

ANNUAL REPORT 2019 - 2020



Supporting and
encouraging
culturally diverse
community
members to reach
their potential

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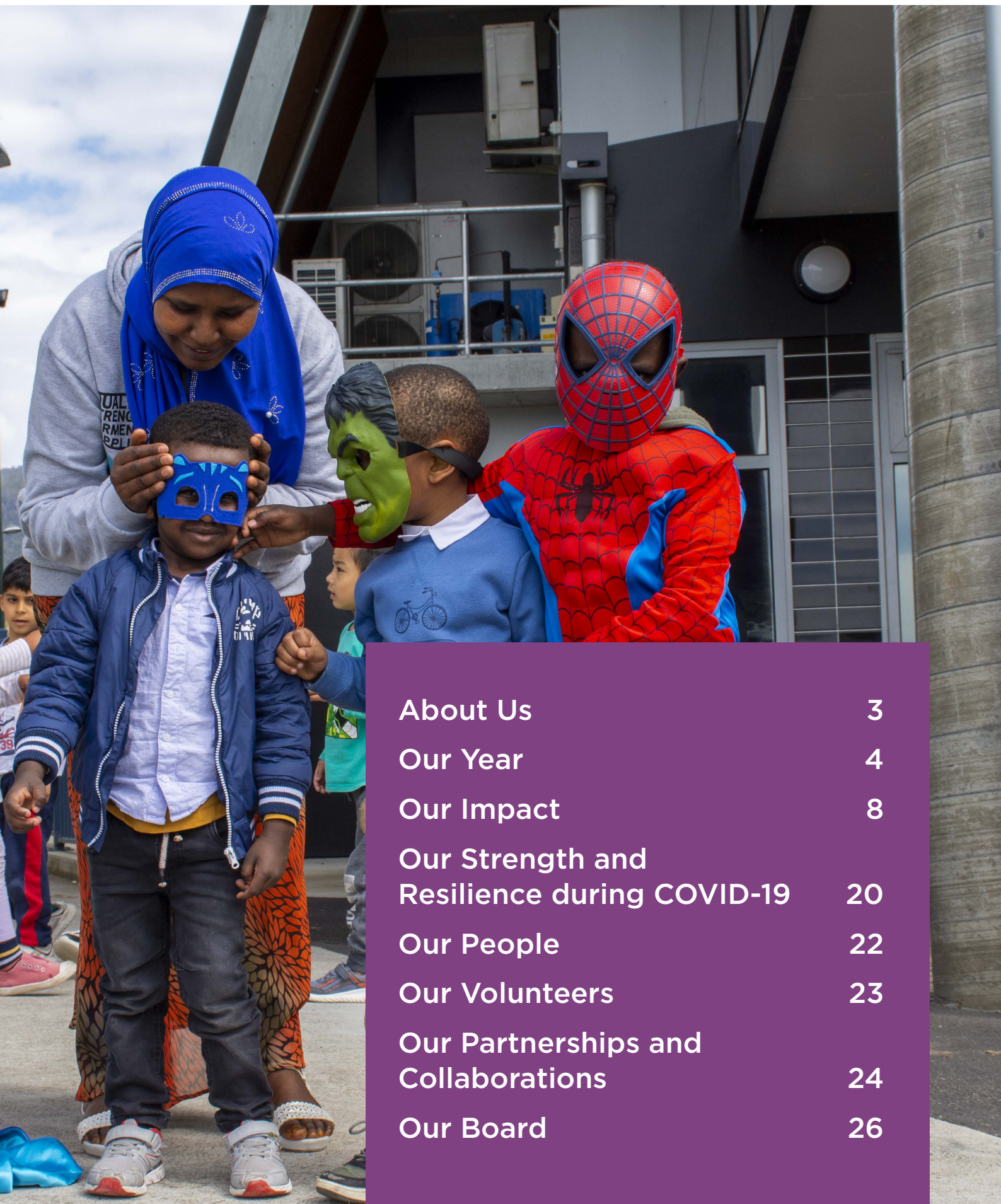
Our Patron:

Her Excellency Professor the Honourable Kate
Warner, AC, Governor of Tasmania.



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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Our vision:
An equitable, just,
culturally diverse and
inclusive society.

About us

Who we are

Migrant Resource Centre Tasmania (MRC Tas) is a not-for-profit organisation that supports and empowers migrants and refugees to settle and live fulfilling lives in 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.

We aspire to create a harmonious and welcoming Tasmanian community and promote understanding, acceptance and belonging.

An extensive range of services and projects are offered, including:

- Individual and group case management
- Capacity building
- Community development
- Support for older people
- Specialised settlement services
- Social Enterprise
- Employment support
- Youth work
- Health and life skills programs and services, including counselling.

For all community

MRC Tas has a range of programs for people from a multicultural background living in Tasmania, regardless of whether they are a temporary or permanent resident. These include:

- Mental Health support through the Phoenix Centre
- Support for those impacted by COVID-19
- Information and referral to other services
- Settlement services
- Employment assistance
- Aged Care
- Multicultural Youth Program.

“Migrant Resource Centre Tasmania has helped me to learn the industry specific lingo I need to work in building and construction in Tasmania. Now I feel confident in my ability to gain employment in the industry.”

Huang Qinglong, English for jobs in Building and Construction participant



Our Year

A warm welcome from the CEO

The enduring impacts of the pandemic are not yet clear, however the resilience and capability to respond during these challenging times has been remarkable. Our staff and volunteers have displayed an enormous commitment to ensuring Migrant Resource Centre Tasmania delivers the best possible service to clients and the Tasmanian community.

