

Annual Report

2016-2017

*Working toward an equitable, just,
culturally diverse and inclusive society*



ABOUT US	3
OUR YEAR	6
OUR SERVICES	13
OUR CLIENTS	17
OUR TEAM	20
OUR VOLUNTEERS	21
OUR PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS	24
OUR BOARD	26



**Migrant Resource Centre (Southern Tasmania) and
Phoenix Centre – Southern Tasmania**

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From 1 October 2017

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ABOUT US



WHO WE ARE

The Migrant Resource Centre (Southern Tasmania) Inc. (MRC) is a not-for-profit organisation, which has been assisting migrants and refugees to settle in Tasmania since 1979. Together we strive to create a more supportive and inclusive Tasmanian Community.

Vision

An equitable, just, culturally diverse and inclusive society.

Mission

To inspire and support culturally diverse communities to reach their full potential.

What We Do

Our core services are focussed to meet the needs of migrants, humanitarian entrants and refugees. We provide:

Individual assistance for settling in Tasmania

Services and support for **older people**

Support and counselling for those who have experienced torture and trauma

Community development, project activities and building cultural awareness of needs

Support and advice to government, business and the broader community

A WARM WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR

"As a refugee who came here with nothing, I am very grateful to this country for the opportunities I have had. Refugees, perhaps more than other immigrants, are more likely to make a positive contribution to their new country, driven by a need to give something in return for being given a chance to start again after a terrible experience."

So said Les Murray AM, during an address to the Refugee Council of Australia during refugee week in 2008. Les, who was a refugee from Hungary in the 1950s, died this year on July 31. He is remembered as one of the positive forces in promoting the World Games in Australia.

The MRC continues its work through a range of activities that can support, welcome and sustain refugees and migrants.

Guided by the 2016-2019 Strategic Plan, this year the Board's activities have:

- Strengthened the governance framework by refining and aligning policies to reflect our new operating environment
- Worked closely with the CEO and management team to support services delivered
- Boosted the MRC's reputation and expertise by actively seeking and working with partners
- Overseen the introduction of a more integrated information sharing program for our growing organisation.

The Board leads our organisation to meet challenges in order to deliver quality services and care. The work and dedication of staff and the valued role of all volunteers sets our path for a bright future.

I would like to thank the commitment of all Board members, and to those involved in the great work of the sub-committees. I look forward to working with the Board and the rest of the MRC South team into the future.

Like Les Murray, every migrant has the right to reach their full potential. It is through the many programs that our growing organisation can deliver that we play our part.

Helen Burnet
Chair



A YEAR OF DELIVERING SERVICES FROM THE CENTRE OF DIVERSITY

Over the past year the MRC has enjoyed delivering its services from its new office in the suburb of Glenorchy, which is characterised by its high representation of multicultural communities, arising from historic and recent waves of migration. Since the move, the MRC has seen an increase in client visits, a greater interaction with the local community, and lots of positive feedback.

Our clients settle in Australia through a range of pathways including skilled, family and humanitarian migration programs. A large number of arrivals that settled in Glenorchy and the Greater Hobart region between January 2010 and December 2014 were from humanitarian programs.



A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

I am pleased to report our continued progress toward the achievement of the strategic objectives established by the Board in 2016.

This year was one of purposeful evolution for the MRC as we relocated from two separate sites in Hobart to a new facility at the KGV Sports and Community Centre in Glenorchy. While organisational efficiencies have been achieved in this new location, it has been a combined commitment by all staff in both Hobart and Launceston to continuous improvement, innovation and resourcefulness that has resulted in a year of ongoing development.

With a key focus on strengthening our understanding of our clients, we have integrated our service delivery model, allowing for a more seamless experience for those that access the MRC. We have also worked to engage with clients, community and key stakeholders to improve our flexibility and to be a more active driver in responding to changing needs.

Through capital investment, the Board has provided staff with significant technological improvements to undertake their roles. Internally we have analysed our information systems and scoped a new database which will give greater insight into service delivery outcomes.

In keeping with a key priority to empower our staff, we are developing a more strategic approach to Human Resources. The implementation of a proactive health, wellbeing and safety culture including the establishment of a Workplace Health and Safety initiative has been welcomed.

For the MRC, it is our staff and volunteers who symbolise just how effectively diversity contributes to achieving our goals. With their own experiences and capabilities, our team brings wonderful perspectives that add value to our organisation. I am grateful to lead such a vibrant and energetic team who are committed and dedicated to their roles.

The coming year will be one of extraordinary and exciting challenge for the MRC. With the securing of the subcontract with AMES Australia to deliver the newly designed Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP) service, our organisation will adapt by offering multiple services in Hobart and Launceston. We will evolve our stakeholder strategy accordingly and look forward to engaging with the broader Tasmanian community as a result.

I conclude by thanking the Board for their strong guidance and direction, the Chair Helen Burnet, for her support, and the Director of Services, management team, staff and volunteers – all of whom have contributed to a year of wonderful achievements.

Alison O'Neill
Chief Executive Officer

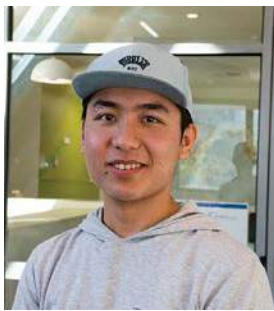


OUR YEAR



"The MRC really help people to solve their problems. They are kind people who help me with my driving. I'm really happy that MRC moved to Glenorchy because I can come here easily and quickly."

Learner Driver Mentor Program Client, Samana and her mother Hajar, from Afghanistan.



"I like having the MRC in Glenorchy because it is closer to where I live."

