

Migrant Resource Centre Tasmania

2018–2019

mrctas.org.au





**MIGRANT RESOURCE
CENTRE TASMANIA**

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MRC Tas acknowledges the traditional owners of country throughout Australia, and their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and to elders both past and present.



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Who are We?

ABOUT US

Migrant Resource Centre Tasmania (MRC Tas) is a not-for-profit organisation that has been assisting migrants and refugees to settle in Tasmania since 1979.

Four decades later the organisation reflects both our history and the changing and evolving needs of our community. We strive to create a more supportive and inclusive Tasmania.

OUR VISION

An equitable, just, culturally diverse and inclusive society.

OUR MISSION

To support and encourage culturally diverse community members to reach their potential.

WHAT WE DO

Our focus is on meeting the needs of migrants, humanitarian entrants and refugees through effective, targeted and meaningful services. We promote the needs of multicultural communities through advocacy and by working with mainstream services to support the delivery of responsive and culturally inclusive services.

You've Just Arrived.

How Can We Help You?

Moving to a new country can be exciting, rewarding and challenging. There are a lot of questions and it can be hard to know who to ask.

To help people from migrant backgrounds settle in Tasmania, MRC Tas offers an Information and Referral Service by email, phone, and a weekly drop-in session at the Glenorchy office, where staff and volunteers assist new arrivals with many of the initial matters they may be facing, including:

- Finding a place to live
- Getting connected: utilities, phone & internet
- Learning English
- Enrolling a child in day-care or school
- Finding a doctor
- Exchanging money and shopping
- Obtaining a driver's licence
- Transport
- Getting to know the local community: social, sporting and recreational opportunities
- Study options
- Applying for a tax file number
- Employment
- Citizenship

"I met with an MRC Tas staff member who gave me information about how to get my driver's licence in Tasmania. I didn't know where to start. I had my licence in Kenya and miss the independence that comes with driving. I learnt about the Tasmanian driving rules and what the process is for getting my licence. MRC Tas made it simple for me to understand what I needed to do."

—TABITHA
INTERNATIONAL STUDENT



Building the Future

As a young person, 20-year-old Kwot faced many new obstacles and challenges when he arrived in Tasmania from Ethiopia. These include learning English, driving and employment. Multicultural Youth Tasmania, a program of MRC Tas, enabled Kwot to have the tools and support he needed for successful settlement.

Kwot participated in MY (Multicultural Youth) Step into Work. The program aims to increase practical workplace knowledge, skills and abilities. The program supports participants to build work readiness through work experience, strengthening networks, and employment pathway planning.

Placement at the South Hobart Tip Shop helped Kwot learn invaluable workplace skills and helped him on his way to full-time employment.

“I really loved it because everybody I worked with in there, they’re really lovely,” Kwot said.

Resource Work Cooperative Coordinator Molly Kendall said Kwot’s enthusiasm was contagious.

“Kwot was a welcome addition to our workplace. He was an injection of vibrancy to our team and some much-needed cultural diversity to our work landscape. Our customers loved being welcomed by Kwot’s smiling face and our workers appreciated that we, as a business, were helping his transition into work,” Molly said.

After his work experience placement, Kwot was offered a casual position with the tip shop’s deconstruction team as he worked towards a tiling apprenticeship with local construction company Divergence.

With full-time work in the pipeline, the only thing holding Kwot back was getting his driver’s licence. Kwot’s Youth Worker Jal connected him with the MRC Tas Learn to Drive program. Kwot worked with his Volunteer Driver Mentor Martin to practise driving in the MRC Tas learner driver vehicle. After lots of hard work, Kwot passed his driving test on his first attempt.

Kwot is now a first-year apprentice tiler with Divergence, and happy he can support himself and his family with transport.

Jal said it has been amazing to watch Kwot flourish in his new home.

“I speak to Kwot at least once a week to check in and see how he is going. Kwot’s opportunity to take on an apprenticeship with Divergence has been life-changing for both him and his mother. Before employment, he lived in a one-bedroom unit with his mum because they could not afford a bigger place, and now he can afford to pay rent on a two-bedroom unit for them both.”

Multicultural Youth Tasmania & Settlement Services

MRC Tas Settlement and Community Services work to build the confidence and capacity of clients to participate socially and economically in Tasmanian life and independently access

mainstream services. Services include weekly drop-in support, community development, youth, migration support, employment assistance and driving support.



Floating the Pain Away

During the cold Tassie winter months, a group of women from many different backgrounds, all suffering from chronic pain, gathered for treatment at a hydrotherapy pool, adjacent to the MRC Tas Glenorchy office. The program was developed by the Phoenix Centre as an alternative therapy to help women improve management of physical and emotional discomfort.



