



# Annual Report

2017-2018

Inspiring and supporting  
culturally diverse  
communities to reach  
their full potential

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## WHO WE ARE

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

## Vision

An equitable, just, culturally diverse and inclusive society.

## Mission

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

## What we do

Our core services focus on meeting the needs of migrants, humanitarian entrants and refugees. We provide:

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**Individual assistance** for settling in Tasmania

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**Humanitarian Settlement Program**

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**Services and support** for older people

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**Support and counselling** for those who have experienced torture and trauma

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**Community development**, project activities and **building cultural awareness** of needs

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**Support and advice** to government, business and the broader community

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**Research and Training**



# A warm welcome from the chair

## Over the past year, our organisation has both grown and consolidated.

We have now established our place in culturally diverse Glenorchy and moved into new premises in Paterson St, Launceston. We commenced trading as Migrant Resource Centre Tasmania, as program developments enabled a greater statewide presence for our clients. Having sold our former premises, we look to the future to invest in projects that enable us to enhance our effectiveness for the communities we serve.

Every day, MRC Tasmania has been there to provide services to humanitarian refugee families and to individuals in both emerging and established migrant communities. New programs have been launched, and testing of our social enterprise concepts has helped to challenge social and economic barriers, often through hearty food and friendship.

The Board undertook a check point of our strategic plan in January, enabling a critical re-focus of the things we set out to achieve:

- > At a time of growth – **stability**
- > Commencing the Humanitarian Settlement Program – **governance and balance**
- > Fostering our input from clients and staff – **innovation and good ideas**

On a personal level, I have enjoyed leading the Board for the past four years. There are many ways to be involved in helping MRC Tasmania. We have dedicated volunteers – from language support, to welcoming people at the airport, to teaching to drive, to providing

work experience etc.

Being a Board Member is another way of volunteering. This role helps to set the direction of our organisation, ensures both financial responsibility and good governance, and monitors carefully the opportunities and challenges which arise.

During my time as Chair I have worked closely with skilled, dedicated individuals and have witnessed many positive outcomes. It has been one of the most fulfilling experiences I've had!

I take this opportunity to thank all of the Board for their support over these past few years whilst I have been Chairperson. It has been very rewarding to lead such a fantastic organisation doing its bit for migrant communities in Tasmania. We've been aided by an exceptionally thoughtful, competent and engaging CEO, Alison O'Neill, and I take this opportunity to thank Alison and her very capable senior management and staff.

I wish the new Chairperson, Nick Bedding every success and I look forward to being involved for the next chapter of achievements for multicultural community members in Tasmania.



**Helen Burnet**  
Chair



## MRC TASMANIA WELCOMES NEW CHAIR

Nick Bedding was appointed as Chair of the Board in August 2018. Nick joined the Board in 2014, and he has a professional background in the financial services sector. He is a current member of the Finance, Audit and Risk Subcommittee, and has held the position of Second Treasurer of the Board.



## A message from the CEO

**2017-18 has been another year of challenge, opportunity, reflection and renewal.**

We have navigated through the implementation of the Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP); a newly refined and defined service model. With this, our client numbers increased dramatically overnight, and our team subsequently expanded, adding depth, diversity and more expertise to our organisation.

The launch of our trading name Migrant Resource Centre Tasmania recognises the statewide focus of our service delivery. While the Phoenix Centre has been active in northern Tasmania for some time, the addition of HSP, and the subsequent opening of the Launceston office has been a welcome addition. We have seen an increase in allied service demand as the local community and service organisations realise the potential to work cohesively on broader programming initiatives and our portfolio of opportunities continue to expand accordingly.

During a period of growth, our previous attention on systems, compliance, risk management, technology and contemporary service practice has held us in good stead. While we have expended energy in expansion, our capacity to be agile and dynamic in adjusting our services has been enhanced accordingly.

A recurrent theme through review is our whole of organisation commitment to continuous improvement. In a challenging sector, one of our greatest strengths is our active initiation and welcoming of feedback as a

conduit of improvement. Our resilience to change focuses on ensuring the community and stakeholders can access services that reflect needs as they evolve.

