



ANNUAL REPORT 2020 - 2021

Migrant Resource Centre Tasmania
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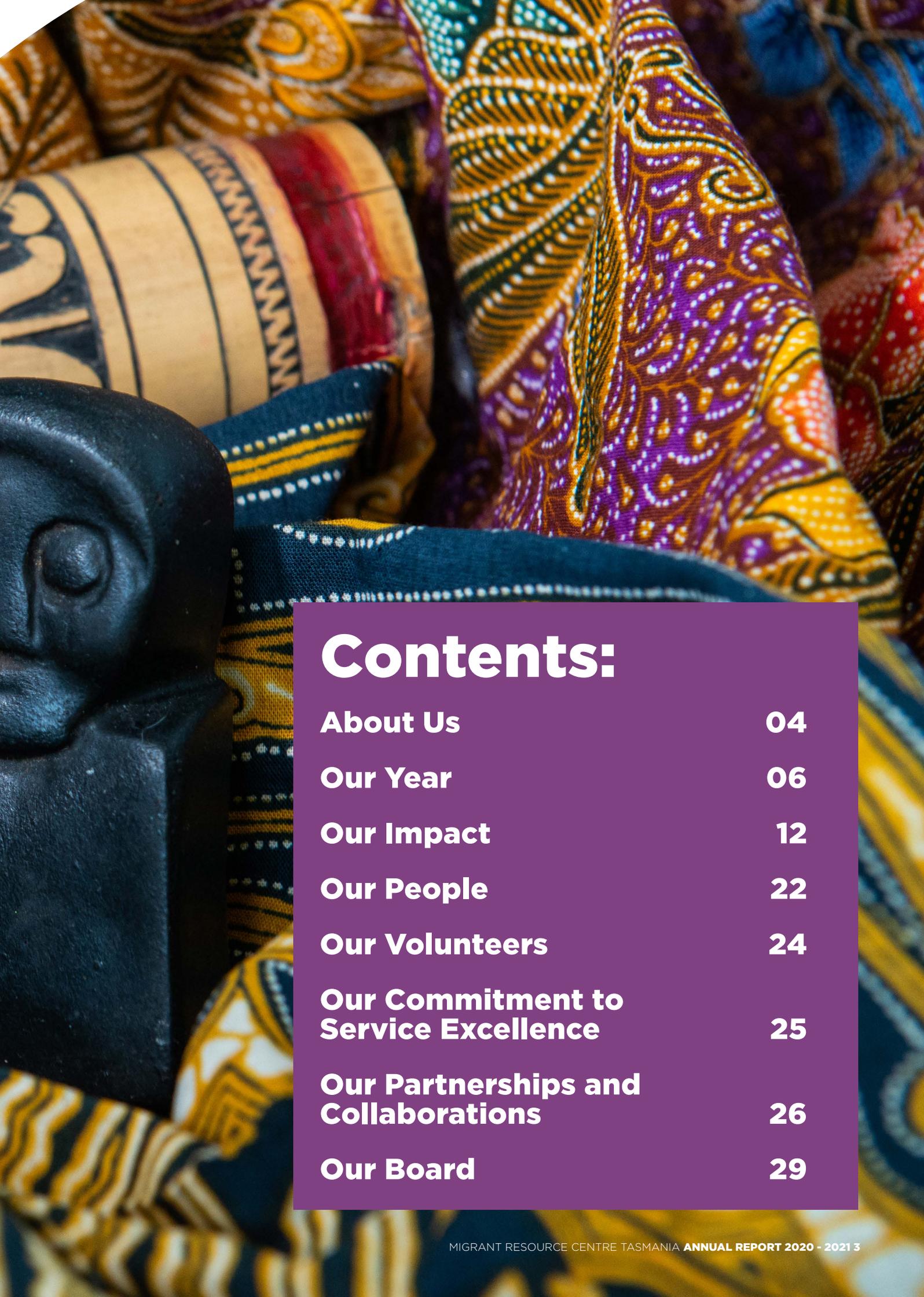
Our Patron:

Her Excellency Professor the Honourable
Barbara Baker 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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About Us

Who we are

Migrant Resource Centre Tasmania (MRC Tas) is a not-for-profit organisation working to support and empower culturally diverse community members living in Tasmania.

Our vision is for an equitable, just, culturally diverse and inclusive society. Through the delivery of effective, targeted, and meaningful services, we aim to encourage and support culturally and linguistically diverse community members to reach their potential.

We work to ensure Tasmanian services are responsive and culturally inclusive to all people from multicultural communities, and collaborate with mainstream services and organisations.