Simbi, who arrived in Tasmania in 2004 with severe injuries, said the group sessions had a very positive impact on her life, both physically and mentally,

“I have sciatic pain in my legs, a bad back injury, and suffer from migraines. Through this program I have learned how to let go...how to relax,” Simbi said.

The 8-week hydrotherapy program was coordinated by MRC Tas Natural Therapies Coordinator Astra. The program included health and wellbeing sessions followed by hydrotherapy.

“In addition to the hydrotherapy, there was a focus on pain management, an element of health literacy, an emphasis on self-love and wellbeing, and an opportunity for socialising and getting together. The aim was to provide lasting benefits to women with pain that is not easily treatable through traditional pain management methods,” Astra said.

Simbi said she is happy she had the chance to participate, and has made new friends from different countries,

“The program has been really great. We’ve been laughing, we’ve been doing exercises with a lovely teacher, we have met new people, we help ourselves out, especially some of them, they were really worried about water at first,” Simbi said.

Astra said that despite the program taking place in winter, the sessions were very well attended and great feedback was provided from participants. Due to the positive outcomes, the Phoenix Centre is looking to run the program again in summer.

“The women got so much out of it. It felt productive and beneficial. They had such big smiles on their faces during each session. I know the histories of a lot of these women and I get a bit teary sometimes, to see them just doing something pleasurable for themselves is just really lovely,” Astra said.

Phoenix Centre

Migrant Resource Centre Tasmania’s Phoenix Centre provides support services to people and communities who have experienced torture and other traumatic events in their country of origin or while fleeing those countries.

The Centre delivers a wide range of training and projects which support the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities. The Phoenix Centre has staff based in Glenorchy and Launceston and provides services statewide.

Ageing with Independence

“Bingo!” Kla Kla exclaims as she wins at her favourite game yet again. Kla excitedly chats away with fellow attendees of the MRC Tas Aged Care Multicultural Day Centre, visibly enjoying her outing.

Kla, aged 66, arrived in Tasmania two years ago with her daughter who has cerebral palsy and epilepsy. Attending the Day Centre provides Kla with opportunities for independence and social connection.

OUR IMPACT

“I enjoy attending the Day Centre as it gives me a break from caring for my daughter. I also like getting to know the other clients. I enjoy bingo, it helps me to learn the numbers,” Kla said.

Each week MRC Tas holds three Day Centres for older clients as part of its Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP). Activities include lunch outings, information sessions, games, tai chi, and exercise sessions. The Multicultural Day Centre hosts clients from 18 nationalities, most of whom only speak little English.

Day Centre Coordinator Nicole said working at the Day Centres has made her realise that connection happens regardless of language. “Clients are always friendly, welcoming and wanting to engage with each other regardless of language or country of origin,” Nicole said.

In addition to attending the Day Centre, Kla has weekly one-on-one support with a Bicultural Worker to help access community, shopping, transport and other support. She also receives daily support via the NDIS.

Nicole said she has seen a positive change in Kla’s demeanor since she started accessing services,

“When Kla started coming to the Day Centre, she came with a Bicultural Worker, and then it got to a point where she felt comfortable coming on her own. She always walks in confidently, gives me a smile and says good morning. She has also started supporting a new attendee with whom she shares the same language.”

Aged Care Services

MRC Tas Aged Care Services connect older people, and people with disability and their carers, with social activities and support to live at home, be part of the community and to access services. MRC Tas also provides cultural education to aged care service providers and to other community organisations. Services have a focus on cultural needs, wellness and independence.

Older Tasmanians from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, their family and carers seeking information and support to navigate the aged care system can access free help through the Aged Care System Navigator (ACSN) Trial, provided by MRC Tas.





Connecting Community & Food

Tasmania's food scene is receiving a dash of vibrance and culture with the launch of MRC Tas Catering—a social enterprise project that provides kitchen skills & workplace experience to multicultural Tasmanian community members seeking hospitality work.

The project was funded by the Tasmanian Government and operates in Glenorchy and surrounding suburbs. MRC Tas Catering offers authentic and delicious food with recipes sourced from local migrant communities, featuring Tasmanian produce.

Catering is available for corporate meetings, canapé functions and various events, and the bespoke menus offer a variety of cuisine and seasonal produce.

In May 2019, MRC Tas started up Friday Deli Days at the KGV Sports and Community Centre, providing participants with an opportunity to gain experience in a busy café style setting and a chance for the community to come and say hello and enjoy some delicious Friday lunchtime food.