Despite the demands of the past year, our focus remains firmly on our strategic priorities. A reshaping of our organisational structure positioned us well to adjust to the substantive impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

With the closure of the Australian borders we saw the immediate cessation of the Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP). A number of families arrived leading into the close down period, and our HSP team worked hard to ensure these new Tasmanians received the supports they needed. We share the deep concerns of communities as it becomes apparent that many refugees will be globally isolated for some time. While our on-arrival services are now paused, we continue to dedicate resources to supporting existing HSP clients.



Alison O'Neill, Chief Executive Officer

We have also introduced a range of short and medium-term measures, including the Food Box initiative, digital support for young people, programs for skilled, business and temporary migrants and enriched support for our ageing community members.

Alongside this, the Phoenix Centre has extended programs. This includes the introduction of the Cultural Community Connections Program to support the health and wellbeing of culturally and linguistically diverse communities during COVID-19 and beyond. We were very pleased in early 2020 to achieve a very positive assessment against National Mental Health Standards for the Phoenix Centre, and our interim report makes special mention of the passion our team have for their work, and each other.



As mentioned in the Chair's report, the acquisition of a substantive property to address housing challenges is an exciting opportunity to further connect allied services, employment programs and social participation in southern Tasmania. In Launceston we were pleased to expand the successful southern based MY Pathways Program. Our ability to support young people has now been further augmented through additional programs acquired from both Tasmanian Community Fund and Commonwealth Department of Health.

The unique global circumstances we currently face ultimately impact the very core purpose of MRC Tasmania. As we focus on the future, we are committed to consulting and responding effectively to the changing needs of our clients and communities.

While we have experienced periods of uncertainty during recent months, there is no doubt our capable team has, can, and will continue to rise to the challenge. I am very grateful for the resilience and efforts of the entire team at MRC Tas, our staff and volunteers as well as the guidance of the MRC Tas Board, and in particular, the Chairperson.



Our 40th Anniversary Celebrations

Migrant Resource Centre Tasmania celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2019. To acknowledge and celebrate this significant milestone, we held events in Hobart and Launceston.

In August 2019, a reception was held at Government House. Attendees enjoyed exploring the beautiful ballroom, mingling, and hearing inspiring speeches acknowledging the work of MRC Tas and the many benefits of having a culturally diverse Tasmanian community. We sincerely thank our Patron, Her Excellency Professor the Honourable Kate Warner, AC, Governor of Tasmania and Mr Warner for their generous support in hosting us.

In November the celebrations continued with a community gala at the Hobart Town Hall. Over 250 community members attended the event and enjoyed a range of activities and performances. It was fantastic to see people from so many different backgrounds and cultures come together in the spirit of welcome, connection, and harmony. Attendees included MRC Tas clients, many of whom had recently settled in Hobart. Bus transport was provided from the MRC Tas office in Glenorchy to ensure

accessibility. It was wonderful to see more established members of the Hobart community also in attendance. Bicultural workers provided language support during the event. A big thank you to the City of Hobart for its support.

In December 2019, our Launceston office held a community picnic at Riverbend Park. It was a fantastic event, and despite cool and windy weather, approximately 70 people attended and brought lots of delicious food to share. It was a great way to conclude our 40th anniversary celebrations.



Chair Report

The 2020 financial year will be forever defined by the advent of COVID-19 and the harm, significant disruption, and uncertainty this has caused to our lives and our community. The management and staff of MRC Tas can take a great deal of pride in how well the organisation responded to the initial crisis and our ability to maintain essential services during extremely difficult times. Since the easing of restrictions in Tasmania we have recommenced normal operations whilst implementing appropriate precautionary measures to ensure a safe environment for our staff and clients.

During the year, we continued to implement our 3-year strategic plan with a focus on delivering the highest level of services to migrants, humanitarian entrants and refugees. A number of initiatives to strengthen the organisation's structure and systems have been implemented and we are continuing to evolve our services and improve the monitoring of the effectiveness of our programs.

To counteract a significant issue faced by humanitarian migrants in securing accommodation, we purchased a property located in Goodwood. The property consists of 5 houses and 14 cabins. Initial renovations have been completed and we are currently using the facility to provide short-term accommodation for humanitarian migrants. We intend to seek funding to further develop the property to provide broader community and learning facilities.

The purchase was funded with support of the State Government and through the utilisation of the proceeds from the sale of our former Hobart property. On behalf of the Board I would like to thank the State Government for their assistance in the development of this important initiative.



Nick Bedding, Chairperson

Our thanks go to all our staff, volunteers and donors for their support and commitment during difficult times. Whilst no one can predict the longer-term impacts from the pandemic, MRC Tas is well positioned to continue to provide essential support to the migrant community.

As a community, we need to ensure that the importance of migration and the creation of a diverse multicultural society is not forgotten and that we continue to provide opportunities and support to people from culturally diverse backgrounds.

Financial Statements

Please visit mrctas.org.au/annual-reports for the 2019-2020 audited financial statements.

Our Impact



Phoenix Centre

Providing culturally appropriate mental health and wellbeing support to individuals and communities

The Phoenix Centre is a specialist rehabilitation agency that provides therapeutic mental health and wellbeing support and capacity building activities to survivors of torture and other traumatic experiences and their communities. Support includes counselling, psycho educational group work and community development activities. Our service operates from an integrated trauma recovery framework that aims to resolve the detrimental impacts of exposure to systemic violence and loss, persecution, perpetration of human rights violations and forced displacement.