Since 1979, we have assisted people from migrant and refugee backgrounds to find their place in Tasmanian society. Whilst our mission has evolved to meet the changing needs of our community, our work continues to be guided by a core set of values:

- Centred on people, focused on outcomes
- Culturally respectful communities
- Interconnected systems of support
- Developing and growing
- A human rights framework

What we do

We offer an extensive range of services and projects, including:

- Capacity building
- Community development
- Counselling
- Employment support
- Individual and group case management
- Health and life skills programs and services
- Social Food Enterprise
- Settlement services
- Support for older people
- Youth work



Supporting and encouraging culturally diverse community members to reach their potential.



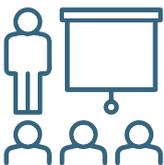
Our Year



Our clients originate from over 65 countries and speak more than 55 languages.

Nepali, English, Oromo, Farsi, Tigrinya, Karen, Arabic, Amharic, Dari, Mandarin, Cantonese, Hazaragi, Chinese, Persian, Vietnamese, Shwahili, Greek, Spanish, Burmese, Italian, German, Hindi, Tamil, Somali, Dinka, Lingala, Anuak, Chin, Indonesian, Japanese, Thai, Urdu, Bari, Croatian, Dutch, Gujarati, Kisii, Kiswahili, Madi, Singhalese, Tagalog, Albanian, Bengali, French, Kirundi, Krio, Malay, Malayalam, Polish, Punjabi, Pushto, Sudanese, Telugu, Tibetan, Ukranian.

The top 5 languages (other than English) spoken in Tasmania are Mandarin, Nepali, German, Greek and Italian.
Source: ABS Census 2016.



Individual Client Sessions: 13,800 Workshops, Group activities and Day Centres: 958.

The Aged and Community Services team offer a range of fun activities and social outings for older people in the south of the state, such as gentle exercise classes, lunches, table tennis, excursions, and centre based social support groups. The monthly activities calendar can be found at: mrctas.org.au/aged-care/



29 bicultural workers representing 16 different cultures. Languages represented by Bicultural Workers:

Oromo, Arabic, Amharic, Cantonese, Farsi, Hindi, Japanese, Karen, Nepali, Burmese, Serbian, Spanish, Tigrinya.

MRC Tas is proud to foster a culturally and linguistically diverse workforce, with many staff and volunteers identifying as multilingual.

The Bicultural Learning and Development Officer role commenced this year to support the development and maintenance of the Bicultural Worker program, including matching program area needs with suitable bicultural support, along with supporting Bicultural Workers to reach their potential.



27 participants of the Learn to Drive program were successful in obtaining either their provisional or full licence.

The MRC Tas Learn to Drive Program was recognised by Driver Mentor Tasmania for the highest number of on-road hours for a multiple car program: 243.5 hours for the month of March 2021.



An online donations platform was launched on the MRC Tas website.

Our first online fundraising campaign was for the Food Box Program. During October 2020, Dana Eating House and Tasmanian Professional Cyclist Nathan Earle Team Ukyo joined together to raise funds for MRC Tas. Their joint fundraising efforts raised a total of \$8,815.02 towards our Food Box Program. In combination with community donations, support from the Jetty Foundation and North Hobart Rotary Club, and extended via funding received by the Tasmanian Government, we were able to deliver over 2,700 food boxes to people who were impacted by COVID-19 restrictions. Volunteers from the Glenorchy District Football Club and MRC Tas were an essential part of the program. MRC Tas also worked in partnership with the Australian Red Cross. We are grateful for the support of the Tasmanian community. To learn more about donating to MRC Tas visit mrctas.org.au/donate



A new resource was created by the Phoenix Centre: Be kind to your mind.

In response to COVID-19, the Phoenix Centre developed a range of wellbeing messages to remind us of small things we can do to be kind to ourselves and others during uncertain times. The Be kind to your mind resources are available in 11 different languages on the MRC Tas website: mrctas.org.au/phoenix-centre-resources/

CEO Report

The last year has been one of change globally and there is no doubt that the events of 2020 will reverberate well into the future. During the year MRC Tas continued to adjust services to ensure practical and relevant supports were available to meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse community members across the state.

Despite a period of funding uncertainty, high levels of engagement with Government and funding partners ensured a swift and healthy fiscal recovery, which enabled us to be responsive to the substantial increase in demand across all services, as well as accommodate the rapid influx of additional clients requiring support.

The establishment of many new programs during the year is a testament to the resilience and capability of our team. Services in southern and northern Tasmania continue to grow, with highlights including:

- **MY Community Champions**, a program that engages multicultural youth peer workers to champion their favourite sport and recreation activity.
- **Amplify Ability**, a program that focuses on goal setting and making connections to improve the health and wellbeing of anyone from a migrant or refugee background.
- **EnCOMPASS**, building on a successful trial of the Aged Care Navigator program, supporting older people to access and navigate the aged care system.
- **The Migrant Network Tasmania**, a popular program which has gone from strength to strength to help state-sponsored skilled migrants and international students to establish their careers in Tasmania.



