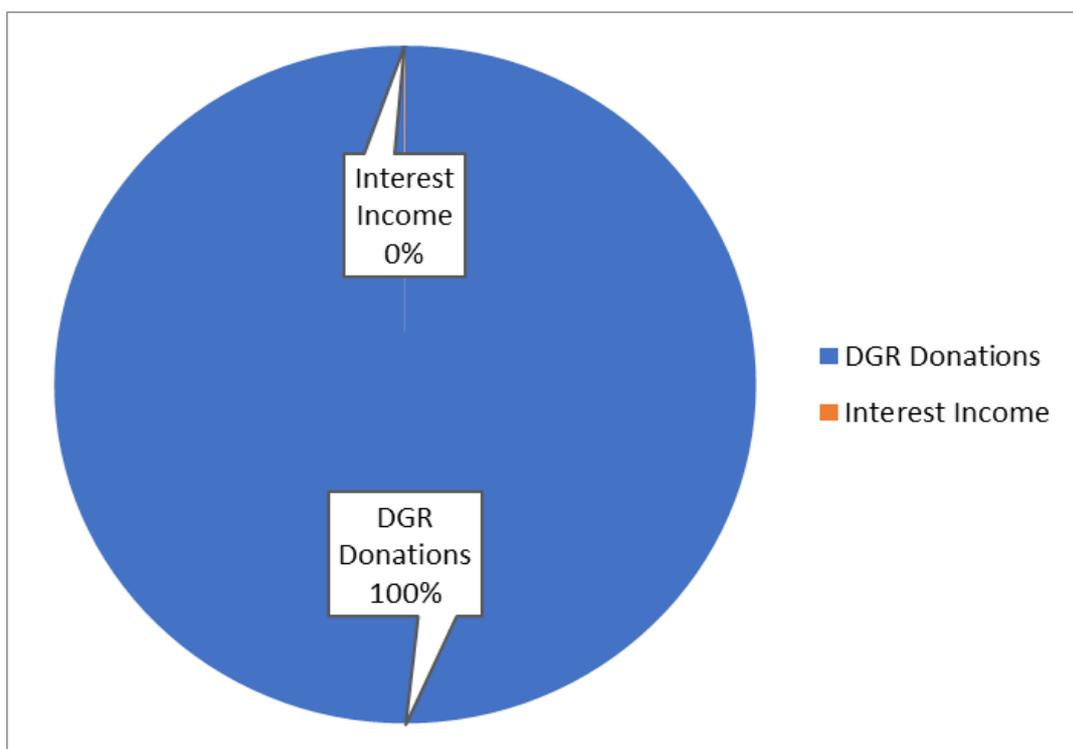
FINANCIAL REPORTING

At the end of June 2017, MissingSchool held assets totalling \$13,486.

Our accounts were audited and certified on 30/11/2017 by Certified Practicing Accountant, Stephen Sitko.