Youth Client, Mohammad, from Afghanistan



"MRC is the best in helping culturally diverse people. I like the MRC very much."

Learner Driver Mentor Program Client, Rev. Samuel, from South Sudan



"It is easy for me to come to MRC when I need help as it is close to the bus."

MRC Client, Zewdi, from Eritrea

2016 CENSUS: GLENORCHY

16.1%

of people speak a language other than English at home

20.1%

of residents are born overseas

15.6%

of residents have both parents born overseas

1.2%

The dominant language spoken at home, other than English is Nepali

OUR CLIENTS ORIGINATE FROM OVER

52 COUNTRIES
OF THE
WORLD



AFGHANISTAN
ALBANIA
ARGENTINA
AUSTRALIA
BANGLADESH
BHUTAN
BURUNDI
CHILE
CHINA
COLUMBIA
CONGO
CONGO: DEMOCRATIC
REPUBLIC OF
EGYPT
EL SALVADOR
ERITREA
ETHIOPIA
GERMANY
GREECE
HONG KONG
HUNGARY
INDIA
IRAN
IRAQ
ITALY
JAMAICA
JORDAN
KENYA
LIBYA
MALAYSIA
MYANMAR (BURMA)
NEPAL
NETHERLANDS
NEW ZEALAND
PAKISTAN
PALESTINE
PAPUA NEW GUINEA
POLAND
RWANDA
SAMOA
SIERRA LEONE
SOMALIA
SOUTH KOREA
SOUTH SUDAN
SRI LANKA
SUDAN
SYRIA
TANZANIA
THAILAND
UGANDA
USA
VIETNAM
ZIMBABWE

1 YEAR IN
THE NEW
GLENORCHY
OFFICE

COMMUNITY
WORKSHOPS

37

48,242
WEBSITE VIEWS

1 TOTAL
FACEBOOK
PAGE LIKES

1,311

26

NEW STAFF STARTED



320

PHOENIX CENTRE
COUNSELLING
CLIENTS



212

AGED CARE CLIENTS



135

AGED CARE DAY
CENTRES HELD

5,580

HOURS OF ROAD
RULES TRAINING
DELIVERED

VOLUNTEERS
CONTRIBUTED

3667

HOURS OF THEIR
TIME TO HELP



FINANCIAL
**SNAP
SHOT**

OUR INVESTMENT:
DIRECT CLIENT SERVICES
\$1,458,497
OUR PEOPLE COSTS TO DELIVER
PROGRAMS
\$2,551,435
OUR END OF YEAR RESULT:
SURPLUS
\$20,661

FOR FULL FINANCIAL REPORT FROM THE 2016-17 FINANCIAL YEAR PLEASE VISIT WWW.MRCTAS.ORG.AU/ANNUAL-REPORTS



COMMUNITY DINNERS

Welcoming new community members, and celebrating the ever increasing diversity that is Glenorchy.

Starting in February 2017, one Friday each school term the MRC invites new and established community members to participate in celebrating and welcoming diversity through a Community Dinner.

All are invited to bring a plate of food to share, whether it be their favourite food, or food from their traditional kind of cooking, to enjoy a meal together. It's a very spirited, warm and friendly environment in which to meet new people.

The food is spread out on a big table and everyone is welcome to grab a plate and settle down at a table with other community members. People feel naturally encouraged in that environment to insert themselves in amongst people they haven't met before with the explicit purpose of saying hello and starting a conversation about everyday things, like food.

Children are welcome to come along too. It's a chance for kids to break down barriers because play is pretty universal, and food likewise - It's an easy point for conversation with an English language learner.

This event would not be possible without the support of our wonderful and greatly-valued volunteers, who work hard to make the venue space comfortable, provide transport to some families without a car and assist with washing dishes and cleaning up at the end of the night.

MRC Settlement Services Coordinator, Clarissa Adriel, says the dinner gets great reviews from attendees.



"It's really nice hearing the stories. For example I remember one pair that were chattering away, they said 'we've actually seen each other at the bus stop regularly but never actually had a conversation'. So they came along to this event and then it was kind of like they had permission to start a random conversation in a way that you might not feel comfortable to do at a bus stop. That's the exact kind of connections we want to make in Glenorchy, where there's this wonderful diversity. There's goodwill, interest and curiosity. Sometimes people just need a safe easy place to start a conversation."



EXPRESSIVE THERAPY – ‘HANDS’ QUILTING GROUP

Expressive therapies helping to heal survivors of torture and trauma

“There were no interpreters involved in the making of this quilt; we relied on creativity, demonstration, lots of laughter and newfound friendships that were created from the women involved sharing their skills with each other. The quilt represents “hands” in the diverse languages from the countries represented by each of the group participants; Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Jordan, Syria and Zimbabwe”. – Rachel Hart, MRC Phoenix Centre Counsellor

Over a period of two months, women from various countries came together to create a quilt under the guidance of dedicated volunteers from the Tasmanian quilting community.

The women were able to share their textile skills, build relationships in the community as well as practise English in a low pressure environment. It was hoped the project would assist with the healing of these women who have experienced trauma and torture in their lives.

Many clients of the Phoenix Centre are women who are isolated due to various reasons, such as:

- Becoming the head of the household
- The impact of torture and trauma
- Mental health
- Challenges with learning a new language
- Fear of harassment/discrimination
- A lack of connection to their community for support.

Expressive Therapy is a type of therapy where the creation process of artwork is the focus of the intervention rather than the finished product. Through the use of imagery, the connection between mind, body, emotions and cognitions is generated, helping to integrate trauma experiences and create healing.