Alison O'Neill, Chief Executive Officer

While Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP) arrivals remained on pause during the year, the HSP team have continued to work in difficult circumstances to support clients. We eagerly await a restart of HSP arrivals when travel is permitted, and MRC Tas continues to advocate locally and nationally for the urgent safe resettlement of those in desperate need of humanitarian protection. With ongoing closure of Australian borders, MRC Tas continued to deliver services to address risks to those migrants who are not eligible for a range of Government supports. We recognise there is a high level of vulnerability for these community members and remain committed to supporting their needs during this difficult time.

Alongside our core services growth during the year, as highlighted throughout this report, the organisation continued to focus on achieving structural sustainability measures in line with our strategic objectives. We have welcomed a range of new partnerships and collaborations and introduced new technology and system enhancements to improve our organisation capability. In the latter part of the year we also finalised a new Bicultural Worker Program as well as an internal learning and development service for staff and volunteers.



Of significance was the securing of funding so that we can better understand the impact and outcomes of our work, now and into the future. This multi-year project will enable us to consistently evaluate and assess our services, underpinned by a quality service framework, and will have substantial future influence for MRC Tas.

Reflecting on the achievements of the last year, it is with mixed emotions that I am bidding farewell to MRC Tas. It has been a great privilege to work with such a skilled, culturally sensitive and compassionate team and there are many people who have my sincere and heartfelt appreciation for their support of our work, and for being a part of my journey. In particular, I note my thanks to the Board Chair, current MRC Tas Board and especially the senior executive leadership team.

MRC Tas is a thriving place, where people connect. There is a deep sense of purpose, dedication, and passion for making a difference, alongside a healthy appetite for successful change in challenging times. I leave with fond memories, and strong confidence that the future of MRC Tas is very positive indeed.

Chair Report

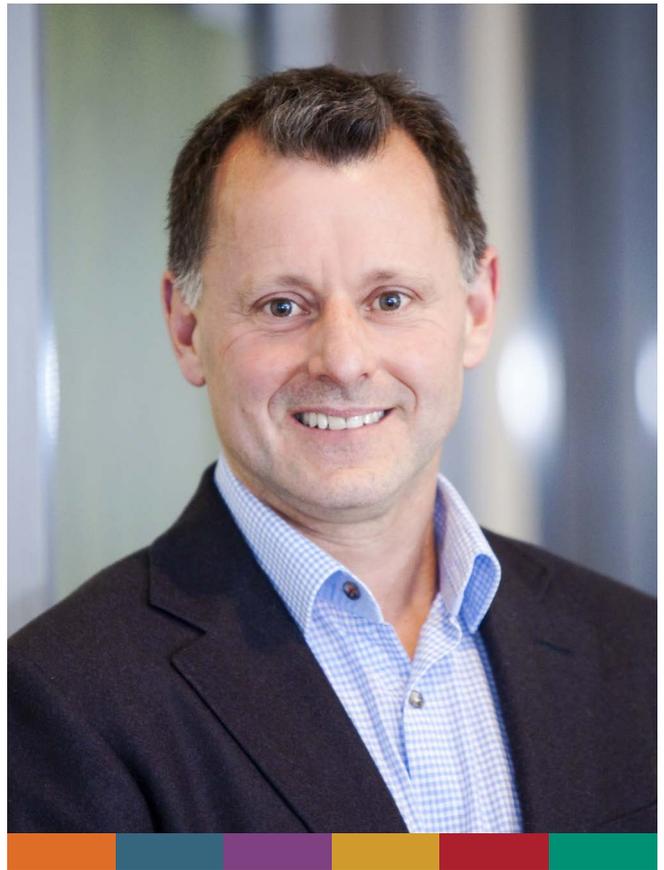
Despite the very trying circumstances created by the continuation of the pandemic, I am pleased to report that the organisation showed great resilience and adaptability in dealing with the changes necessary to maintain services and provide essential relief to those in our community most severely impacted.

The Board and Management team have reviewed the strategic plan in light of the ongoing disruption to our community and the significant impact the closure of borders has on migrants and refugees. Despite several programs facing short-term funding shortfalls, we are confident in the sustainability of the organisation and remain committed to the long-term strategic direction. We are in the fortunate position of being able to utilise our robust financial position to sustain services despite increased funding pressure.

A number of new initiatives were implemented during the year to support the community and to ensure no loss in the quality of the services provided. We have also developed programs to better assist existing community members with new job readiness and workforce development programs, the expansion of our Social Enterprise Program, and the creation of a Housing and Learning Program.

I would like to acknowledge the wonderful contribution made by our staff and volunteers who have shown tremendous dedication and resilience during very trying circumstances and in a period when many had been directly impacted by the pandemic.

Despite the uncertainty and insecurity in the current environment, it is important that we do not lose sight of the necessity to promote and encourage diversity in our community and our obligation to support people less fortunate than ourselves. The plight of refugees and migrants must not be forgotten whilst we act to protect the community and we must ensure that we fulfil our humanitarian obligations.