I am fortunate to lead a team of passionate and dedicated staff who are fully committed to our vision and mission. Investing in our capacity and building of skills is a constant focus, and through training and development, peer learning and modern human resource practices we enjoy the benefit of working in an energetic environment that is creative, initiative-driven and supported. The leadership and assistance provided by the senior Program management team is also highlighted. During the year a full complement of program lead roles was finalised with service oversight ably led by Director of Services Gillian Long and complemented by the expertise of Chief Financial Officer Sheldene Blackler.

I would like to thank the support of Chair Helen Burnet who has led the Board in recent years. I would also like to acknowledge the Directors for their commitment and strategic oversight of MRC Tasmania.

Ultimately, our primary goal is to inspire and support culturally diverse communities to reach their full potential, and this will continue to guide us toward the future.

**Alison O'Neill**

Chief Executive Officer





## OUR YEAR



## 51 LANGUAGES SPOKEN BY OUR CLIENTS

# 325

PHOENIX CENTRE  
NATURAL THERAPIES  
AND COUNSELLING  
CLIENTS



# 53

TRAINING  
SESSIONS  
DELIVERED

VOLUNTEERS  
CONTRIBUTED

# 5141

HOURS OF THEIR  
TIME TO HELP



NEW  
FACEBOOK  
PAGE LIKES

# 600

# 477

MULTICULTURAL  
YOUTH  
TASMANIA  
CLIENTS

# 6

FOOD SOCIAL  
ENTERPRISE  
COMMUNITY  
WORKSHOPS



# 15

CULTURES  
REPRESENTED  
BY BICULTURAL  
WORKERS



NEW OFFICE  
OPENED IN  
LAUNCESTON

# 87,761

WEBSITE VIEWS

# 137

RESEARCH  
PARTICIPANTS

## A YEAR OF GROWTH

### OUR INVESTMENT

DIRECT CLIENT SERVICES	↑24%
REVENUE	↑42%

### OUR PEOPLE COSTS

(TO DELIVER PROGRAMS)	3.95 MIL
STAFFING	↑29%

# 2441

MEALS DELIVERED  
AT DAY CENTRES  
AND GROUP  
OUTINGS



ACHOLI  
AMHARIC  
ANUAK  
ARABIC  
ARMENIAN  
BARI  
BELGIAN  
BENGALI  
BURMESE  
CANTONESE  
CHINESE  
CROATIAN  
DARI  
DINKA  
DUTCH  
ENGLISH  
FARSI / PERSIAN  
FIJI  
FRENCH  
GERMAN  
GREEK  
GUJARATI  
HAZARAGI  
HINDI  
HUNGARIAN  
HAKHA CHIN  
ITALIAN  
JAPANESE  
KAREN  
KIRUNDI  
KISII  
LAO  
MALAY  
MANDARIN  
MARATHI  
NEPALI  
OROMO  
POLISH  
SERBIAN  
SHAN  
SINGHALESE  
SOMALI  
SPANISH  
SWAHILI  
TAGALOG  
TAMIL  
THAI  
TIGRINYAN  
TURKISH  
URDU  
VIETNAMESE

For full financial report from the 2017-18 year please visit [www.mrctas.org.au/annual-reports](http://www.mrctas.org.au/annual-reports)





**"It's clear that Tasmanians are ready to support new food enterprises, and are enthusiastic about trying new cuisines and learning the stories behind them."**

**Scoutt Winter**

MRC Tas Community Development Officer

## Food Social Enterprise

### Bringing unique flavours to Hobart

Tasmania is well known for its vibrant food scene. Migrants contribute to and enhance this already thriving hub by introducing the unique flavours and history of their traditional foods. During the 2017-18 year, MRC Tas explored the viability of a Food Social Enterprise.

This exploration included the development of multicultural catering menu items and the testing of possible business models through a series of community workshops and supported business opportunities. Workshops were held in small language-specific groups and MRC Tas employed local foodie and small business owner Megan Quill to provide participants with professional advice about recipes, presentation, pricing and the food industry in Tasmania.

The MRC Tas team used language support to ensure participants maximised their opportunity for learning. During the workshops, food was prepared together – enabling the sharing of "story" and food heritage. Each group was assessed for business readiness, self-sufficiency, preferred business type and most suitable market for their products. There was a focus on how to source fresh local produce and compostable packaging. Participants were also linked to other opportunities for training such as the 'Migrants into small business' program at MRC Tas, information sessions and one-on-one support from the Tasmanian Business Enterprise Centre and the Federal Environmental Health training program "I'm Alert".