The beautiful finished quilt has been put on display in the MRC office and many of the women involved have expressed interest in participating in similar groups in the future.





NEW PROGRAM – INSPIRE

In June 2017 the MRC launched Inspire, an innovative and vibrant program that connects Tasmanian Multicultural Performers to the broader community.

The MRC has long been a central point for linking business and the community to the hidden talents within multicultural groups. Inspire enables both new and established community members to promote, negotiate and manage their own paid and voluntary cultural performances.

Tasmanian businesses, local and state government, schools and community members can book professional multicultural performers through the dedicated website: www.inspiretasmania.org, and the MRC will continue to add performers into the future.

As part of the Inspire program, performers have participated in a range of training with ExitLeft Performance Academy to refine their performance skills. MRC's case, youth, and bicultural workers and volunteers have supported Inspire participants throughout the program.

To celebrate the launch of Inspire, the red carpet was rolled out for a special one-night-only performance by Inspire participants, held at the Peacock Theatre in Hobart. Guests were bedazzled by the variety of talent on offer, including Hip hop, Bollywood dance, African percussion, Afghan House Music and Afro Pop.

The show was hosted by the very talented Inspire Public Speakers.

Since the launch, Inspire has received an overwhelming amount of interest and support from the community and a number of participants have been booked.

"I have to thank the Migrant Resource Centre because after performing in the Inspire Program Launch I have received a lot of interest and many people are coming along to my studio to try out Bharatanatyam dance. I'm really happy to bring something valuable to my local community."

Arthy Raja

Neeraalaya School of Dance

Inspire was funded by the Tasmanian Government, Department of State Growth. The Inspire website was funded by the Tasmanian Government, Department of Premier and Cabinet, Communities, Sport and Recreation.



Visit www.inspiretasmania.org for more information and to book a performer





THE BHUTANESE ELDERS GROUP

Supporting older Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) groups and maintaining happy and healthy communities.

In 2015 the Aged Care team identified that there had been an increase in the number of elderly Bhutanese migrants who were settling in Southern Tasmania. Big family groups made up of several generations were now calling Tassie home after spending over 20 years living in refugee camps on the border of Nepal due to being displaced amidst political and religious conflict in Bhutan.

Upon settlement in the greater Hobart area, families were spread out, leading to feelings of isolation amongst elderly Bhutanese community members, many of whom had no English and could only connect with friends who lived close by.

The Aged Care team ran a pilot project that involved organising regular group activities. The Elders were consulted and actively participated in identifying topics of interest and potential activities. Amongst the more unique requests, the group has participated in a Zumba class, Art Therapy, visited the Dogs Home and broadened their community knowledge with beach walks and a day at the Botanical Gardens.

The group meetings have served as a great way for members to catch up with friends that they would otherwise have difficulty connecting with. There are currently 35 active members who are either aged over 65 years or hold a Disability Support Pension. The program is facilitated by a CHSP Caseworker, and two MRC bicultural workers support the group on outings. This ensures good communication and minimises cultural barriers in order to provide culturally appropriate opportunities.

There has been a rise in happiness and wellbeing amongst elderly Bhutanese community members as a result of this program and the MRC will continue to seek opportunities to increase group engagement.

The group meetings have served as a great way for members to catch up with friends that they would otherwise have difficulty connecting with.

OUR SERVICES



AGED CARE

Our Aged Care Services team is dedicated to delivering support and services for older people, including those with a disability and their carers, with culturally appropriate and responsive services. Our services focus on wellness and independence.

Our Aged Care Service is comprised of three main program areas; Commonwealth Home Support Program, the Home and Community Care (HACC) State services for clients under 65, and the Commonwealth Home Care Packages Program. Our Service also offers the Partners in Culturally Appropriate Care Program (PICAC), a State-wide information and support program that assists communities and service providers to access Aged Care services.

We work to create opportunities for our clients to connect with others, encouraging social cohesiveness and lessening the potential for isolation. While individual client work is critical, there is a range of group activities the MRC conducts and we are particularly pleased to see sustainability within the Bhutanese Elders Group.

The popularity of the MRC Day Centres continue, with a range of activities and excursions offered to clients throughout the year, including Tai Chi and a visit to Government House. Clients have input into a weekly lunch menu and enjoy a three course meal.

The Consumer Directed Care (CDC) program is now embedded into the Aged Care Service. Currently we are repositioning ourselves to accommodate the changing face of the Australian Aged Care sector, in order to capitalise on new opportunities informed by ongoing reforms. The MRC has remained focused on supporting clients through a shifting environment and will continue to ensure that clients receive seamless services through transitions.

For more information about our Aged Care Services, visit mrctas.org.au/aged-care

Case Managers

Client Coordination

Counsellor

PICAC Project Officer

Day Centre Coordinator

Day Centre Staff

Bicultural Workers

Students on Placement



“Empowering the older people in our community to make informed choices about the aged care they receive is a rewarding experience. By choosing their individual care that’s best for them, our clients can have the quality of life they truly deserve.”

Hans Schmid

PICAC Project Officer

OUR SERVICES

Counsellors

Counselling Coordinator

Natural Therapies Coordinator

Client Support Worker

Bicultural Workers

Project Officers

Volunteers

Students on Placement



“I love that the MRC genuinely works in a person-centred way. We meet people and communities where they are at and work together with them, and other agencies, to meet the needs of our clients. I am passionate about holding hope with clients during and beyond their settlement journeys.”

Esta Birdahic

*Suicide Prevention Project
Support Officer*

PHOENIX CENTRE

The Phoenix Centre provides support services to people who have experienced torture or other traumatic events in their country of origin or while fleeing those countries. In addition, the Centre delivers a range of training and projects which support health and wellbeing of individuals and communities. The Phoenix Centre has staff based in Hobart and Launceston and provides services state-wide.