Nick Bedding, Chairperson

On a final note, I would like to acknowledge the enormous contribution made by the outgoing CEO, Alison O'Neill. Alison has been instrumental in the growth of the organisation and the expansion of our services. She has been a passionate and dedicated advocate for our migrant community and has built MRC Tas into a leading service provider that is recognised as a highly respected community organisation.

Together with the Board, I would like to thank Alison for her dedication and commitment to MRC Tas and to the broader agenda for positive change in our community.

Financial Statements

Please visit mrctas.org.au/annual-reports for the 2020-2021 audited financial statements.

Multicultural Housing and Learning Program

The Multicultural Housing and Learning Program provides a welcoming and enabling environment for people from a refugee and migrant background to connect to their local community, progress their employment goals and transition into stable housing.

Situated in the Glenorchy municipality, there are a range of accommodation options available. Residents have access to employment services, training, and community programming.

The employment program includes access to digital literacy and English classes, certified and non-certified training courses and work experience placements with local business and organisations. The programming provides support to community members to organise their own local events and activities.



A new community space

Originally acquired to address significant issues faced by humanitarian migrants in securing accommodation, the site has always been envisaged as more than just accommodation; a community space where people feel welcomed, inspired, and supported, with opportunities to learn about and take the steps necessary to secure employment. The closure of international borders provided an opportunity to accelerate future planning and seek the wider support that was necessary to bring this vision to life.

In early 2021, we received confirmation that our application to the Tasmanian Community Fund to establish the Learning Program was successful. The new program partners with TasTAFE, Lady Gowrie Tasmania, Glenorchy City Council and Volunteering Tasmania. Donations from the broader community meant that we were able to purchase equipment for a Digital Lab, to host both 'drop in' and formal digital literacy programming. An exciting component

of the new Learning Program is the opportunity for community members to propose, develop and deliver on their communities' own priorities. Community support also means that women participating in the community capacity building programming will be able to access funds that can be used for purchasing goods, materials, resources, or costs associated with delivering their chosen event or activity.

After careful planning, recruitment for participants for the Multicultural Housing and Learning Program has begun. The next phase of the project will be delivering the formal employment programming, and we will continue to promote the diverse opportunities to get involved and assist in realising the potential of this exciting new program.

Our Impact

Phoenix Centre

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

The Phoenix Centre is a specialist trauma focussed service that provides therapeutic and individual mental health and wellbeing support, mental health promotion, prevention, and early intervention. It also provides capacity building activities to people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds including specialist support with survivors of torture and other traumatic experiences. Support includes counselling, psycho educational group work and community development activities.

Our service operates from an integrated trauma recovery framework, with the aim of resolving the detrimental impacts of exposure to systemic violence and loss, persecution, perpetration of human rights violations and forced displacement.

The Phoenix Centre also provides training to mainstream service providers to improve their capacity to work effectively with people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and specialist training to support people who have experienced trauma. Our services are delivered in both the north and south of the state.

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. FASSTT members collaborate to build the capacity of service providers across Australia to work effectively with survivors and enhance their opportunities to rebuild productive and meaningful lives.

Supporting physical activity, wellbeing, and community connection

During the year the Phoenix Centre collaborated with Tennis Tasmania and the Glenorchy City Tennis Club to encourage clients to get active and connect in with their local community. Several engaging group sessions were held at the club, which served as an introduction to tennis for many.

During the October 2020 school holidays, 35 participants brought their families along to try tennis. The day included a range of on-court activities and a barbeque lunch.

It was wonderful to hear lots of laughter and see people moving around and thoroughly enjoying trying a brand-new activity. There was lots of positive feedback from clients, with many keen to continue playing.

“I have never played tennis before, and I want to keep playing.”

“It has been really nice to get out and meet with other people.”

“It is very healthy and very good.”



Transcultural Mental Health Network

The Tasmanian Transcultural Mental Health Network (TTMHN) advocates for the needs of diverse communities by strengthening the cultural competency and cultural responsiveness of the mental health workforce in Tasmania. The TTMHN provides support to those working in mental health and allied services to ensure that the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse individuals, families and communities are met within service delivery. Regular network meetings are held to provide members with an opportunity to:

- Exchange ideas, information, and resources to support their work
- Hear from guest speakers to gain insight, knowledge, and expertise
- Connect with other service providers and organisations working with diverse communities

A new website has been developed to improve access to research and resources and to strengthen visibility of and grow the Network. Visit ttmhn.org.au for more information and to become a TTMHN Member.

“It is brilliant to have a local source to go to for information – I especially like the practical guides, one I used recently that was helpful was ‘Social and Emotional Wellbeing – A Teacher’s Guide’. It is wonderful to attend trainings and forums to connect with other practitioners in Tasmania.”

Emma Barrett, EAL Social Worker and TTMHN member

Aged and Community Services

Providing culturally appropriate care. Supporting older people and people with disabilities and their families to stay active and connected.