One of the business models explored was a market food stall. During the year MRC Tas held a stall at the Moonah Taste of the World Festival, as well as three market stalls at Hobart's Farm Gate Market. The stalls provided an opportunity to 'market test' menu items participants had developed, such as Afghani Bolani and Iranian Kuku (herb omelette) in a sandwich made with Afghani bread. The stall days were a great success, all selling out by the early afternoon.

Another method of market testing used was a showcase event, held at the Glenorchy office. Representatives from relevant state government departments, local government, MRC Tas board members and industry professionals were invited to test the recipes developed through the community workshop process. Among our special guests was The Hon. Jacquie Petrusma MP, who described the dishes as 'absolutely delicious'.

In 2018-19 we will enter into the third phase of the project, which will allow us to solidify our future plans for this highly sought after and exciting initiative.

SUPPORTED BY







## Chinese Day Centre

### Nurturing an eagerness to learn

What started out as a keen interest in learning English has now transitioned into a regular English class for a number of the Chinese Day Centre clients.

Maureen, who is a Day Centre attendee herself and has decades of experience as a teacher, volunteers her time to lead 45 minute classes each week after lunch. Participants regularly practice a few basic topics such as greetings, their home and garden, shopping, and the weather.

Maureen, who usually tutors school aged students, says it's quite a different experience teaching elderly people, especially since this group is a mix of Mandarin and Cantonese speakers.

**"I get excited when my students recall vocab... It's been very satisfying to see their progress over the past few months since the classes started."**

"When one of my students was struggling terribly, I got one of the parents at the school I tutor at to put the Chinese Characters next to phrases. This has been a big help for participants." Maureen said.

MRC Tas Day Centre Coordinator Nicole Turner said that at each session the participants are very eager to learn. The atmosphere during these sessions is relaxed, interactive and supportive. Nicole said she fondly remembers the first time one of the participants chatted with her in English.

"She proudly told me about her garden at home and the vegetables that she was growing. It was wonderful to celebrate her progress with her. At the end of the most recent session, another participant made a brilliant effort to show his appreciation to Maureen by thanking her in English."

*The MRC Tas Day Centres are funded by the Australian Government Department of Health.*



## Building Safe Communities for Women

### Engaging communities in positive and authentic change

The Building Safe Communities for Women project (BSCW), facilitated by the Phoenix Centre, explored with communities what their experiences were of Domestic and Family Violence (DFV), what some of the perceived reasons of the experiences were, and how individuals could find help to assist with change.

A key part of this project was the employment of bicultural workers/community consultants from a diverse range of ethnic groups. These staff members were provided with targeted training in DFV issues and bystander training that they were then able to share within their communities.

The project aided consultation between service providers and bicultural workers and other community representatives. Service providers had the opportunity to increase their knowledge and cultural understanding of DFV in order to better assist clients from a CALD background who may be experiencing DFV.

In December 2017 the Phoenix Centre held a final forum at the conclusion of the project. Over 80 community members from four main ethnic groups attended.

By the end of the project Phoenix Centre and relevant services had reported an increase of female clients accessing support for domestic and family violence issues.

This project was highly successful in supporting and encouraging change in attitude and behaviour within new and emerging communities in Tasmania. The Phoenix Centre acknowledges that this project took the first steps in engaging communities in positive and authentic change.

ANROWS, Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety, supported BSCW projects throughout Australia. Their findings were recorded in a national publication; our project outcomes were referenced on a number of occasions.

*This project was funded by the Department of Social Services (DSS) to assist in building the capacity of culturally diverse communities to address issues of domestic and family violence.*



## Phoenix Centre

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

The Phoenix Centre delivered a diverse range of recovery focused group activities this year, providing opportunities for clients to build their resilience, social networks and explore new experiences through a targeted, culturally appropriate therapeutic lens.

The Men's Group, delivered in collaboration with Red Cross, has again seen high demand with over 15 participants from four different ethnicities attending each fortnight. The group is convened by a counsellor and supported by two bicultural workers, and provides men with the opportunity to discuss issues that are specific to their settlement journey.