Although pre-arrival experiences often have profound impact on individuals and their communities, our clients show enormous resilience, determination and capacity to overcome these experiences. Recovery-focused support provided through the Phoenix Centre enhances the capacity of individuals and communities to rebuild lives and contribute to the broader Australian community.

During 2016-2017 the Phoenix Centre provided individual services to over 320 clients ranging in age from 5 years to 75 years, from over 28 cultural backgrounds, including a special focus this year on new arrivals from Syria and Iraq. Services provided include counselling, natural therapies, neurofeedback (pictured above), mentoring, referral, case management, community development, group therapy and wellbeing activities, along with advocacy. In addition to our on-site services in both Hobart and Launceston, we optimise access to services through outreach in schools, clients' homes and other locations convenient for clients.

Due to an increase in suicide risk within several communities, a new support program known as Mitrah (meaning friend or friendship) was established. Demand for support under the Mitrah program has grown rapidly and we highly value the dedication of volunteers who provide additional support for Mitrah clients and activities.

Phoenix staff provided a broad range of training throughout the year, including general Cultural Awareness training, Mental Health training for interpreters, Suicide Prevention training including safeTALK, training for teachers, university students, the community sector and the mental health workforce. Phoenix staff have collaborated with a wide range of organisations over the last year and it's been extremely pleasing to work with others who are motivated to improve service access for our client group.

Although the context in which Phoenix Centre staff work continues to be challenging, the resilience and stories of many of our clients, along with the outcomes of our services, inspire and motivate us. The commitment, dedication and expertise of staff is greatly appreciated, as is the extremely valuable contribution of volunteers who work with Phoenix staff and clients.



Case Managers

Youth Workers

Bicultural Workers

Community
Development

Migration Advice

Employment Support
Services

Stakeholder Engagement

Student on Placement



“There is a huge appetite in this organisation for innovative and creative approaches to supporting young people and their families to thrive in their new home.”

Sally Thompson

Youth Program
Team Leader

SETTLEMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

The Settlement and Community Services team work to build the confidence and capacity of clients to participate socially and economically in Tasmanian life and independently access mainstream services. Supporting community leadership and active citizenship are important elements of MRC's work. Our services include support and advocacy, community development, Youth program, Migration Support program, Employment Assistance and a Learner Driver Mentor program.

The Settlement and Community services team has had a busy year. We have engaged with over 30 community leaders from 17 different community associations or groups, in a combination of individual and group settings to encourage participation in the Tasmanian community. We have also facilitated 6 citizenship groups for Arabic, Oromo, Hazaragi, Farsi, Karen and Nepali Speakers to provide support to those practicing for the Australian Citizenship test.

Our Drop-in services, including Monday 'Adult' Drop-in and Wednesday 'Youth' Drop-in continue to be popular, with clients dropping in to the MRC office to seek support and assistance from staff and volunteers with a range of matters including filling out forms, writing resumes, completing homework tasks, receiving information and referral to other services, and gaining access to professional legal and migration advice and support.

We believe it is important to encourage skill-building and employment for clients. The team have delivered 37 community workshops and 100 clients have set up their own emails, MyGov and MyTax accounts by participating in our Digital Literacy workshops.

In addition to offering individual support for job seekers, MRC has delivered a 'Pathways Planning' event for young people as well as several supported training and work experience programs in areas such as Horticulture (pictured above) and Hospitality. Many of the participants have found employment or are undergoing further training.

Our Youth program has supported settlement outcomes for youth through case management and activities including holiday camps and a recreation program. We have also worked with Football Federation Tasmania and other sports associations to provide young people with opportunities to participate in organised sports; encouraging a sense of community belonging and increased social capital and inclusion.

Volunteers, partner organisations, local businesses, community service providers and local government all play a crucial role in the delivery of our services and programs. The support of our volunteers is particularly vital and greatly valued. They are always there to provide a helping hand, and friendly support and advice to clients.

OUR SERVICES

Contract Administration

Client and Stakeholder
Services Work

Quality and Compliance

Administration

Information Technology

Finance Management

Facilities Management

Human Resources

Communications

Corporate Project Officers

Volunteers



CORPORATE SERVICES

The Corporate Services team provide central support services to all MRC staff and manage the facilities, assets, IT, Communications, WHS and Compliance, HR and Finance functions.



“I love working for an organisation that truly exhibits the values it advertises. Everyone working here feels strongly about social justice, diversity and inclusiveness. As the HR Advisor, it is such a pleasure to be working at the MRC and ensuring that staff are equipped to achieve our shared goals.”

Laura Papiccio
HR Advisor

Corporate Services provides support to the direct program services of the organisation with the aim of ensuring the best practice standard of service across all administrative functions. Corporate Services provides finance, Human Resources (HR), communications, Work Health and Safety (WHS) and compliance, IT, facilities including housing, volunteer administration and general administration support to the organisation. Also managing contractual arrangements, the Governance Officer ensures compliance with MRC funding obligations, including reporting and financial requirements, in conjunction with the Management team and the Finance Officer.

The project management of the move to the KGV Sports and Community Centre in August was predominantly centralised to members of the Corporate Services team who provided a dedicated and systematic approach to the organisation of this move. The move to KGV allows, from an administrative perspective, a more streamlined approach to a host of central functions across the organisation.

The Corporate Services team expanded this year and now includes a dedicated Communications Officer with primary responsibility for all communication channels, including an increased social media presence and continued work on the MRC website, a new version of which was launched in early July 2016. As first point of contact for all media inquiries, the Communications Officer ensures a consistent approach to all MRC communications.