“Before counselling I would faint at the sound of fire alarms as I thought there was a bomb. Now I understand the strategies learned from counselling and use them to challenge my worries.”

Phoenix Centre client

The Phoenix Centre also provides training to mainstream service providers to improve their capacity to work effectively with people who have experienced trauma. Our services are delivered in both Hobart and Launceston.

The Phoenix Centre is a member of FASSTT (Forum of Australian Services for Survivors of Torture and Trauma), a network of eight agencies that work with survivors of torture and trauma and collaborate to build capacity across Australia.

Exploring Attitudes and Stigma to Mental Health and Suicide

In September 2019, the Phoenix Centre hosted an Expert Insight Forum in Launceston titled 'Exploring Attitudes and Stigma to Mental Health and Suicide - A Multicultural Perspective.' The Suicide Prevention team and Bicultural Workers collaborated to gather information from their communities relating to mental health and suicide prevention. The results from these consultations were presented to an audience of over 100 external service providers. The forum also delivered Cultural Awareness information, a keynote address by refugee health expert Dr Jill Benson, and a panel discussion with key community members about mental health understanding within different cultural communities in Tasmania.

"Listening to the co-researchers talk about their learnings from their own communities gave invaluable insight impossible to get any other way."

Forum Participant

Diverse Ability program

Diverse Ability, a 12-month pilot, was a strengths-based, individual capacity building program for people with psychosocial or physical disabilities from a CALD background. Its activities supported participants to develop the skills and confidence needed to meet their community participation and contribution goals.

Diverse Ability provided individual and group activities to over 20 vulnerable individuals in both Hobart and Launceston. The project focused on developing the capacity of participants to better understand how to navigate services to meet their needs. The program operated from a strengths-based framework and was delivered by peer workers with lived experience of psychosocial disability.

The program was highly successful in supporting vulnerable and isolated individuals (and their carers) in achieving goals and gaining greater value from their lives. As a result of their participation in the program, clients reported increased capacity in communication, social interaction, learning, mobility, and self-management.





Aged Care

Supporting older people to stay active and connected.

MRC Tas Aged Care Services assist people to remain living in their home safely, with support to stay independent, active and engaged in the community. With a focus on mental and physical health, social connections, and physical activity, our case management services cater to individual needs.

Our group activities include information sessions, outings and the chance to meet people from a range of cultural backgrounds.

We help migrant communities and families to register and understand the Government's My Aged Care system. We also offer cultural education and support to aged care service providers through the Partners in Culturally Appropriate Care (PICAC) program.

PICAC works closely with aged care residential facilities, training providers and sector leaders to ensure the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse community members are acknowledged and supported throughout their aged care experience.

Bicultural Workers

MRC Tas Bicultural Workers provide enormous benefits and bring valuable insight and a depth of cultural knowledge and experience to the organisation. Whilst bicultural work may include some language support, it is also much, much more. Bicultural Workers enrich communication and understanding between clients and MRC Tas staff, ensuring innovative service delivery and better outcomes for clients.

Our Aged Care services utilise Bicultural Workers for the Home and Community Care Program and Commonwealth Home Support Program, including:

- Individual social support with tasks such as shopping, attending appointments, transport, companionship, and going on outings
- Group social support at Day Centres and for the Bhutanese Elders Group outings.

As Bicultural Workers are from the communities that they are assisting, they have a unique relationship with clients and can provide a cultural lens to our work, ensuring culturally appropriate care and support.