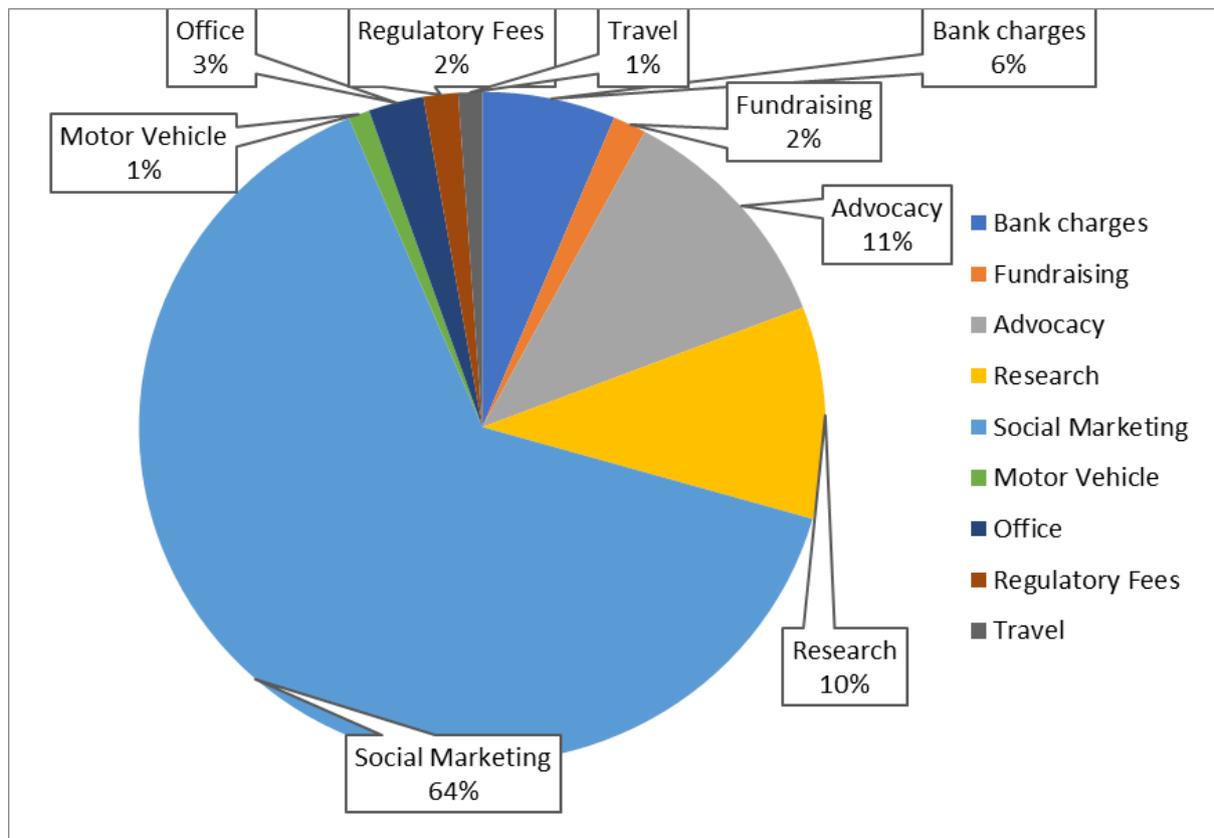
INCOME

Total income for the year amounted to \$13,996, comprising tax deductible donations of \$13,988, and bank interest of \$8.



EXPENDITURE

MissingSchool's expenses for the year totalled \$4,892. The largest expenditure (\$3,142) was for social marketing of the issue (64%), advocacy (11%), and research (10%). This specifically included a full redesign and rebuild of our website to amplify our profile and advocacy, hosting our website, costs associated with collecting and communicating with subscribers, advocacy advertising, and facilitation in developing our Theory of Change. Other costs were spread between operational activities. Note that bank charges are higher than previous years; this is because of fees associated with a large donation we received through Paypal.



BALANCE SHEET 2017

Balance Sheet

Missing School Incorporated

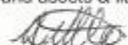
As at 30 June 2017

Cash Basis

Assets	30 Jun 2017
Bank	
Society Cheque Account	13,229
Total Bank	13,229
Total Assets	13,229
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
GST	(90)
Historical Adjustment	(151)
Suspense	(16)
Total Current Liabilities	(257)
Total Liabilities	(257)
Net Assets	13,486
Equity	
Current Year Earnings	9,104
Retained Earnings	4,382
Total Equity	13,486

The association keeps financial records in a way which properly records the association's income & expenditure and assets & liabilities

AUDITED BY:


Stephen Sitko 30/11/2017
Certified Practising Accountant: 9145170



PROFIT & LOSS STATEMENT 2017

Profit and Loss

Missing School Incorporated
For the year ended 30 June 2017
Cash Basis

	2017
Gross Profit	-
Other Income	
Charitable Income:DGR Donations	13,988
Interest Income	8
Total Other Income	13,996
Operating Expenses	
Bank Charges	307
Fundraising	77
Initiatives:Advocacy	555
Initiatives:Research&Practice	500
Marketing	3,142
Motor Vehicle	49
Office	127
Regulatory Fees	80
Travel	55
Total Operating Expenses	4,892
Net Profit	9,104

The association keeps financial records in a way which properly records the association's income & expenditure and assets & liabilities

AUDITED BY:


Stephen Sitko 30/11/2017
Certified Practicing Accountant: 9145170