MRC Tas Aged and Community 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 wellbeing and physical health, social connections, and physical activity, our case management services cater to individual needs. 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 understand and register for:

- The Government's My Aged Care system
- Government support services available to carers

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.

Carer Gateway

During the year, MRC Tas launched its Carer Gateway program to support carers from a culturally and linguistically diverse background. The program works with Care2Serve, which provides counselling, peer support, coaching, advice, information, and financial support to carers. The aim of these services is to reduce carer stress and improve quality of life for carers.

A team of Bicultural Workers have been employed to support carers and their families to learn about and access services. The diversity of languages spoken by the team includes Japanese, Portuguese, Mandarin, Nepali, Farsi, Arabic, Hindi, Cantonese, and Telugu. This has enabled us to reach communities from countries such as Bhutan, Philippines, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.

“Together, we are caring for the carers of culturally and linguistically diverse communities, raising awareness of the support that is available to them, and making a genuine difference to people's lives - every little bit helps.”

Zachary, Bicultural Worker, Carer Gateway Program





Reconnecting after COVID-19 restrictions

Our Aged and Community Social Support Group activities returned to in-person gatherings in October 2020 after time apart (only meeting virtually) during the height of the COVID-19 restrictions in Tasmania. Clients were very happy to reconnect with friends and get out and about in the community again.

Clients were asked to reflect on their experiences whilst in lockdown; some were pragmatic about their experience and some were positive,

“We had a wonderful time – we had food delivered from the supermarket, received meal deliveries, had lots of phone calls from family and friends, and learned how to use Skype to speak to family overseas, which is something we will continue to do.”

However, for most of the client group, it was a time of extreme loneliness, with several clients reporting similarities to their experiences during World War 2.

When clients were asked to describe what it is like to be back together as a group, they said it was like ‘being back with family.’

The Aged and Community Services team found the feedback session to be very powerful as they witnessed the trust and friendship that the clients share with each other.

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. Services focus on social participation, economic wellbeing, independence, personal wellbeing, and community connectedness.

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

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

Group settlement services including English and skill groups, information sessions, and a career networking group.

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



On Your Frequency

The MRC Tas Soundcloud channel offers over 400 audio resources covering a range of topics, including important COVID-19 information, employment, disability, driving, mental health, citizenship and more. The audio tracks are recorded in multiple languages, as well as English.

The audio resources on Soundcloud were listened to 3364 times during 2020-21, and the most popular topics were:

- COVID-19
- Australian citizenship
- First jobs stories and tips

This demonstrates an appetite for important government messages when the information is accessible in emerging community languages such as Oromo, Tigrinya, Amharic, Karen, Nepali, Farsi, Hazaragi and Arabic.

It also demonstrates that the multicultural community can expand their employment 'know how' by tapping into local knowledge and experience of the wider community through stories. Thank you to volunteers who have generously shared their language and stories.

This work to bring information to Tasmania's multicultural community was recognised as a finalist for the Settlement Engagement Transition Support (SETS) Settlement Innovation Award in the 2021 Australian Migration and Settlement Awards, and as a digital volunteering story featured by ABC News.

soundcloud.com/mrc_tas_settlement



Migrant Network – Internship Pilot

The Migrant Network supports skilled migrants to connect with each other, develop their professional networks, and learn from one another. Consultation with members of the Migrant Network highlighted the importance of gaining local knowledge and experience to help find work. During the year an internship model was piloted with a focus on tapping into this local knowledge to share with members of the network. Four interns created six career development events and inspired two network members to host two additional events.

Intern activities included:

- Planning and facilitating the monthly Migrant Network Meet Up event
- Capturing migrant stories in audio and text for the Migrant Network Tasmania website

The experience has supported interns to develop their project and professional skills. They had the opportunity to network with fellow migrants and

connect with other professionals from university, business, peak bodies, employment services, and career development services.

Each intern has landed their own job in the process, created opportunities for others, and contributed to a wealth of resources for job seekers.

“For me, an Internship with MRC Tas was entering the organisation like an uncut-diamond. . . MRC Tas with its brilliant diamond cutting skills helped me learn, grow and connect; helping me to realise the career path I love and can excel at...”

Sudip, Migrant Network Intern

For more information and to join the Migrant Network visit: migrantnetworktas.org.au



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 active 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.



Writing Our Worlds

During the year MYT teamed up with The Story Island Project to deliver some fun and engaging school holiday workshops in Hobart and Launceston. Young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds embraced their creativity, making visual collages, poetry, stories, songs, and more. Participants were supported by young artists from a culturally and linguistically diverse background and Sisters Akousmatica, a radio broadcast project promoting women and gender diverse voices in public space.



Community Champions Project

In January 2021, nine young people from refugee backgrounds from across the state were employed by MRC Tas as Peer Workers to work with their communities. The MYT Community Champions project utilises peer-to-peer connection to help address barriers to participation in sport for women and young people from multicultural backgrounds, such as low levels of English, unfamiliarity with Australian culture, systems and processes, and discrimination.