A key focus this year of HR and Compliance was the continued development of organisational policies and procedures which are essential to guide the actions and decision-making across service delivery and other functions of MRC.

Another focus of HR has been to continually invest in and build the knowledge and understanding of our staff to enable them to work effectively with people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds. We do this by providing all new and existing team members with Cross-Cultural Awareness training that not only reflects the diversity of our clients, but also our staff and programs.

OUR CLIENTS

DEBAKI THAPA – A ROLE MODEL TO CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE YOUTH

“My family spent 22 years in the camp. Refugee life was hard and painful. There was no future in the camp, so we waited, hoping. Then we got a golden chance to come to Australia.”

Debaki Thapa arrived in Australia in 2014 with her parents, two siblings and grandparents. Debaki was just 15 years old, and had grown up in a refugee camp in Nepal after her family left Bhutan amidst political and religious conflict. There were limited opportunities for education, with only one teacher available to provide lessons to those in the camp.

When Debaki arrived in Tasmania, she attended school and began learning English. Faced with many new things to learn and understand about her new home, as well as juggling family responsibilities as the eldest child, Debaki felt overwhelmed and lacked confidence in herself. Then she met Sally, MRC's Youth Program Team Leader, who became Debaki's 'biggest inspiration'.

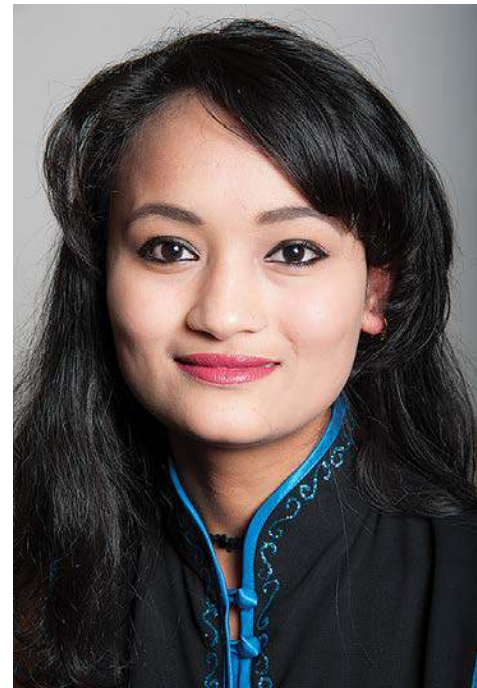
With Sally's support and guidance, Debaki took part in the MRC's Edge Radio Presenter Training program in late 2015. She presented in both Nepali and English to discuss issues being faced by the Nepali community and to promote community events. Debaki recalls that this was a turning point in her life since settling in Tasmania.

Debaki was then employed by the MRC as a Bicultural Worker. In her role she improved her English language skills, became more present and active in her community, and gained more confidence and independence as a young person.

As a Bicultural worker, Debaki mentors youth in her community, helping them to 'build a bridge between Nepali culture and Australian culture.' Debaki also works with Phoenix Centre staff to educate her community about Domestic Violence and Mental Health. "I had no idea what domestic violence was until MRC staff told me about it. I wanted to learn as much as I could and did lots and lots of research and also did training with Lifeline. I want to educate my community about these important issues."

Debaki is on the Human Rights event steering committee for Hobart and was recently nominated as co-chair of the newly established MYAN TAS Youth Advisory Group. She is currently working part-time in Aged Care, has recently become an English home-tutor with TasTAFE, and is also caring for her family, as both of her parents are currently facing medical issues. Debaki dreams of one day becoming a Social Worker for the MRC and is planning to study a degree in Social Work at university.

“Thank you to the Australian Government and the Australian community. At this stage my family and I are happy and joyful. I am moving to make my future good and bright.”



“I realised I can do anything I put my mind to, I can follow my dreams.”



“Maybe one day I will not need government assistance anymore. My dream is to one day buy my own place in the country where I can grow and sell vegetables.”

AADEN* – A FLOURISHING FUTURE AHEAD

“About 2 years ago my life was a mess quite frankly. I was homeless, had legal problems and I suffered from severe anxiety due to PTSD that I ‘treated’ with alcohol. I had no ID papers and therefore could not access any housing services. I lived in a shelter and I was unable to leave without a trusted friend to accompany me. Once when I tried to go to the city on my own I got so overwhelmed that I had to hide in a backyard and spent a night and a day there, unable to go back to the shelter. During that time my GP referred me to the Phoenix Centre and I met my PHaMs Worker for the first time.”

The MRC Phoenix Centre runs a program called Personal Helpers and Mentors (PHaMs), which provides practical assistance for people aged 16 years and over, whose lives are severely affected by their mental illness, by helping them overcome social isolation and increase their connections to the community.

Aaden and his PHaMs Worker got to know one another by taking long walks together, sometimes visiting the Botanical Gardens or Cornelian Bay. Aaden’s worker helped him to replace all of his personal documents, including his original visa, which he had lost. “It took a long time until we satisfied all the requirements and I received a new ‘Immicard’. With the Immicard I was able to apply for housing services, obtain a Tasmanian ID card, and apply for a Disability Pension. That was a big step forward!”

Aaden and his PHaMs Worker discussed an opportunity to do some volunteering and training in Horticulture. At the time Aaden thought it was completely impossible, as he was still unable to leave his house on his own. With his worker’s encouragement and support, Aaden attended an information session at TAFE and applied for a Certificate II in Horticulture. “I was quite scared at first but I began to realize that the other students are actually quite understanding and friendly and I started to make new friends.”