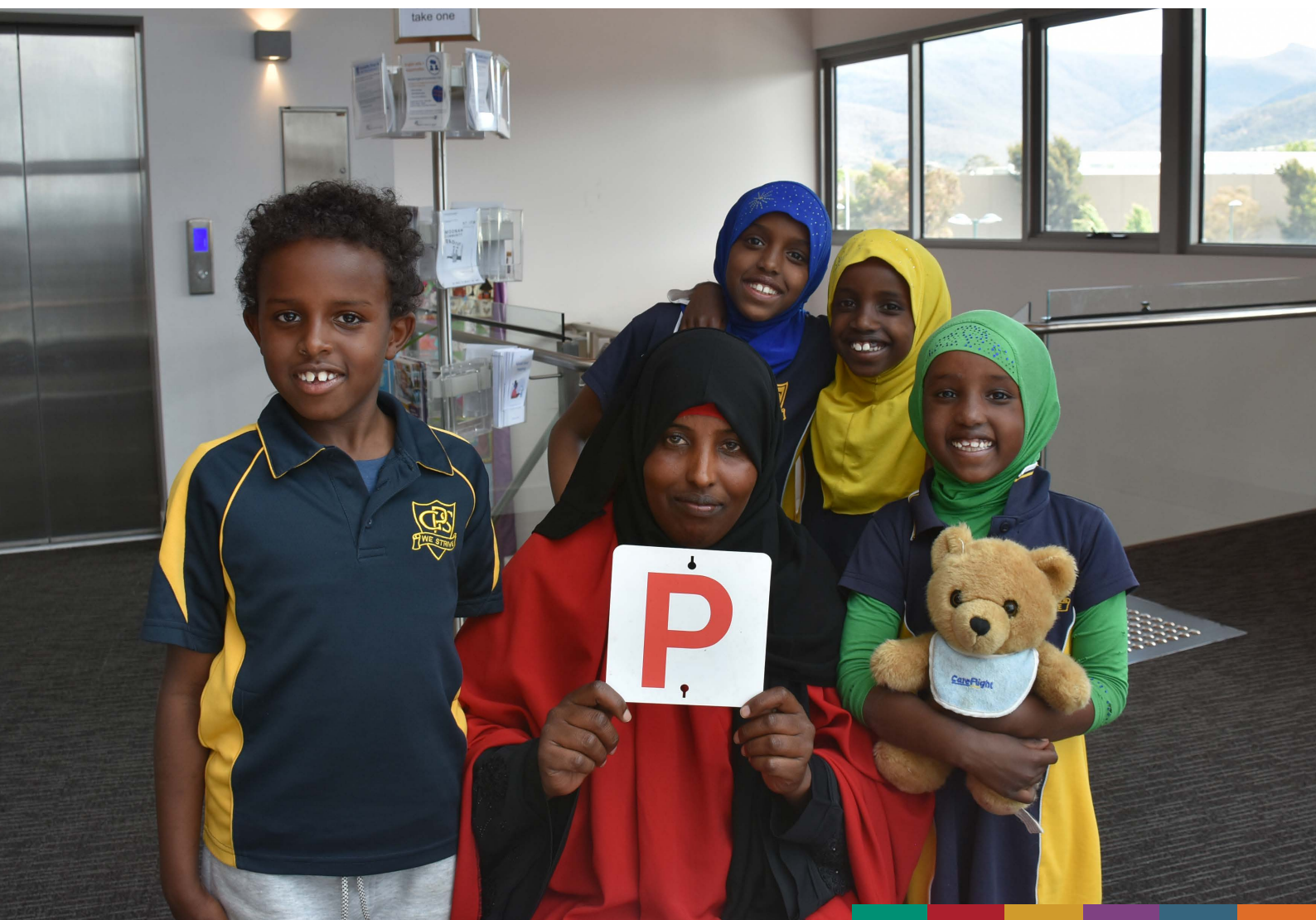
During the COVID-19 isolation period, bicultural workers regularly phoned clients to communicate important government messages and conduct wellbeing checks. They also played a critical role in consulting with clients about their needs, and supported the resolution of concerns.

A highlighted concern amongst the Bhutanese Elders Group was the feeling of isolation, as clients were unable to meet in person. Our bicultural worker Januka was instrumental in setting up an online group. She supported clients to access video chat so that they could still connect virtually and benefit from social connection whilst remaining physically apart.



“I am feeling proud, happy and grateful to support the Bhutanese Elders Group. They understand me, and I understand them. I can talk homely language, so it is easy for them to understand and communicate their needs. I feel that they are all my grandparents; I really like helping them. They call me ‘Tuli’ which means eldest daughter. I am so grateful to MRC Tas for providing me with this type of job where I am able to help the elder people in my community.”

Januka, Bicultural Worker



Settlement Services

Equipping new Tasmanians with knowledge and skills. Building capacity to settle successfully.

MRC Tas Settlement Services equip clients with the skills and confidence needed to address their settlement needs and thrive in daily life. Our services focus on social participation, economic wellbeing, independence, personal wellbeing and community connectedness.

Outcomes are accelerated by determined multicultural communities, a passionate team and the goodwill and generosity of volunteers.

We offer specialist individual, group, and community support, made up of:

Individual settlement services including information and referral, case support, driving program, migration support, and employment and industry projects.

Group settlement services including English and skill groups, information sessions, workshops, work experience in our social enterprise kitchen, and a career networking group.

Community development services including leadership capacity building, emerging community associations, community consultations, and enabling civic participation.

Promoting the needs of multicultural communities through advocacy and working with mainstream services to support the delivery of responsive and culturally inclusive services.

Migrant Network

An important part of settling into a new community is building up local knowledge and contacts. The Migrant Network was established to assist skilled migrants to connect with each other, develop their professional networks, and learn from one another. It provides:

- Networking opportunities
- A distribution list to share migrant stories, settlement supports, and events
- Online events – workshops on employment, networking, small business, and settlement
- A LinkedIn group – a space to make connections with each other and beyond
- Audio tips shared by migrants about their settlement and career experience to help other migrants.

“Through networking we can access and share ‘unwritten’ knowledge essential for establishing a life and career in Tasmania. Migrants should never underestimate the power of networks, it’s how I got my first job.”

Aimen, Migrant Network Participant

Driving Program

For many of our clients, being unable to drive presents a major barrier to employment and inclusion in the Tasmanian community.

The MRC Tas Driving Program assists clients at each step so that they can get their licence safely and legally.

Through the Car Café, learners can practice English and road rules with volunteers. Once ready to get on the road, clients are matched with a volunteer driver mentor through the Learner Driver Mentor Program, and can practice driving in a dedicated learner vehicle.

In 2019-2020, Volunteer Driver Mentors undertook 1544 hours of on-road instruction with learners. Five learner drivers obtained their L2 licence, and nine learner drivers achieved their goal of obtaining their P1 licence.

Volunteer driving mentors quietly change lives, one licence at a time.

“A big thank you to my volunteer mentor Simon. Now I have the driving licence I can take my kids wherever they want. To get a driving licence was my first step to settle down in Tasmania, now my aim is to get a job in cleaning.”