Among a range of other individual and group activities, we have also delivered:

- An 8 week program for parents and young children that focused on strengthening positive attachment between parent and child.
- Individual support via natural therapies and counselling to 325 clients from 22 ethnicities, ages ranging from 2–87.
- A women's wellbeing group with a focus on developing identity. Activities have included excursions, art therapy (including pottery classes) and supported discussions of self, connection and healing.

The Phoenix Centre will continue to work with our clients, partners and collaborators to improve the health and emotional wellbeing of our clients. A particular focus will be to work with individuals and communities to improve family relationships and to support those who are grieving the loss of families and friends.

**"I love how we take a client centred approach at MRC Tas. As a Phoenix Centre Counsellor I value the diverse backgrounds and needs of my clients. I don't make assumptions as every client has a different experience."**

**Agnes Sestilio**  
Phoenix Centre  
Counsellor





"I enjoy supporting our clients with their settlement journey. It can be very challenging for them at times, but helping people to feel at home in Tasmania is always so rewarding."

**Vatsal Mehta**  
Engagement Officer



## Settlement and Community Services

**Settlement and Community Services support people from refugee, humanitarian or migrant backgrounds to settle in Tasmania and successfully participate in the local community both socially and economically. Supporting young people and community leaders are important elements of our work. Our services are delivered primarily from our Glenorchy office and include Support and Advocacy, Community Development, Youth Program, Migration Support Program, Employment Assistance, and a Learner Driver Mentor Program.**

This year Multicultural Youth Tasmania (MYT) was launched; inspiring and supporting culturally diverse young people to reach their full potential. MYT consults with our Youth Advisory Group to guide the development of programs, which are designed to develop a young person's sense of belonging and resilience. Under the MYT banner, MRC Tas youth services have grown and diversified to include:

- > **MY (Multicultural Youth) Pathways**, an early intervention program for young people who are at risk of disengagement, facilitating targeted interventions based on the participants own goals.
- > **MY Swim to Sport**, which in partnership with 'From Zero to Hero', supports young people to learn to swim and become involved in water-sports and local swimming clubs.
- > **MY Step into Work** offers work experience, career advice and training to support young people to develop skills in their chosen career.

In 2018-19 we intend to diversify the services that we can offer to community members by strengthening our programs based on enterprise. This will include the continued development of the fee for service element of the Migration Support Program, as well as investigating new opportunities for programs such as Inspire Tasmania.

**You can now learn about the big range of services we offer multicultural youth by visiting [www.myt.org.au](http://www.myt.org.au)**



## Humanitarian Settlement Program

**The Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP) supports people from a refugee/ humanitarian background who have newly arrived to Australia to build the skills and knowledge needed to participate in Australia's economic and social life. HSP provides early practical support through a needs based case management approach.**

Last year MRC Tas, in partnership with AMES Australia, was appointed to provide the Commonwealth Government's newly designed Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP) in Hobart and Launceston.

The launch of HSP has been a huge cross organisational effort to establish a new office space in Launceston, recruit and train a new team and begin to work with over 400 new clients across the state. Highlights have included welcoming Tasmania's newest community members to their new home and hearing stories of everyday achievements that demonstrate the strength and resilience of our clients.

In the next financial year we are looking forward to growing HSP's volunteer base. We will continue to work collaboratively with other service providers and will seek further support and opportunities for newly arrived community members to participate socially and build their knowledge and skills necessary for economic participation.



**"From day one I am able to guide our clients in their settlement journey. I enjoy seeing their confidence grow day by day."**

**Thir Bahadur Thapa**

HSP Senior  
Support Worker







"I enjoy exploring and developing resources that promote culturally appropriate care for the ageing population. Language, culture and ethnicity should not act as barriers to accessing vital services."

**Hannah Poon**  
Partners in Culturally Appropriate Care (PICAC) Officer



## Aged Care

**We provide a range of quality Aged Care services that support the diversity within our communities. Our focus is on providing individualised services for older people, including those with a disability and their carers, to support client diversity and guide clients through the ageing experience. Our services adapt with the individual, as care needs and goals change.**

After a period of consolidation and focus on overall quality and efficiency, we are pleased to offer programs that promote client choice, independence and wellness, and create opportunities for our clients to connect socially with others.