Since receiving support from his PHaMs Worker, Aaden’s anxiety has reduced greatly, and he plans to get his driver’s licence, apply for Australian citizenship and finish his certificate in Horticulture. “I find the academic side of studying still quite hard but with the support of my PHaMs Worker I have learned to take one step at a time and we develop strategies to help get over difficult times.”

Aaden also plans to find a part-time job that will allow him to continue his studies.

*NAME CHANGED

MARIA VIALLE – UNBELIEVABLY STRONG AND AN INSPIRATION

"My husband and I were married when we were very young. The first time we met, he went to visit his mother in hospital, and I went to visit my mother in hospital. They were in beds next to each other. The day that his mother was supposed to come home, he went to collect her and she had died overnight. So that was quite a shock. That was three weeks before his 21st birthday. Then my mother died four weeks before my 18th. So we were both sort of lost. I thought it would be really nice to go to another country. I was very adventurous, even at 18. I went to the immigration office and asked for some information and they asked 'where do you want to go?' And I said, I don't really care, as far away from here as possible."

Maria and her husband were aged 18 and 21 when they left the Netherlands and moved to Wayatinah, Tasmania, where her husband had secured a job with Hydro Tasmania. While in Wayatinah, Maria taught English to the Dutch children who lived in the town. The couple then moved to Launceston with one daughter and another on the way. Maria became a full-time mother, having another two children (4 total). Maria recalls that being a mother was 'the nicest job'.

At age 40, Maria worked for the Children's Commission, and gained the opportunity to complete a social work course. Maria got a job with Social Security (now called Centrelink) as an Ethnic Liaison officer in Hobart. It was through this position that Maria first became involved with the MRC. Maria spent 1 day a week at the MRC office, which only had two staff members at the time, to assist new arrivals fill out medical and social security forms.

17 years ago Maria's husband fell victim to a vicious dog attack that left him with severe injuries to his face, requiring many surgeries. Maria became his sole carer, helping him to slowly recover from the incident. 10 years later Maria's husband's health deteriorated further, with 6 blocked arteries in his heart, requiring lifesaving surgery and a long recovery time. Unfortunately his health continued to decline and Maria began caring for him full-time.

A couple of years ago Maria became overwhelmed and felt that she couldn't manage her husband's illness on her own any longer. She contacted the MRC who organised for Maria and her husband to be assessed by the Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT). As a result, they were able to receive assistance that they desperately needed, while still being able to live in their own home.

"I like the fact that they (the MRC) are very professional. They always call back and if you need anything they will organise it for you. My husband and I have both had a package with the MRC for 2 years now, and I don't know how we would survive without it."

At 83 years of age, Maria has recently overcome a battle with depression and is now an advocate for suicide prevention. With the support of MRC services, which promote independence and wellness, Maria is able to maintain a wonderful attitude and outlook. Maria is an active and admired member of the community, and a loving and doting mother and grandmother.



"I like the fact that they (the MRC) are very professional. They always call back and if you need anything they will organise it for you. My husband and I have both had a package with the MRC for 2 years now, and I don't know how we would survive without it."



FOSTERING A CULTURALLY DIVERSE, SUPPORTIVE AND INCLUSIVE WORKFORCE

“Cooking is all about people. Food is maybe the only universal thing that really has the power to bring everyone together. No matter what culture, everywhere around the world, people get together to eat.” Guy Fieri

The relocation of the MRC offices from Hobart City to the KGV building in Glenorchy has brought all MRC teams under the one roof, resulting in increased interaction across programs and teams; especially in the communal staff space, which features a fully-equipped kitchen, lounge area, dining table, and sunny balcony offering lovely views of the River Derwent.

With a diverse workforce representing a range of perspectives, experiences, cultures, genders, and ages, it is no wonder that sharing food has become a popular way to celebrate our organisation’s diversity.

On Harmony Day 2017, the MRC not only celebrated diversity with our clients and communities, but also together. Staff were encouraged to bring any dish to share – a favourite dish, a dish from their cultural heritage, or a dish that has some meaning in their life. It was a fantastic way for team members to enjoy a meal together and to ‘share our similarities, celebrate our differences’ – M. Scott Peck.

The MRC recognises the benefits of having diversity within staffing, such as our ability to better solve complex problems, exhibit a higher level of creativity and innovation as well as a broader thought process. The MRC takes pride in the diverse range of skills and talents of our staff, which enable us to provide quality services that align with the values of diversity and inclusiveness.

OUR VOLUNTEERS



The dedication and commitment of volunteers contributes immeasurably to MRC's services. We value the work of all volunteers, 108 of whom recorded over 3,600 volunteer hours for a variety of activities across the organisation in 2016-2017, supporting all program areas. We would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of our wonderful volunteers.

VOLUNTEER PROFILES

Kerry Ho

Please share a bit about yourself:

Born in Sydney, my father was a Cantonese refugee from warlord and civil war China. On my mother's side I am fourth generation Australian descendant from Scotland (settling in Macquarie Plains Tasmania in the 1840s) and Wales. I'm related to Arthur Stace; also known as Mr Eternity in the 1960s history of Sydney. I've worked in the hospitality industry and tertiary teaching.

When did you get involved with the MRC and why?

I started with MRC in June 2016. I had become isolated so I applied and joined the team at MRC to give back and re-connect with the community.

What do you like about volunteering with the MRC?

Friendliness of other team members and assisting people to enjoy and develop their lives.

What MRC activities are you involved in?

Tax Help; Youth Drop In – Literacy, Homework and Job tutoring; Client transport; Cultural Centres – cooking and assisting; and Community Dinners. Have also been involved in Youth Camp, Car Club and tutoring of Citizenship Preparation.