Nunish, Driving Program participant

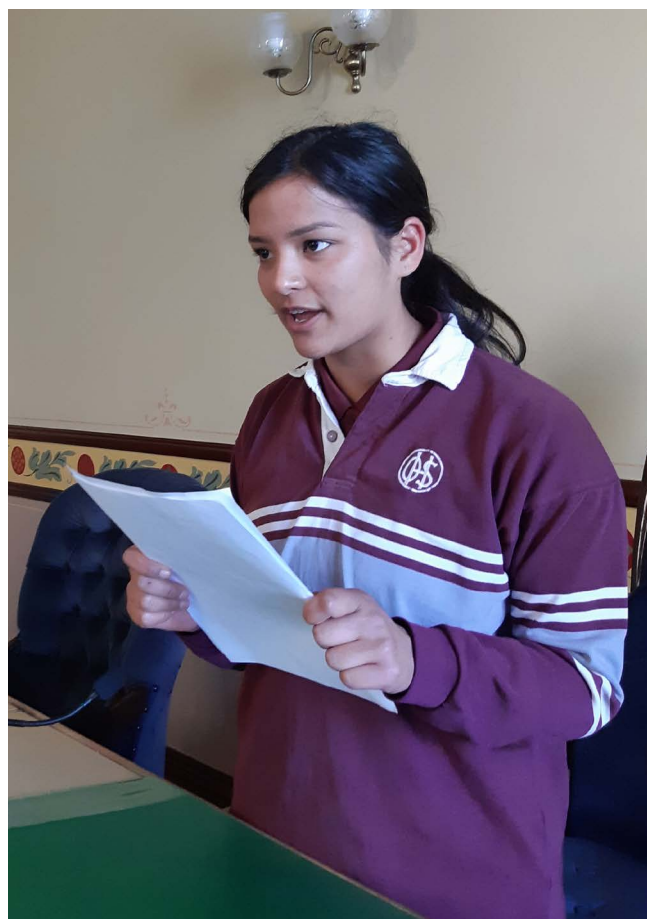


Multicultural Youth Tasmania

Supporting multicultural young people to thrive in Tasmania.

The Multicultural Youth Tasmania (MYT) program provides targeted services and projects to support young people aged up to 25 years from multicultural backgrounds to reach their full potential and thrive as members of the Tasmanian community.

MYT services work directly with clients, focusing on sport and recreation, education, employment, and wellbeing. Participation in MYT services provide an opportunity for young people to develop a strong sense of belonging and resilience during settlement and beyond. MYT also provides training, support and resources to ensure that the needs of multicultural youth are being met within mainstream services, particularly in the areas of youth, education and community.



MY LiFE program

The MY LiFE program focuses on English development that supports the transition to tertiary study. In 2019-2020 the program enrolled 21 students in weekly academic English development. Participants flourished in the group study environment and reported improvements in critical thinking, digital literacy, confidence, communication, syntax and vocabulary.

Students finished the program by delivering a speech in the Hobart City Council Chambers. Student topics ranged from issues on racism, Muslim women in Australia, mental health and differences between Nepal and Australia. This provided a platform for participants to practice verbalising their ideas in a formal environment. The sessions developed confidence and advanced language use, both written and spoken.

Following the successful outcomes from the program, MY LiFE has been funded again through the Department of Communities Learning Grants program and will be delivered in 2020-2021.

“All humans should have equal rights and should be treated equally, no matter where they live in the world.”

Excerpt from MY LiFE speech 'Gender Equality' by Tika

MY Pathways Program Launceston

The MY Pathways program is an early intervention program that works with youth who are disengaged, or at risk of disengagement, with the community, education and employment and/or are displaying anti-social behaviour. Assistance is provided through case management and group work.

Following successful outcomes for young people in Hobart, including employment attainment, re-engagement in educational institutions, and improved engagement with mainstream services, the program was launched in Launceston in early 2020 through generous philanthropic support.

The program has seen strong engagement from Launceston's young people, with participants reporting enhanced confidence and leadership skills, a sense of belonging and purpose, and alleviated feelings of loneliness and isolation.

Important links have also been established with the Alanvale TAFE, Newstead College and the South Sudanese Youth Association to enhance our ability to support program participants.

Humanitarian Settlement Program

Building on strengths to support positive resettlement.

The Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP) provides support to humanitarian clients both on arrival and during their initial settlement period through a coordinated case management approach, tailored to individual needs.

MRC Tas delivers the HSP statewide in collaboration with AMES Australia. During the initial settlement period the HSP strengthens the ability of humanitarian clients to participate in the economic and social life of Australia and equips individuals with the skills and knowledge needed to access services independently.

The HSP also provides Specialised and Intensive Services (SIS) for clients with exceptional or complex needs. SIS offer clients short term needs-based support to access mainstream services and develop the necessary skills to manage their needs independently. Exit from the HSP is based on clients achieving clearly defined settlement outcomes.

While our on-arrival services are now paused due to COVID-19, we are continuing to dedicate resources to support existing HSP clients to settle into their new lives in Tasmania.

HSP Buddy Program

In 2019-2020 the HSP team worked to improve support for our clients with the development of the HSP Buddy Program. The program matches newly arrived families with a volunteer for a set period of time. Case study (names changed for privacy):

Raj and Sara are a very young couple with a baby. They arrived and were matched with a volunteer who helped them practice English, learn their way around Hobart and even lined up a job for Raj as soon as his English improved a little. Raj and Sara now call their Buddy volunteer “Mum” and they regularly share meals and spend time together.

Tassie Mums

The Tassie Mums are a state-wide volunteer-run organisation that supports families in need by donating essential items for children.