MRC Tas Settlement and Community Services Manager Catherine said MRC Tas Catering offers the Tasmanian community new and interesting flavours whilst also providing migrants with pathways to employment via practical work experience,

“The work experience placements occur in small groups and focus on kitchen hygiene and cleanliness, kitchen orientation and basic knife skills. Participants are provided with wrap-around support, including workplace English and vocabulary support for clients with English as a second language, education about worksite procedures and WHS, feedback on their work performance, job references, and links to external work and training opportunities,” Catherine said.

“I arrived in Tasmania in March 2017 with my family from Sudan. I was so excited to be here, I felt safe with my family. I didn't have any English, just my basic ABCs, so I studied hard at TAFE. I practised and improved slowly. I completed level 1 and 2 of English language classes and then studied a hospitality course at TasTAFE.

Now I am having my work experience placement at MRC Tas Catering and I am very happy and excited to learn new skills, improve my English, meet others, and share

my food. I am enjoying learning to cook different food from other countries—I am even cooking new things at home. I am cooking lots of chicken dishes, falafel, kubba, sandwiches...many things. When my English is better, I would like to open a small business cooking Eritrean food.”

—Abebea

MRC Tas Catering work experience participant

Since completing the work experience program, Abebea participated in two external work placements with Alceme Kitchen and Hamlet and is employed casually by MRC Tas Catering.

**MRC Tas Catering
Social Enterprise**

Weekly Friday Deli Day menu updates can be found on:
f @mrctasmania @mrctas.catering

Hungry?
Drop in for lunch,
or book us for your
next event or
meeting!

Finding a Universal Language

How do you talk about suicide with someone whose native language may not even have a word for it? That's just one of the challenges Beth wrestles with every day.

As Senior Project Officer, Beth leads the CALD Community Connections Project, which aims to help people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities across the state respond to suicide risk.

OUR IMPACT

The statewide project is supported by Primary Health Tasmania under the Australian Government's PHN program and covers a wide-ranging brief that includes building collaborative links with local communities, improving responsiveness to suicidality and reducing stigma.

Even within mainstream Australian society, this can be difficult—but for Beth, there's the added challenge of negotiating the unique cultural perspectives and experiences of clients from Afghani/Hazara, Bhutanese, Burmese, Ethiopian, Eritrean, Iranian, Karen, Syrian and other backgrounds.

"For example, they might say yes, there was suicide in their community, and it was because of black magic or a curse on the family, or the family member may have sinned in the past," she explained.

"So the question becomes, how would we work around that here? Because this is how we might see it, and this is how you might see it."

Beth said approaching the topic of suicide indirectly, in such a way that the person doesn't feel they're being individually targeted, can be the best way to eventually bring about a frank discussion.

"Say if a younger man in the Afghani community was concerned about his father or uncle, they would likely believe they cannot and will not ask them if they're feeling suicidal because it would be too offensive. They say it wouldn't save their life, it would bring them too much shame," she said.

"But one of the young men suggested he could say, 'My Australian friend's uncle was going through a similar thing to you, and he was feeling really sad, and he actually attempted to die. Have you ever felt that bad?'"

"So it's just going about it in a gentler way."

Workshops and training events also help equip other community members with the skills necessary to identify and support someone at risk of suicide, including regular safeTALK sessions.

SafeTALK gives participants four basic steps to recognise people who might need help, and connect them with it: Tell, Ask, Listen and KeepSafe.

The training is available to anyone interested in preventing and addressing suicide, including volunteers of the MRC Tas Mitrah program, which supports people who are at elevated risk of suicide to engage with their community and improve their life skills.

Former primary school teacher Carol joined the program after its launch in 2017 and has since worked with two people—a man and a woman—who fled persecution overseas to come to Australia.

"When I retired from teaching, it was one of the things I wanted to get involved in. And I didn't want to just fill in time, I wanted to do something worthwhile," she said.



Now, through Mitrah, she meets up with a man of Kurdish background once a week and provides friendship and support.

Like Beth, Carol has found that there's a way to talk frankly about suicide without necessarily using the word.

"I've never discussed 'suicide' and 'depression', but I've always asked how they are, and have they been to their doctor, how are they feeling — things like that," she said.

"If they mentioned it in those terms, I would talk to them about it, but you're there to be a support."

Mitrah program volunteers act more like 'buddies' for Migrant Resource Centre Tasmania clients and, where necessary, seek help from centre staff for guidance.

Carol said having a shared project or task is also a good way to build trust and help reduce stress for the person, who may not have strong English language skills or know how to access certain services.

One of the nicest memories she has of her volunteering experience so far was looking after

a man's two children while his wife went to hospital to give birth to their third.