What motivates you to stay involved?

Totally selfish on my part, the pleasure of seeing the relief and happiness on people's faces when they achieve a step in their new lives. Developing new mates.

In your opinion, what is the most important work that the MRC does?

Helping the locals and clients bind into an Australian community.

What volunteer contribution or achievement are you most proud of?

Both Citizenship Preparation and Homework tutoring.

Do you have a message you would like to share?

Everyone can contribute, however small. Continue advancement and bonding of our unique community by sharing more events involving local citizens.



OUR VOLUNTEERS



MONDAY 'ADULT'
DROP-IN TEAM MEMBERS
FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:
VATSAL, SHELLEY,
BAHADOR, JUNE,
CASSANDRA, ADRIAN
AND QUAN

Cassandra Lamont

Please share a bit about yourself:

My name is Cassandra, I am married to Josh and we have a Weimaraner named Bentley. My work life has mostly been in the Medical Imaging field working as a Sonographer and Radiographer. Taking a summer holiday in the middle of winter is one of my favourite things to do.

When did you get involved with the MRC and why?

I needed a career change in mid-2016. I had heard positive reports about MRC over the years from previous volunteers and decided this was where I wanted to invest my time.

What do you like about volunteering with the MRC?

I love volunteering at MRC and getting to meet people of all different backgrounds and ages. The training that is offered to volunteers is something I also appreciate and feeling that what I contribute is valuable and of use to the clients and staff.

What MRC activities are you involved in?

During 'Adult Drop-In' my role is to welcome clients as they arrive and link them as smoothly as possible with a volunteer or worker. At 'Youth Drop-In' my role is to provide English support to anyone who would like some extra English tutoring.

What motivates you to stay involved?

The desire to show unconditional love to people arriving in Australia. I want them to feel that they are cared for and receive all the help they need in order to settle here.

In your opinion, what is the most important work that the MRC does?

Providing an environment where clients feel safe and can access support and services that they need.

What volunteer contribution or achievement are you most proud of?

Simple things like being consistent and reliable can build trust with clients enabling them to reach out for extra support if needed.

Do you have a message you would like to share?

MRC is a great place to volunteer, if you are thinking about being a volunteer just do it!

We would like to acknowledge all volunteers who have been with us throughout the past year:

Cloudia Ali	Jeff Daly	Russell Hill	Ruby Ryan
Faisal Alzahrani	Tristan Derham	Kerry Ho	Denis Saltmarsh
Hannah Avent	Dennis Derrick	Sara Ho	Mavis Sayer
Jeanette Banks	Sheree Dervish	Monica Hudson	Ash Schuurman
Galia Bastoni	Joy Di Tommaso	Navdeep Hundal	Liam Sheridan
Nick Bedding	Bernadette Donehue	Kacee Johnstone	Robert Sherrington
Ailsa Bennell	Catherine Double	David Kettlewell	Kate Shipway
Barbara Benson	Liz Dougan	Melissa Kruger	Thomas Shurvell
Jewel Beresford	Harry Downes	Abbey Lack	Alvin Sin Hong
Paul Beresford	Derry Doyle	Sera Lalagaves	Richard Skinner
Sarah Blundy	Sally Edith	Cassandra Lamont	Evelyn Slater
Lorna Boxall	Kate Edwards	Kerriane Lofts	Margaret Amy Steadman
Jacinta Bradshaw	Jess Egginton	Annie Lord	Chris Stennard
Carol Bristow	Fritz Feike	Shafiq Mohamed	Bronwyn Summers
Helen Burnet	Jamila Fontana	Karen Morgan	June Templer
Alison Burrows-Cheng	Steven Ford	Mahoubah Mostean	Claire Tilt
Lili Calitz	Simon Fountain	Yorke Mountford	Anna Wade
Ian Cartwright	Stella Gray	Phoebe Nash	Miriam Webb
Christine Charles	Alexandra Haddad	Frank Neasey	Maduka Wehella
Angela Chung	Barry Hall	Bridget Osler	John Wickel
Harry Chung	Kathy Hall	Meegan Pearce	Sue Wilcox
Judith Clark	Danielle Hanifin	Graham Prichard	Bernard Williams
Robin Coffey	Una Harbinson	Adrian Pyrke	Pippa Williams
Patrice Coleman	Cate Harding	Anna Read	Teruyo Wolfe
Susan Collings-Andrews	Trudy Harvey	Peter Rochman	Adam Wolstenholme
Justin Cook	Christopher Harwood	Caroline Ross	Michael Woolford
Ali Cummins	Raija Heffernan	Merilyn Rowlands	Patricia Wykman

OUR PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS



WRITER KATE DEWAR PHOTO CREDIT: JACK ROBERT-TISSO

Thank you to the many organisations who partner and collaborate with us to deliver important services to our clients and create awareness of migrant issues in our community. Here are three highlights from a busy 2016-17 year, where we have enjoyed many valued relationships:

TASMANIAN WRITERS CENTRE

The Tasmanian Writers Centre, in partnership with the Moonah Arts Centre and Glenorchy City Council, placed a young writer at the MRC as part of the 'Young Writers in Glenorchy' program.

Kate Dewar took up residency at the MRC for a total of 8 days during March and April 2017 to observe our services and interactions with clients and the community. Kate's essay provides an important insight into the challenges that new arrivals face and the role of the MRC and the Tasmanian community in helping migrants and refugees to settle successfully.

"They come to Tasmania not as guests, but as new members of the community."
- Kate Dewar

Visit taswriters.org/young-writers-city-glenorchy to read Kate's essay.