Several HSP clients across the State have recently given birth, and Tassie Mums have provided necessities through the donation of newborn support packs. The bundles include nappies, cots, baby clothing, change mats, bottles, and other essential equipment. Babies born in Australia are automatically given citizenship status and are, therefore, not eligible for support through the HSP.

HSP volunteers collect the packs and deliver them directly to recipients. Volunteers always give lovely feedback that our clients are so grateful and happy to receive these donations.





Research and Consultation

Informing practice through participatory community-based research.

To provide quality services, we need to understand the needs of our communities, as well as the impact of programs and policies. We value participatory, community-based research and consultation.

We have a long history of participating in research about the experiences of refugee and migrant communities in Tasmania. MRC Tas participates in national networks, roundtables and other bodies which inform policy-making. Staff contribute their time and expertise as participants in university research projects, and where appropriate, we promote the opportunity for community members to take part in research interviews and surveys.

MRC Tas is committed to building research and evaluation capacity to better support our clients and improve program delivery and design.

Women at Risk project

A key focus of MRC Tas research in the last year has been on the National Research project 'From Risk to Cohesion - Understanding Social Cohesion for Women at Risk and their Families'. Since 1989, Australian humanitarian visas have included a special 204 subclass visa for women and their dependents identified by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to be at high risk due to their gender and lack of protection from a male guardian. The number of 204 arrivals has increased substantially over the last decade, with a significant proportion of the national intake settling in Tasmania. Women and their families arriving on 204 visas face particular barriers to settlement, including isolation from their communities, increased mental and physical health issues, and a lack of specialised services.

The aim of this research is to help improve the quality of life and wellbeing of women at risk and their families. The project also explores ways to increase the social cohesion, belonging and participation of 204 visa women and their children.

Evidence from the study has already been presented as part of the FECCA 2019 National Conference and has informed other MRC Tas projects, including the Phoenix Centre's Expert Insight Forum and Community Feedback Session. The report will be publicly available by the end of 2020.



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

Menu updates can be
found on:

Facebook:
[@mrctasmania](#)

Instagram:
[@mrctas.catering](#)



“It is good to have customers and to share my recipes. I am making friends too. I am very happy.”

Huweida, a work experience participant who is now employed in the Kitchen

Social Enterprise Kitchen

Connecting community and food.
Providing a pathway to employment.

The MRC Tas Social Enterprise Kitchen operates from our Glenorchy site and provides a pathway to employment for people from migrant and refugee backgrounds. Participants undertake practical workplace experience, furthering training and employment opportunities in the hospitality industry.

The Kitchen has now been operating for over a year and has received great interest and support from the wider community. Open three days per week for dine in and takeaway, the Kitchen offers a changing menu of authentic and delicious food. The types of dishes on offer depend on the country of origin/cooking style of those working in the Kitchen, as well as the local produce in season. The work experience training focuses on kitchen hygiene and cleanliness, kitchen orientation and basic knife skills. Participants are offered training in small groups, 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.

The employment program includes assessment, taster shift, formal work experience shifts and then an opportunity to volunteer or referral to external work experience, training and employment opportunities.

During the year, our Kitchen was fortunate to receive many generous donations, such as fresh produce from the gardens of Government House Tasmania, and a new oven and cooktop from a philanthropic donor. MRC Tas is grateful for this wonderful support of our social enterprise.

Participant Evaluation – December 2019

- **92%** of participants were satisfied with the work experience
- **100%** would recommend the work experience placement to a friend
- **96%** reported they gained skills including **72%** improved English skills and **33%** improved service skills
- **100%** of participants felt their goals are now achievable and **90%** are clear on their next step
- **40%** of participants had secured casual work, another **10%** had applied for jobs.

Our strength and resilience during COVID-19



During the height of the COVID-19 restrictions in Tasmania, we worked to adapt our service model to the latest health advice whilst working to minimise disruption to clients' access to support. Between late March and mid May 2020, the majority of our client work transitioned to telephone or digitally based communication platforms and we suspended community access to our offices in both Glenorchy and Launceston. While we took significant steps to limit face-to-face services with clients, we continued to deliver a small number of programs personally to vulnerable individuals with the understanding that not all health and wellbeing needs can be met through virtual communication.

During the uncertainty of COVID-19, I witnessed great strength, resilience and good humour from MRC Tas staff, volunteers and clients as we faced an array of challenges together. As a result, I was confident in our combined capability to deliver effective support despite the difficult circumstances.

Alison O'Neill, Chief Executive Officer

Supporting our staff

Our Director team and Work Health and Safety committee acted swiftly to put policies and processes in place to enable staff to work from home. This included the rapid upgrade of ICT systems. The small number of staff working in the office adhered to strict hygiene and social distancing guidelines.

Adapting our services

Many of our regular group activities and drop-in sessions moved online to help clients remain engaged in services. For example, our Youth Drop-in service utilised Zoom for weekly online sessions. The Volunteer Program gave volunteers the option to continue providing support via telephone and digital platforms.

“It is good we are still meeting; it is in this time that we are really in need of a groups like this.”

Group activity participant

Whilst these approaches did help to alleviate feelings of isolation for some of our clients, we had clear feedback that the online services were no replacement for in person services. MRC Tas took a staged approach to re-introducing face-to-face service provision, ensuring a COVID-19 safe work environment for all.

Communication and information sharing during COVID-19

We moved rapidly to provide responsive communication and information sharing. Working with our bicultural workers and program staff, and collaboratively with Public Health Tasmania, we were able to ensure that multicultural community members were able to access reliable and up to date information and health advice.