MYT Peer Workers underwent leadership, project management, facilitation and public speaking training to prepare for the role. The Peer Workers have been collaborating with sport and recreation organisations including Football Tasmania (FT), Reclink and Get Outside - Parks and Wildlife to deliver tailored programs to their peers and community.

As part of the project, Peer Workers have also facilitated Championing Diversity in Sports and Recreation training with sporting organisations to provide front line staff and volunteers with practical advice and tools to foster a socially inclusive and diverse sports sector.

The implementation of Peer Workers for this project has been so successful that the roles have now been embedded across all MYT programming, including MY Employment, Sport and Rec Connect, and MY Education.

MYT Peer Worker Profiles:

“Working as a Peer Worker for MRC Tas has opened up many opportunities for me and my community. Being able to work amongst and with other multicultural people allows me to see Tasmania’s growing diversity. Working with MRC Tas has allowed me to incorporate the love I have for sport with my passion for working with young people and women to help increase the participation of culturally and linguistically diverse people. Working here has also helped me to strengthen the bond I have with my community and help empower them on their journeys to find their place in society.”

Diana Obeid – MYT Peer Worker, Launceston

“As part of the Community Champions program, my aim is to be able to inspire women of all ages to try out new activities, be fit and active and know that there’s always help and support out there.”

Tha Da Shay – MYT Peer Worker, Hobart

“As a Peer Worker, I get to visit and communicate with different people from different backgrounds and perspectives. Working with people from refugee backgrounds helps me to look at things from a different point of view and sometimes makes a huge, huge difference to our lives. It was my goal to empower the girls and young women from Hazara community to try new things and feel that they are part of this community”.

Setayesh Karimi – MYT Peer Worker, Launceston



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.

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.

As the Kitchen heads into its third year of operation we will continue to strengthen its core purpose: to provide pathways to employment for people from migrant and refugee backgrounds.



‘Kitchen of dreams’

Excerpt by Stephanie Jack from 40 South Magazine

Huweida Nader has just pulled a warm tray of pastries out of the oven. Huweida is a refugee from Syria. The first time she remembers cooking was as a teenager when her mother was out of the house. She dipped a banana in flour and vanilla, and fried it in oil.

About four years ago, in the midst of the ongoing Syrian civil war, Huweida fled to neighbouring Iraq with her husband and two adult sons. Her family spent two years waiting for a visa in Erbil before making it to Australia. “I like Tasmania. I never leave Tasmania,” she says. “Maybe to visit Melbourne or Sydney, but I stay here.” She places her hands firmly on the table for emphasis.

“In Syria I spoke French and Arabic, French helped me with my English,” says Huweida, who also studied English at TasTAFE. Her love of cooking led her to a work placement, and eventually employment, at the Kitchen. She particularly enjoys making Syrian sweets. “My mother taught me how to make many sweets.” One of her favourite things to make is ma’amoul, which is semolina shortbread filled with walnuts and drenched in icing sugar. When I visit she is in the process of preparing it for the next day.

The glass-fronted display case at the Kitchen is filled with other desserts Huweida has made, including znood el sit (the custard pastries named after a woman’s upper arm that I drooled about earlier) and seewa (buttery biscuits filled with sweet date paste). The top of the biscuits is imprinted with a pattern of lines and circles. Huweida makes seewa using a mould that belonged to her mother and which she brought all the way from Syria. “It is my dream to open a bakery,” she tells me.

Tasmania will be very lucky if she realises her dream.

Read the full article here: fortysouth.com.au/stephanie-jack/kitchen-of-dreams-1

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

Menu updates can be found on:
Facebook: @mrc Tasmania
Instagram: @mrc.tas.catering

Our People



Working from a place of understanding.

At MRC Tas we embrace and celebrate diversity. 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.

Developing our team

In June 2021, our passionate and talented team came together from our Glenorchy and Launceston offices to participate in an All-Staff Development Day. The program included an inspiring and thoughtful presentation on Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism by key note speaker Erfan Daliri, a social change author, educator, and consultant. The day also consisted of some fun and creative team activities designed by Energy Health, a choice of engaging workshops, and a closing panel session discussing the importance of the Client Voice.

Feedback from staff was that the day made them feel more connected to each other, they learnt new information relevant to their work, and they valued getting together as a whole organisation.

“Thank you to the Migrant Resource Centre of Tasmania for inviting me to facilitate a full team session on Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism. It was a huge day with some incredible contributors and a lot of powerful conversations.”

Erfan Daliri



Staff Learning and Development Program

In line with the MRC Tas strategic goal of engaging highly skilled and capable staff, volunteers and Board members, we are launching a new Learning and Development Program. The program aims to extend skills and competencies through participation in a range of free mandatory training opportunities and is in addition to professional development opportunities which specifically relate to individual roles.