"They had no one else, but I said I would look after them so he could be there," she said.

"When I saw them come out with the baby, there was a big smile on his face."

In a way, Carol said being a Mitrah volunteer is a bit like being extended family to people who have, in many instances, none of their own nearby.

And in return, she loves being able to learn about their cultures, such as the music and food, and build a friendship during their weekly catch ups. Because even if she's not a clinician herself, Carol said there's one thing she can be: a friend.

"There's a huge emotional benefit to volunteering — it's not a one-sided thing," she said.

"To befriend someone isn't a big task."

THIS ARTICLE WAS FIRST PUBLISHED IN PRIMARY HEALTH TASMANIA'S PRIMARY HEALTH MATTERS MAGAZINE.

PRIMARYHEALTHTAS.COM.AU

Phoenix Centre Suicide Prevention Project

The Phoenix Centre Suicide Prevention Project assists service providers to work effectively with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities and supports CALD community members to build capacity in their responses to suicide.

40 Years of Impact

Forty years on and MRC Tas remains focused on its mission to support and encourage culturally diverse community members to reach their potential, and this will continue to guide us toward the future.



1979: Migrant Resource Centre (Southern Tasmania) is Founded

Migrant Resource Centres were born out of changing Federal Government policy in the 1970s towards multiculturalism.

1970s



Bhutanese Elders Group Commences

Fortnightly group outings are provided to increase social connection and wellbeing amongst elderly Bhutanese clients.



Support for Asylum Seekers

Torture and Trauma counselling provided to asylum seekers, including those who were detained at the Pontville Detention Centre

2015



Move to New Premises at KGV Sports & Community Centre

The relocation increased accessibility to support services for many Tasmanian migrants and allowed for significant growth in programs delivered.

The Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP) Commences in Collaboration with AMES Australia

Now Trading as Migrant Resource Centre Tasmania (MRC Tas)

New Launceston Office Opens

2016

2017



Centre Begins in a Sandy Bay Flat

Amongst the first programs offered were welcoming functions, English language classes and Home and Community Care (HACC).

1980s



The Phoenix Centre Joins MRC

The Phoenix Centre was established to provide services to meet the health and wellbeing needs of people who have been subjected to torture or other refugee related trauma.

1990s



Additional Services Added

Including the Top Gear Driving Program, a dedicated employment service, and programs in Launceston.

2000s



Support for Kosovo Refugees

Services offered at the Brighton Safe Haven—a project established by the Federal Government to accommodate and assist Kosovo refugees

OUR HISTORY

Multicultural Youth Tasmania Launches

Youth services provided by MRC Tas expanded to include a suite of services and are now provided under the one banner: Multicultural Youth Tasmania (MYT).

MYT provides targeted programs and projects to support young people aged up to 25 years from multicultural backgrounds to reach their full potential and thrive as active citizens of the Tasmanian community.

2018



MRC Tas Catering Social Enterprise Launches

2019



Who We are Today

Located in Glenorchy and Launceston

Clients from over 72 countries

Over 100 staff members

2613 Facebook page likes

34 projects

Over 200 active volunteers

Today



Working From a Place of Understanding

We value our diverse workforce, representing a range of perspectives, experiences, cultures, genders, and ages. Sixty percent of MRC Tas employees are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and there are approximately 31 languages/cultures represented by staff.

OUR PEOPLE



YUSEF MOHAMMADI BICULTURAL WORKER, LAUNCESTON OFFICE

"First of all, I think we must love what we do. I love my job. Many of our clients are struggling with language barriers. When for the first time you step into a foreign country, where everything is unknown to you, you would be so desperate to know about this new world you have walked in to. The way I can deliver this information and experience is very important in order to make a good impression

and ensure they feel at home despite language and cultural barriers. I have discovered my hidden strengths while supporting our clients and I'm loving what I have been doing and want to continue working in the Community Services sector. Thanks to MRC Tas for having me as part of its great team."

JAL DAVID YOUTH WORKER, GLENORCHY OFFICE

"I am a youth worker. I work with young people aged 15-25, who are "at risk" or disengaged from education, employment and community. I support them to access mainstream services and advocate for culturally appropriate practices such as using an interpreter when engaging with CALD youth.

The highlight of my role would be seeing how much difference being engaged in employment

makes for the young people. Like all young people, when involved in employment they seem to have this sense of purpose where little things that maybe have kept them back before are no longer factors. I have seen a young person experiencing a range of issues transform overnight after gaining employment."

GEORGIE CARR COUNSELLOR, GLENORCHY OFFICE

"I provide counselling support for people who have experienced trauma or torture prior to arriving in Australia. The most important part of my role is building a trusting relationship to establish a place of safety where a person can explore and process their past experiences.