To keep staff informed, we developed a central information hub and offered a simplified overview of key information and local news. Our bicultural workers and program staff made regular phone calls to clients to provide this information in-language. In addition, easy-English text messages were sent out to all clients to communicate significant changes, such as the progression into lockdown.

During this time, we also continued to advocate on behalf of our clients to State Government

departments, providing advice and guidance on how to effectively communicate with Tasmania's new and emerging communities. This included collaborating with the Department of Health Tasmania and other service providers to produce plain English and translated COVID-19 resources and audio recordings.

Wellbeing support

A key focus during this period was supporting health and wellbeing. We provided vulnerable clients, such as newly arrived humanitarian entrants and those accessing Aged Care services, with regular wellbeing checks over the phone. Our Phoenix Centre Counsellors also developed Therapeutic Resource Packs for mental health services.

New Services commenced during COVID-19

By working in partnership with government and philanthropic funders, we have been able to extend our services, providing emergency food relief, advice, information and referrals for community members, support to the elderly, and tailored mental health services.

Food Relief

Aged care meal deliveries - With the help of our wonderful volunteers, we were able to deliver over 300 nutritious meals to our clients' homes during May and June.

Food Box Program - Since early May 2020, we have been providing weekly staple food boxes to temporary visa holders and other migrants who are experiencing financial hardship due to COVID-19. Delivery of the boxes around Hobart and surrounding suburbs is being supported by the Glenorchy District Football Club and MRC Tas volunteers. The food boxes are packed by volunteers and contain healthy, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food, intended for cooking in a home kitchen.

Thanks to the support provided by the Glenorchy District Football Club, the Rotary Club of North Hobart, the Jetty Foundation, the Tasmanian Government, Government House, and the Hobart community, MRC Tasmania has been able to provide up to 60 food boxes per week to those in need of food relief.

Our People



Working from a place of understanding.

Our workforce represents a wide range of perspectives, experiences, cultures, genders, and ages. The skills and talents of our staff enable us to provide quality services that align with our organisational values of diversity and inclusiveness.

There are many benefits of having a diverse team, such as our ability to better solve complex problems, exhibit a high level of creativity and innovation, as well as a broader thought process.

Growing Potential

MRC Tas is committed to supporting career advancement and proactively seeks opportunities for professional development. During the year, four of our staff began studying a Diploma of Community Services. As part of this program we offer on-site sessions and encourage mentoring and input from experienced case workers. The qualification opens up opportunities for a wide range of roles within the Community Services sector, including case management and the coordination and/or delivery of person-centred services to individuals, groups and communities.

“I am enjoying the course as I can see very direct implication in the tasks I do at work. I am privileged in getting the opportunity to put these skills into practice while I study. I would like to support people to make a positive difference to the quality of their lives and to give them hope for a better future. Working in community services is fulfilling and rewarding. This qualification will help me to expand my skill set and improve my chances of career progression.”

Thir, Community Engagement and Projects Officer

Our Volunteers



Meaningful engagement through volunteering.

Our Volunteer Program supports volunteer involvement across the organisation, including recruitment, induction, and ongoing support.

Volunteering Tasmania

Migrant Resource Centre Tasmania is a member of, and has a long-standing relationship with, Volunteering Tasmania. As a peak body, Volunteering Tasmania provides information and support to volunteer involving organisations across the state, including bi-monthly network sessions, training opportunities and resources. It also provides opportunities for organisations to share experiences and resources, and together develop and refine strategies for best practice in volunteer management and involvement. Volunteering Tasmania provided MRC Tas with essential support and guidance for the management of volunteers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Volunteering Tasmania's support and advocacy is greatly appreciated.

Digital Volunteering

The restrictions imposed due to COVID-19 had a significant impact on the volunteer program. In late March 2020, all volunteer activity was suspended to protect the health of our volunteers, clients and other workers. We acted swiftly to develop processes that allowed volunteers to continue to provide support remotely, by telephone or online.

New systems and ways of doing things were implemented, and online drop-ins, learning environments, and phone systems were introduced.

A core group of volunteers were keen to maintain contact with clients and staff and continued to provide essential support to clients, including:

- Aged Care and Phoenix Centre: Wellbeing checks
- Multicultural Youth: Tutoring and homework support and an online drop-in
- Humanitarian Settlement Program: Support to individual clients and project support for the housing program
- Settlement Services: Online sessions for group activities, such as the English for Building and Construction group, Hospitality Ready English group, and Car Café.

Our Partnerships and Collaborations

Our ability to support clients is enhanced by our partnerships and collaborations. Featured below are four highlights from our many valued relationships in 2019-2020.

Engaging multicultural youth in sport

During the year, our Multicultural Youth program established two significant partnerships with peak sporting organisations Football Tasmania and AFL Tasmania. The partnerships work to address barriers to participation for multicultural youth by offering full scholarships for young people to join local sporting clubs.

After a 3-year collaboration on training and scholarships, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was established with Football Tasmania. An MOU with AFL Tasmania was also established in January 2020, with a football clinic for young women held to launch the partnership. The participants had an opportunity to have a kick with the North Melbourne AFL Women's team at the KGV oval and can now apply for an AFL scholarship in 2021.

We will be working with both AFL TAS and Football TAS to deliver 'Engaging CALD Youth in Sports' training to local clubs, providing support for clubs to foster an inclusive environment for their new players.