SURF LIFE SAVING TASMANIA

A special summer series on water safety was delivered in collaboration with Surf Life Saving Tasmania.

Community consultations with newly arrived Syrian and Iraqi communities indicated people had concerns about water safety in Tasmania. In collaboration with Surf Life Saving Tasmania (SLST), a program was developed to meet the needs of this group. The sessions took place during January and the beginning of February 2017.

The session started with an interactive information session for people of all ages. People learnt specific information such as how to identify a rip and what to do if caught in one. There was also an opportunity to get into the water where people learnt more about the role of Surf Life Savers in emergency situations.

The session was held at a beach that was accessible by public transport, ensuring that people could revisit the beach and park space again. At the end of the session, participants were very keen to visit the beach again and reconnect with the surf life savers on duty.

HOBART COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE

The MRC has partnered with the Hobart Community Legal Service to connect clients with important legal services and advice.

The Hobart Community Legal Service (HCLS) has been hosting weekly sessions within both the Adult and Youth Drop-in service, which has been very beneficial for clients, enabling referrals for sensitive legal information (e.g. family violence, divorce), and/or representation (e.g. for current legal proceedings). The needs of each client are identified through a legal screening tool. At the time of writing the HCLS has also presented at a couple of MRC information sessions including 'Driving and the Law' and 'Elder Abuse' to provide legal education to clients.

OUR BOARD



Helen Burnet
Chairperson

Helen is an Alderman with the Hobart City Council, and has been a member of the MRC Board since 2009, currently holding the position of Chairperson. Helen has a broad interest in the health and wellbeing of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities and is a passionate advocate for social inclusion.



Allison Burrows-Cheng,
Vice Chairperson

Allison has been a member of the MRC Board since 2006. She is currently the Vice Chair. She is a solicitor and has been in private practice for 25 years.



Jeanette Banks
Secretary

Jeanette joined the Board in December 2012. Jeanette is employed as the Public Health Evaluation Officer with the Public Health Services in the Department of Health and Human Services. Previously Jeanette worked with the Commissioner for Children and in the area of Community Sector Development with the Human Services Branch of the Department of Health and Human Services.



Chris Stennard
Treasurer

Chris is employed as CFO and Company Secretary of the Incat Group of Companies. Chris is a Fellow of CPA Australia. He has had experience in the manufacturing, service, IT, insurance and banking sectors. He is interested in social and community issues.



Nick Bedding
Second Treasurer

Nick joined the Board in 2014. Nick is the Managing Director of Symic Pty Ltd, a private investment company specialising in venture capital, property development and equity investment. Nick has extensive experience in the financial planning and stock broking industries and in merger and acquisitions in the financial services sector.



Frank Neasey

Frank has been a member of the Board since 2014. He has practiced law since 1982 and has been appointed a Criminal Injuries Compensation Commissioner since September, 2016. He has also been a volunteer driving instructor with MRC's Top Gear Program since 2011. Frank is also a member of the Inland Fisheries Advisory Council.



Kacee Johnstone

Kacee joined the MRC Board in July 2015. She is a director to the board of Gymnastics Tasmania and Flourish Tasmania. Kacee has also previously worked as a Senior Advisor to a number of Tasmanian-based Federal Members of Parliament. Kacee hopes to share her knowledge of fundraising, marketing, government funding processes and policy development with the Organisation.



Jamila Fontana

Jamila joined the Board in 2016. She currently works in marketing and communications and brings with her significant events management experience. Jamila is passionate about Tasmania and its rich multicultural history and her enthusiasm and understanding of current communications techniques and trends make her a valuable addition to the Board.



Shafiq Mohamed

Shafiq joined the board in February 2017. Shafiq is an Environmental Engineer and works as a Departmental Manager in Local Government. Shafiq is of an Indian origin and practices Islamic faith. He first arrived in Australia in 2002 to undergo Higher Education and has lived in Tasmania for the past 10 years. Shafiq is very passionate about multiculturalism, and joined the MRC board as a way of helping fellow migrants and new arrivals, as well as contributing back to the community.



Maureen Rudge
Second Secretary
(retired October 2016)

Maureen has been a member of the Board since 2006. She is a retired Occupational Therapy Consultant and a Justice of the Peace. In 2008 Maureen was awarded the Order of Australia Medal in recognition of her contribution to the Occupational Therapy profession and service to the community over many years.



Alison O'Neill

Alison commenced as the Chief Executive Officer of MRC in May 2015. Alison's extensive and varied background includes leadership positions within the NFP sector at both a state and federated level, predominantly in the health and disability areas. Alison sits on a number of advisory groups and committees that inform, guide and influence outcomes for the multicultural communities in Tasmania at a local, state and federal level.

In accordance with the Constitution, from time to time the Board appoints subcommittees with specific terms of reference to support the activities of the MRC. Board subcommittees meet regularly and make recommendations to the Board. During the year a number of Board members participated on Board Subcommittees, including the Finance, Audit and Risk and Governance and Human Resources Subcommittee.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The MRC would like to thank the many organisations, businesses and individuals who supported and donated time, expertise and financial resources to us during the 2016-2017 financial year. In particular, we thank the following for their support:

Department of Social Services

Department of Health

Department of Premier and Cabinet

Department of Health and Human Services

Department of State Growth

Skills Tasmania

Tasmanian Community Fund

Anglicare Tasmania

LINC Tasmania

The Myer Foundation

CatholicCare

Red Cross

TasTAFE

Primary Health Tasmania

Drug Education Network (DEN)



*Working toward an equitable, just,
culturally diverse and inclusive society*

mrctas.org.au