Boarding the Titanic, building Jenga cities, ribbon twirling and juggling! I work with all ages, however as you probably noticed I particularly enjoy engaging with primary school aged children. It doesn't matter what their first, second or third language is because every child speaks a common language...play.

The therapeutic relationship offers a space for the child to feel in control and choose exactly how they want to be in the counselling room. It's remarkable to witness the healing that comes from this baseline of safety and freedom to express. There's something magical about trusting a child completely in their play. I've accompanied children acting out war scenes with textas they've turned into guns and helped build cubby houses to hide from something frightening. But most importantly I've witnessed a child's body posture move from closed to open, their capacity to learn at school soar and positive attachments to families grow."



Supporting New Members of Our Community

The Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP) provides early, practical support to humanitarian entrants.

The MRC Tas Volunteer Program supports clients to settle in Hobart and Launceston by recognising and building on strengths, with the aim of increasing their skills and knowledge and leading them to be independent and active members of society.

HSP Volunteers support clients with:

- On-Arrival Orientation Support
- Responsive 'drop-in' services to meet client needs, e.g. Housing, Employment
- Admin and Project Support
- Orientation Buddies
- Welcome Packs

HSP Housing Drop-in provides weekly support, with volunteers building client skills in searching for properties, attending inspections, applying for properties, and celebrating with them when they secure a lease. HSP Volunteer Engagement Officer Cassandra said volunteers are a vital part of a coordinated, team-based case management approach,

"We appreciate the persistence of our volunteers and the encouragement they bring to the team while supporting clients on the challenging search for long term accommodation," she said.

The interaction between clients and volunteers is rewarding for the volunteer and an essential support to our clients.

"I've been volunteering to assist with the HSP for a few years now. It's become an important part of my life. Some days are very busy, some not so. My favourites are when I've helped a new arrival make a phone call themselves or fill out forms and have them leave smiling. I have heaps of respect for the good humour, patience and resilience of the MRC Tas staff."

—MARGARET
MRC TAS VOLUNTEER

MRC Tas Volunteer Program

Volunteers contribute immensely to MRC Tas services. In 2018-19, 208 volunteers recorded more than 7434 volunteer hours for a variety of activities across the organisation. Thank you to all MRC Tas volunteers for their valued support. To learn more about volunteering with MRC Tas please visit mrctas.org.au/volunteer

Enriching For Both of Us



Maria, who migrated from the Netherlands 67 years ago, spends a lot of her time caring for her husband, resulting in little opportunity for social connection or focus on self care and wellbeing.

Through the MRC Tas Aged Care Community Visitor's Scheme (CVS) she can enjoy some 'Maria time' and indulge in her favourite hobby—silk ribbon embroidery and working with silk paper.

The 85-year-old loves sharing her knowledge on her unique art form with Anne, her CVS volunteer. "You spin it and play with it. It's like watercolours. You just play with it and it forms a fabric."

Our CVS volunteers meet with older people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds fortnightly for companionship, support, and activities such as shopping and socialising. MRC Tas provides this free service for people who are living in their own homes and are receiving a Home Care Package.

Anne has been visiting Maria at her home for the past few months to work on art projects together.

Maria said she had previously stopped working on her art due to her need to care for her husband. As a result of Anne's visits, Maria now has an opportunity to get creative and share her knowledge.

"I am enthused being able to share my passion with someone. Anne has totally revitalised my love for it!" Maria said.

Maria's client worker Claudia facilitated the initial connection, suspecting it would be a great pairing. "I knew it would be a good match because both Anne and Maria had something to give and gain from the relationship."

Anne said she really enjoys visiting Maria and is sharing her craft learnings with her grandchildren. "I appreciate that for some people life can get smaller as you get older. Maria's life is expanding in everything she does, and it's been really enriching connecting with her."

Aged Care Services Community Visitor's Scheme

The CVS is funded by the Australian government. The scheme plays an important role in providing companionship for older people living in a Government Funded Aged Care Facility or living in their own homes and receiving a Home Care Package.

Our Partnerships & Collaborations

Thank you to the many organisations that partner and collaborate with us to enhance our ability to support clients. Featured below are four highlights from our many valued relationships.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY TASMANIA

To respond to the low reported rate of racial discrimination in Tasmania, Equal Opportunity Tasmania provides outreach to MRC Tas once a month. Clients, community members, staff and volunteers use the service for support to understand their rights and reporting options.

Equal Opportunity Tasmania representative Mel said part of outreach is inspiring people that change is possible, and that people can feel comfortable approaching Equal Opportunity Tasmania with their concerns and questions.