Over the 2021-2022 financial year, all staff will be required to refresh or undertake training in:

- Cultural Awareness Training
- Child Safety Training, and
- Working with Interpreters

The Staff Learning and Development program will enable all staff to access foundational skills. In the future there will be opportunities to extend the program with other modules relevant to our work.

Our Volunteers

Meaningful engagement through volunteering.

Our Volunteer Program supports volunteer involvement across the organisation, including recruitment, induction, and ongoing support. MRC Tas provides different opportunities for people to volunteer. People approach MRC Tas to volunteer for many different reasons. They may have time to spare, they may want to support our vision and mission, or perhaps they want to gain new or additional skills that will support their career goals.

Volunteering at MRC Tas gives people the opportunity to work in a diverse environment that exposes them to people, culture, languages, and experiences.



Meet Ivy Yin – Career Coaching and Migrant Network Volunteer

What was your reason for wanting to volunteer with MRC Tasmania?

I was lucky to be a recipient of the Food Box program and was very grateful to receive support from MRC Tas during COVID-19 last year. I really wanted to give something back to the organisation that had supported me. I knew that MRC Tas offered many different services and after talking with the Settlement team in January I knew that volunteering with Career Coaching and Migrant Network would be a great opportunity to give back to MRC Tas. I have a background in Human Resources, and I knew that this would be an opportunity to use and practice my skills.

What have been the benefits of volunteering with MRC Tas for you?

It built up my confidence. As an immigrant, I am always worried about my English not being

good enough, but at MRC Tas I get plenty of encouragement that pushes me to get the confidence to look for a skill-related job. I also explored my skills and gained knowledge about local Human Resources and practiced them in my job searching and network building.

Volunteering with MRC Tas is a great bridge to a real job. After three months of volunteering, I started work as a Human Resource Officer in a not-for-profit. The key to getting this job is they saw that I have local Human Resources experience.

“Because of volunteering, I had the confidence to network and work on my CV and cover letters to help me find work in HR.”

Ivy Yin

Our Commitment to Service Excellence

*Striving for service excellence.
Maximising outcomes for clients and our organisational impact.*

MRC Tas strives for service excellence in all aspects of its work to help maximise outcomes and organisational impact. Our organisation encourages and supports a culture of designing, developing, and delivering services that are informed by research, experience, and the voice of our clients. This approach helps to build a sound evidence base for our current and future work and ensures that our services are aligned to best practice. Along with overseeing data collection and analysis and continuous improvement strategies, our Quality and Research Program supports our service delivery programs to meet standards and accreditation requirements.

Research

Informing practice through participatory community-based research

Our focus on research not only informs the services we deliver, it also enables us to contribute to the broader evidence base, helping to ensure the perspectives and experiences of our clients are considered, included, and reflected in more mainstream research, policy and practice. Along with conducting our own research and evaluation, we frequently support other researchers by providing them with Cultural Awareness Training and facilitating access to bicultural staff and community members for focus groups, interviews, and other research activities.

Training

Fostering a responsive and culturally inclusive Tasmania

MRC Tas delivers training on-site, as well as in workplaces and other community venues, to community sector and government employees, industry, volunteers, students, and others who are interested in understanding how to increase their awareness of cultural diversity and capacity to provide support to people from migrant and refugee backgrounds. Our bicultural workers are a key element in the success of our training.



Regardless of where our training is delivered, or who the participants are, the inclusion of the perspectives of our bicultural workers, both in the development and delivery of training, is always highly valued. When training participants are asked to reflect on the three most useful components of MRC Tas Training, the opportunity to listen to and learn from our bicultural workers' stories is frequently noted.

“Lived experiences and shared stories really made the key messages hit home.”

Training participant

“The resources, presentations and information shared were very appropriate and informative. Very good training – interactive and leaves you thinking about you own biases and judgements.”

Training participant

To learn more about the training offered by MRC Tas, visit mrc Tas.org.au/training

Our Partnerships and Collaborations

Our ability to support clients is enhanced by our many valued partnerships and collaborations. Featured below are four highlights from our many valued relationships in 2020 – 2021:

Providing meaningful and practical workplace experience

As part of the Multicultural Youth (MY) Step into Work program, a strong collaboration has been established with Nando's (North Hobart and Rosny) to deliver work experience placements to young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds. Nando's has hosted seven placements and employed six participants through the program. Working with Nando's has enhanced the capacity of MYT to provide program participants with meaningful and practical workplace experience that supports and develops young people's economic participation. MYT is committed to expanding the collaboration with Nando's and other local employers to support clients to gain employment.

“It has been a positive collaboration as we see how the young people grow during their time at Nando's... the aim is for them to gain employment plus experience and therefore make a positive change in their journey of life, and we are happy to be part of it.”