Phoenix Centre and Max Solutions - AMEP Provider Launceston

The Phoenix Centre works closely with Max Solutions staff to ensure the psychosocial wellbeing of students attending English Language classes in Launceston.

During the year, the Phoenix Centre delivered a series of 3 sessions to all trainers and support staff at Max Solutions, covering topics such as cultural competency, trauma awareness and vicarious trauma/self-care. This training was well received by Max Solutions staff and offered an opportunity for both organisations to share knowledge and improve processes around how to support students who might be struggling with the impacts of past trauma.

As a significant number of humanitarian entrants are engaged with Max Solutions for English language learning, it is important to equip and offer ongoing support to trainers to ensure they recognise, respond to, and refer individuals to the Phoenix Centre for assistance.

Strengthening community ties

In 2016 MRC Tas moved into the KGV Sports and Community Centre, co-locating with the Glenorchy District Football Club (GDFC). Since then our relationship has continued to develop and GDFC has generously supported the MRC Tas social enterprise by allowing us to use the café space at a nominal rent. The Club has also been a great supporter of our Food Box program, assisting us to deliver over 60 food boxes around Glenorchy and surrounding suburbs each week. We appreciate the efforts of the GDFC to warmly welcome multicultural community members to our shared facility. We look forward to continuing and strengthening this relationship in 2021 and beyond.

Partners in Culturally Appropriate Care and TasTAFE

Our Partners in Culturally Appropriate Care (PICAC) program delivered a Culture Centred Aged Care workshop to 54 Aged Care Cert III students. As an adaption to the COVID-19 restrictions, some of this training was delivered online.

The students were inquisitive and eager to learn about how they can help clients and their support network have a positive experience while ageing.

MRC Tas and TasTAFE are eager to continue this relationship to encourage students to appreciate the value of diversity and help them to be better prepared to meet the needs of their future clients.

Acknowledgements

We thank the following for their support during the 2019-2020 financial year:

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
Department of Communities Tasmania
National Disability Insurance Agency
Skills Tasmania
Tasmania Police
Primary Health Tasmania
City of Hobart
TasCOSS
Council of the Ageing
AMES Australia
Scanlon Foundation
Tasmanian Community Fund
Jetty Foundation
Rotary Club of North Hobart

MRC Tas would also like to thank the many organisations, businesses, and individuals who supported and donated time, expertise, and financial resources to us.

We are grateful for the philanthropic support received from private donors, as well as donations from the Tasmanian community.

Our Board



Nick Bedding, Chairperson

Nick Bedding joined the 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 Board in December 2012. She is employed as the Public Health Evaluation Officer with the Public Health Services in the Department of Health. Jeanette has worked in government for the past 24 years in policy and project management work in various departments. This includes asset management, managing community support programs, health, young people policy development and housing. Her passion for community development has seen her volunteering over the years with Lifeline, Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania and mentoring programs for young people.



Nicola Cox, Secretary

Nicola joined the Board in January 2019. Nicola has an extensive professional background in ICT executive roles, including Co-Founder, CEO, Consultant and Project Manager. Nicola is a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and Recipient of Tasmanian Premier's Board Diversity Scholarship. Nicola sits on the board, and is the public officer, for Community Transport Services Tasmania. Nicola continually builds on her board and directorship knowledge. She enjoys spending time with her family, volunteering at the local football club and exploring Tassie's natural beauty.



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.

Our Board



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 Board since late 2017. Jes 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. A soccer tragic, currently also the Head Coach of Kingborough Lions NPL team.



Sonia Caton, Board Member

As an experienced non-executive director and lawyer, Sonia brings expertise in governance, change management, developing partnerships and creating opportunities. She is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and a Fellow of the Migration Institute of Australia. She sits on a number of NFP boards and state and national committees, having worked closely with refugees, asylum seekers, international students and CALD communities for most of her career. She is committed to outcomes that support social cohesion, equality of access and justice for all.



Alison O'Neill, Board Member

Alison is the Chief Executive Officer of MRC Tas. She is a graduate and member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors course, an executive member of the Settlement Council of Australia and sits on a range of advisory groups at a local, state, and federal level.

Our Board



Victor Stojceviski, Board Member

Victor has a Macedonian background and joined the Board in late 2017. He arrived in Tasmania from Victoria in 2004, and has a LLB (Hons)/BA (Hons) (majoring in English Literature). He has two daughters. He is Project Manager at the Magistrates Court of Tasmania. Victor's varied background includes leadership roles within the justice sector, particularly in court and law reform and therapeutic jurisprudence, and in suicide prevention. Victor is a member of the Law Society of Tasmania and the Asia Pacific Coroners' Society.



Manoj Nair, Board Member

Manoj is a business leader with over two decades of techno-commercial experience in leading companies across the world. He has co-founded and has been on the Board of a couple of Internet start-ups. He is currently involved with the Department of Education and the University of Tasmania to design and develop a predictive digital model that can help Tasmanian schoolteachers to support better educational outcomes for their students.

Dishank Sharma, Board Member

Dishank has a background in retail management within leading food retail chains. He moved to London in 2009 to undertake higher education and later to Tasmania. Dishank holds BA (Hons) in Applied Accounting from Anglia Ruskin University UK and a Master of Professional Accounting from the University of Tasmania. Dishank enjoys playing cricket and has played on a national level in India. Being a migrant himself, he has always been interested in the welfare of refugees and other migrants.

Dishank resigned from the Board in July 2020.







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 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