“Since starting outreach, we’ve developed a greater understanding of the issues people face—and that they may want different types of help than

what we expected. Some people want to leave the past in the past without a formal complaint, but they still value being heard, learning about anti-discrimination law, and feeling empowered to respond to things that happen at school, on the bus or affect other community members. These conversations would not have happened without outreach,” Mel said.

The exchange of training between organisations has resulted in Equal Opportunities recording information in different languages to be more accessible to emerging communities. It has also resulted in increased complaints and collaboration from MRC Tas staff and volunteers on behalf of community members.

BAPTCARE: NDIS DELIVERY PARTNER

Since December 2018, MRC Tasmania has partnered with Baptcare to deliver a weekly Disability Drop-in at the Glenorchy office. Community members can ask about anything to do with disability.

The attendance of Baptcare aims to de-stigmatise disability within CALD communities and provide information and support for accessing the NDIS.

As NDIS Local Area Coordinator, Tracey welcomes anyone seeking information on behalf of others, workers who seek advice about a client, and anyone supporting a carer.

“As a local resident, I can help families navigate disability support and also link to local services and opportunities.” Tracey, NDIS Baptcare.

Case workers describe the difference it’s made:

“An Ethiopian client with significant mental health issues always struggled to know the progress of his NDIS application until Disability Drop-in started. Now he has finished the assessment with a NDIS coordinator.”

“Working with NDIS has meant that a young boy with a hearing impairment can use a support app on his own phone at school, something his mother wouldn’t have been able to navigate without Disability Drop-in.”

“After working with the NDIS at Disability Drop-in a 41-year-old Eritrean woman is able to access an appropriate hearing aid for the first time.”

COUNCIL OF THE AGEING (COTA)

Older Tasmanians, their family and carers seeking information and support to navigate the aged care system can access free help through the Aged Care System Navigator (ACSN) Trial. Under a subcontract with COTA, MRC Tas works closely with Tasmanian culturally and linguistically diverse consumers and communities, providing information and support to ensure informed choice and access to culturally responsive services.

COTA provides MRC Tas with valuable advice and assistance regarding accessing resources for the Trial. As an organisation focused on aged care, COTA has access to several networks and hosts numerous forums and events throughout the year, providing excellent networking and learning experiences for MRC Tas staff and clients.

FASSTT

The Phoenix Centre is a member of FASSTT (Forum of Australian Services for Survivors of Torture and Trauma), which is a network of Australia's eight specialist agencies that work with survivors of torture and trauma.

The network enables agencies to share resources and build a nationally consistent approach for the

delivery of targeted, evidenced based, therapeutic interventions. FASSTT works to inform national policies and programs that support recovery from experiences of torture and trauma and contributes to work on an international level by the by IRCT (International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims).

Acknowledgements

MRC Tas would like to thank the many organisations, businesses and individuals who supported and donated time, expertise and financial resources to us during the 2018–19 financial year.

In particular, we thank the following for their support:

Department of Social Services

Department of Health

Department of Home Affairs

Department of Premier and Cabinet

Department of Health and Human Services

Department of State Growth

Skills Tasmania

Tasmanian Community Fund

Tasmania Police

CatholicCare

Australian Red Cross

TasTAFE

AMES Australia

Primary Health Tasmania

Scanlon Foundation

Council of the Ageing

Anglicare Tasmania

City of Hobart

National Disability Insurance Agency

Zonta Club of Hobart

Save the Children Australia

Glenorchy City Council

Our Leadership Team

MRC Tas staff are deeply connected to the organisation's purpose. We value the diversity in ourselves and others. Our unique environment fosters creative people, with innovative solutions to address challenging issues.

Staff and volunteers are encouraged to be actively involved in planning, delivery and evaluation. We genuinely value time, expertise and experience, and acknowledge the composed guidance of our leadership team.

OUR LEADERSHIP TEAM



GILLIAN LONG DIRECTOR OF SERVICES

"The thing I enjoy most about working at MRC Tas is knowing the organisation's values are truly aligned with the values of the individuals who make up the organisation. It's something I witness daily. Values underpin every aspect of service delivery at MRC Tas, resulting in the achievement of measurable differences in clients' recovery, wellness and independence."



SHELDENE BLACKLER CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

"We understand the power of relationships and connection and have mutually beneficial relationships with our clients and community that help us to openly engage with the world. We observe gaps in common thinking and behaviours and use this to affect change. Our energy is focused on not necessarily what is, but what can be."