Omar Carrillo, Nandos State Manager

Encouraging conversations around mental health in Launceston

Mental health is an important topic for people of all backgrounds. During the year, the Phoenix Centre collaborated with the City of Launceston to create a conversation guide, translated into Launceston's top 10 languages other than English, including Amharic, Arabic, Burmese, Simplified Chinese, Dari, Hindi, Nepali, Oromo, Persian and Tigrinya. The guide has been printed onto business size cards and is intended as a tool to help connect people of different cultures and backgrounds, and to empower them to start important conversations around mental health within their communities. Each card includes tips on how to ask if someone is OK, how to actively listen, how to encourage action, and how to follow up afterwards.

Intergenerational and cultural connection

In the spirit of Harmony Week 2021, a Cultural Feast was held by Clarence High School in collaboration with MRC Tas through the Partners in Culturally Appropriate Care (PICAC) program, as part of the Food Connections Clarence initiative.

Two classes of Hospitality students prepared a delicious selection of dishes for MRC Tas Aged and Community Services clients and other community members. Prior to the event, Chinese Community chef Kui Lin Tai, affectionately known as Mrs Chia, conducted a mentoring session at the school,

“I'm really happy to be sharing my culture and my recipes with the students because food is so important in Chinese culture and in bringing the community together.”

Kui Lin Tai (Mrs Chia)



Clarence High School teacher Amanda Sutton said the experience was beneficial for students and community members alike, “This was a great opportunity for the students to connect with the elderly and isolated in our local community and learn that you have to taste a culture to understand it.”

Hospitality Workforce Development

During the year the Tasmanian Hospitality Association (THA) co-designed and co-delivered a Hospitality Ready training program with MRC Tas to prepare a pipeline of workers for Tasmania’s hospitality industry. The collaboration created the ability to meet participants at their current level of skill and experience and offer appropriate opportunities. More than 100 people progressed in the pipeline towards hospitality jobs, and 23 people secured jobs.

MRC Tas provided community engagement, language support, links to other employment supports such as Career Coaching, the Driving Program, Conversation Club, and the Hospitality Ready English group and learning resources, and work experience in the MRC Tas social enterprise kitchen.

The collaboration involved testing innovations such as job seeker profiles, Hospitality Ready Facebook Group, and video introductions. We are looking to develop these strategies further in the future to serve as a talent pool for local employers.



Acknowledgements

We thank the following for their support during the 2020-2021 financial year:

Australian Government:

- Department of Health
- Department of Home Affairs
- Department of Social Services

Tasmanian Government:

- Department of Communities Tasmania
- Department of Health
- Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management
- Department of Premier and Cabinet
- Department of State Growth

National Disability Insurance Agency
Skills Tasmania
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
Care 2 Serve
RACT Insurance
Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia
Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal
Australian Communities Foundation
Keystone Tasmania

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 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.



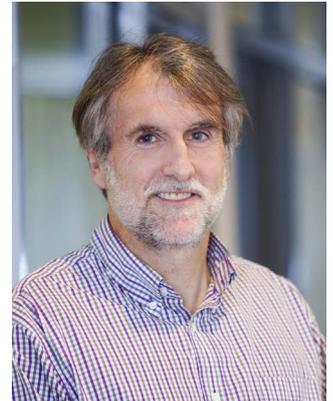
Jeanette Banks
Vice Chair

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.



Chris Stennard
Treasurer

Chris has been the Board Member of MRC Tas since 2015. He 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.

Our Board



Wendy Heatley
Board Member

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.



Fahim Chowdhury
Board Member

Fahim joined the Board in November 2020. He is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and a member of Global Association of Risk Professionals. Fahim has extensive experience in financial markets and treasury management. Originally from Bangladesh, he has a keen interest in Tasmania's multicultural society. He is a passionate social cricketer and devotes his spare time towards the development of the game. Currently he also chairs the Board of the Huon and Channel Cricket Association.



Sonia Caton
Board Member

Sonia is a nationally recognised immigration lawyer and former Chair of the Refugee Council of Australia. She is a graduate of the AICD and brings a depth of board experience with not-for-profit and for-profit companies. She was recently instrumental in devising and launching Australia's leading online Inclusion training program. Sonia teaches law, mentors lawyers, and is committed to access and equity for all, but particularly in relation to new arrivals to Australia. Sonia is also a migrant to Australia and speaks two languages other than English.



Alison O'Neill
Public Officer

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 Stojcevski
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 digital start-ups. He is currently involved with the Department of Education and the University of Tasmania to build predictive digital models that can help school teachers promote student engagement in their classrooms.



Phaedon Stough
Board Member

Phaedon Stough is the Founder and CEO of Innovation Bay, an exclusive network of tech start-ups founders and investors from across Australia and New Zealand. Phaedon has been working with tech founders for over 20 years and is an advisor and investor to a number of innovative companies. Previously Phaedon founded and ran the Mitchellake Group, a global boutique executive search firm and has recently returned to Hobart after six years in San Francisco.

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