EMILY CHURCHES PHOENIX CENTRE MANAGER

"The Phoenix Centre team, through the provision of highly specialised and culturally appropriate therapeutic services, work with participants and communities, to alleviate the debilitating impacts of torture and complex trauma and support recovery to restore positive and meaningful futures. It is a challenge that holds immeasurable rewards."



CATHERINE DORAN SETTLEMENT
& COMMUNITY SERVICES MANAGER

"Our services are strength based and are responsive to individual need. They provide the support, tools or opportunities that our clients need to achieve their goals. This support is crucial for individuals to adapt to, participate and thrive in Tasmanian society. The most rewarding component of our work is witnessing the strengths and achievements of our clients."

CEO Report



Since inception, the core purpose of MRC Tasmania has been to create opportunities for multicultural communities to flourish in Tasmania. From modest beginnings we now offer a broad range of services across a wide geographical area.

As community needs have changed, our organisation has evolved, and again this year we were pleased to have several new programs funded that will strengthen the capacity of MRC Tasmania to assist multicultural communities engaging and settling in Tasmania.

In our settlement and community programs we launched our high-profile MRC Tas Catering and continued to grow our youth services, as well as increase services in our highly sought-after Migration program. We also successfully retained and strengthened our support up to five years post arrival with the commencement of the Settlement Engagement and Transition Service (SETS). In partnership with Save the Children we have built a model of service aligned to the National Settlement Framework that leverages positive collaboration with other settlement and mainstream services.

While the Tasmanian population benefits from migration, there are trends of ageing demographics, and MRC Tas provides tailored services for older people from culturally diverse backgrounds. We commenced the Aged Care Navigator service which will assist people to access Aged Care programs, while the Partners in Culturally Appropriate Care (PICAC) program continues to work closely with mainstream services, assisting to build cultural competence in the aged service environment. Our thriving Day Centres, Community Visitors Scheme and specialised and individual support services remain in demand. The Phoenix Centre has also grown with the addition of several tailored programs to meet essential mental health needs of our clients. Phoenix staff have specialised skills and training which is valued by both mainstream services and our communities.

We have been fortunate this year to cultivate and participate in an extraordinary range of stakeholder networks. MRC Tas leads a number of working groups in settlement, families and children and employment as well as expert forums in youth and mental health. These networks not only serve to amplify the voice of our community, our clients and their needs, but also improves sector efficiency and effectiveness.

We look to the future with anticipation and enthusiasm. Our new strategic plan will drive significant organisational change as we reset to accommodate our ongoing growth and future proof our sustainability.

We could not do all of this without the stable and dedicated leadership of our Board and our talented and exceptional staff and volunteers. It is their commitment to purpose that enables MRC Tasmania to increase the impact we make every day.

—ALISON O'NEILL
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Chair Report



This year marks the 40th Anniversary of the Migrant Resource Centre Tasmania and presents a wonderful opportunity to recognise the amazing strengths, knowledge and resilience of migrants, and to acknowledge the enormous contribution they make to our community.

It is also a time to reflect on and celebrate the broader social and economic benefits of multiculturalism in Tasmania.

Over the past 12 months we have continued to evolve and grow the organisation whilst maintaining our focus on providing the very highest level of service and care. We have broadened our service offerings and expanded our operations in Launceston to ensure we are meeting the needs of our clients and the community.

The Board undertook a major strategic review during the year and has set the strategic plan for the next three years. We are now moving into a period of sustainability, consolidating the structure of our organisation, while ensuring we remain flexible and adaptive to the future. As always, we will continue to focus on the services we deliver to ensure they are providing what our community needs.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to acknowledge the wonderful contribution made by our staff and volunteers. The organisation attracts high quality and dedicated people and our impact is greatly enhanced when combined with our fantastic network of volunteers. We have over 100 employees and rely on more than 7434 hours per annum of volunteer work to help us provide essential services. The enthusiasm, loyalty and commitment of our team at MRC Tasmania is inspirational.

—NICK BEDDING
CHAIR



Financial Statements

Please visit mrctas.org.au/annual-reports for the 2018-19 audited financial statements.

Strategic Plan Snapshot 2019–2022

Since its establishment in 1979, MRC Tasmania has been part of the landscape of cultural diversity in Tasmania. Four decades later, the organisation reflects both our history and the changing and evolving needs of our community.

In 2019 we set out to shape the next stage of our essential service to the Tasmanian community. We have developed a Plan that demonstrates our commitment to impact, supported by a strong strategic framework.

OUR VALUES

CENTRED ON PEOPLE, FOCUSED ON OUTCOMES

Our organisation is sensitive to community needs and recognises people who access our services often have distinct and evolving needs. Our role is to support them appropriately to achieve their goals.

CULTURALLY RESPECTFUL COMMUNITIES

Our organisation is committed to acknowledging, understanding and meeting the different needs of diverse groups. We encourage and reflect cultural awareness and use this knowledge in our work.

INTERCONNECTED SYSTEMS OF SUPPORT

Our organisation positively and actively co-operates as part of an interconnected system of services. Our role is unique in that cultural diversity is at the heart of what we do.

DEVELOPING AND GROWING

Our organisation is an environment of compassion, positive behaviours, respect and responsibility. We share common goals and will continuously improve our understanding and expertise.

A HUMAN RIGHTS FRAMEWORK

Human rights principles are at the core of how we do what we do. These beliefs are universal and fundamental.

OUR GOALS

OUR STRUCTURE

To stabilise and strengthen the organisation's structure and systems through effective governance and management.

OUR SERVICES

To provide services of the highest quality possible.

OUR PEOPLE

To engage highly skilled and capable people in our organisation.

OUR SUSTAINABILITY

To create a solid operational and financial base that will allow us to be flexible and responsive.

OUR COMMUNITY

To bring our expertise in migrant and refugee settlement to a wider audience and promote understanding and positive discussion in the community.

Our Board



NICK BEDDING CHAIRPERSON

Nick joined the MRC Tas Board in 2014, and has held the position of Chairperson since August 2018. 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.



JEANETTE BANKS VICE CHAIR

Jeanette joined the MRC Tas 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.



NICOLA COX SECRETARY

Nicola is the Co-Founder and Director of Virtual Information Technology Pty Ltd., a Tasmanian IT service provider and Optus Business Centre. Nicola is a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and Recipient of Tasmanian Premier's Board Diversity Scholarship—2016. Nicola sits on the board and is the public officer for Community Transport Services Tasmania (CTST). Nicola continually invests in building her board and directorship knowledge. She enjoys spending time with her family and volunteering at the local football club.



WENDY HEATLEY SECOND SECRETARY

Wendy is a lawyer with a Master of Business Administration who has worked in legal, policy and management roles in the Tasmanian and Commonwealth governments. Recently, she worked as a lecturer and tutor in business law at the Tasmanian School of Business and Economics, University of Tasmania, where she enjoyed teaching domestic and international students. Wendy has a long record of volunteering for community organisations as a board member and office bearer.



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.



JES KENTH SECOND TREASURER

Jes has been a member of the MRC Tas board since late 2017. Jes is employed as a CFO for OneCare Ltd. He has varied experiences in Executive roles for a number of Not-For-Profit organisations, predominantly in the Aged Care sector. Originally from Malaysia, he has keen interest in Tasmania's multicultural society.



HELEN BURNET BOARD MEMBER

Helen is the Deputy Mayor of the Hobart City Council, and has been a member of the MRC Tas Board since 2009. Helen held the position of Chairperson between October 2014 and August 2018. She has a broad interest in the health and wellbeing of culturally and linguistically diverse communities and is a passionate advocate for social inclusion.



ALISON O'NEILL BOARD MEMBER

Alison has been the Chief Executive Officer of MRC Tasmania since 2015. With a professional background predominantly within corporate leadership roles in the NFP sector she is also a graduate of the AICD Company Directors course. Alison is an executive member of the Settlement Council of Australia and participates in a range of advisory groups at a local, state, and federal level that inform, guide and influence outcomes for the multicultural communities in Tasmania.



VICTOR STOJCEVSKI BOARD MEMBER

Victor has a Macedonian background and joined the MRC Tas Board in 2017. He arrived in Tasmania from Victoria with his family in 2004. He is currently the Registrar of Tasmania's Guardianship and Administration Board. Victor's background includes leadership roles within the justice sector, particularly in law reform, therapeutic jurisprudence, court administration, and coronial law.



MANOJ NAIR BOARD MEMBER

Manoj is a senior executive with over 20 years' global experience in the Internet and Telecommunication Industries, having worked in diverse geographies such as Asia Pacific region, the Middle East, the Indian sub-continent, UK and Africa. He has also been involved in establishing two Internet start-up companies as a Co-Founder and as a Board Member. He is currently involved with the Tasmanian Department of Education and the University of Tasmania to create a predictive digital model that improves educational outcomes.







Donate

FUNDS, TIME OR EXPERTISE

Our mission is to support and encourage culturally diverse community members to reach their potential. Many of our clients face challenges as they settle into a new community and our capacity to provide assistance is greatly enriched by the generous support of others.

Make a difference.

As a registered charity all donations \$2 and over are tax deductible. If you would like to discuss contributing funds, time or expertise that aligns to our community goals, please contact us.

mrctas.org.au/donate