Through registration of clients with MyAgedCare and a new intake structure, we are happy to see growth of new clients within the Home and Community Care Program (HACC) and Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP). In collaboration with the Humanitarian Settlement Program we are seeing an emergence of new communities within aged care services, further providing scope for growth and diversity.

While individual client work remains critical to supporting clients with more complex needs, we also offer a range of group activities which continue to grow in popularity. We hold regular consultations with the communities we support to ensure our services reflect choice and remain relevant. This year we have been able to offer Day Centres and client groups some exciting experiences through the information they have given us, of particular note was the enjoyment of the harbour cruises.

In addition to direct service provision, we work in collaboration with government, peak bodies and sector providers within aged care, to improve knowledge and access for people from diverse backgrounds.

We will continue to strive for innovative, sustainable and efficient services, and keep clients informed and educated on changes occurring due to government reforms. We will work with clients to deliver the services that they have traditionally come to love whilst enhancing client experiences with new and exciting opportunities.





## Corporate Services

**The Corporate Services team provides effective and efficient administration support to the direct program areas of the organisation. Corporate Services comprises of finance, human resources, communications, IT, facilities, volunteer coordination and general administration support.**

"I am passionate about showcasing the amazing work of our organisation towards our mission. I am inspired daily by our dedicated staff, volunteers and especially our wonderful clients, who share their stories of resilience, accomplishment, and their hopes and dreams for a bright future in their new home."

**Tahlia Morgan**  
Communications Officer

Understanding the daily challenges faced by the direct program areas, we build and maintain robust processes, identify improvements, provide valuable insights, and address unexpected challenges to ensure that the rest of the organisation is well supported.

Overseeing the setup of the additional office in Launceston was a primary focus of the Corporate Services team this year. It was a mighty task that required assistance from every function of the team.

The setup of the new office and team in Launceston also resulted in expanding the delivery of administration support, which highlighted a number of complexities. Streamlining processes and implementing additional technological resources assisted in delivering support to a team in another geographical location.

The growth of MRC Tas has resulted in the increased demand for frontline support from the Corporate Services team. Ensuring the team is well equipped to deliver best practice standards for all administration functions, and a pool of relevant skills are available as required, was also a focus this year.

In the year ahead Corporate Services will continue to provide value-added administration services and solutions that are flexible and tailored to the particular circumstances of the program areas. At the time of writing we are also expanding the team to include an IT Officer to provide on-site technical support to the organisation as well as researching and the implementation of new systems in line with the MRC Tas Strategic Plan.

## Training

**MRC Tas has centralised training from across our program areas to improve quality and efficiency of delivery. All training is now coordinated by the MRC Tas Training Coordinator Rebecca Lamb. Training registration is now available online through our website.**

Feedback from MRC Tas training participants:

"It covered so much and taught me things I'd never heard or thought of. It was so beneficial and informative."

"Was great to have a mix of tasks, videos and information. Was very engaging."

"Really insightful info about the refugee/migrant process. Sharing of facts and experiences. Very informative."

## Research

In addition to participating in a range of research, during the year MRC Tas was funded to lead two research projects. These included a study to understand participation rates in Vocational Education and Training (VET) and the current role of training in supporting employment outcomes of refugees in Southern Tasmania. The second research project, which will continue until late 2019, is an investigation of the social cohesion of Women at Risk families when they arrive in Tasmania in order to aid the settlement process. This study is funded by the Australian Government, Department of Social Services. MRC Tas hopes to continue contributing to the knowledge base related to the experiences of refugees and migrants through building this component of our work, and also through the development of partnerships with other researchers.



The background of the entire page is a collage of colorful, bohemian-style tassels and beaded necklaces. The tassels feature various colored beads (red, orange, green, blue, purple) and small metal bells. The background is a soft, out-of-focus blue-grey color.

# MRC Tas Training and Professional Development

Are you looking to improve your knowledge and skills to work more effectively with individuals, families or communities from culturally and linguistically diverse or migrant backgrounds?

MRC Tas offers quality training opportunities for organisations and individuals and can tailor workshops to suit your requirements

Cultural Awareness Training - Working with Interpreters - safeTALK - Incidental Counselling - Working with people from a Refugee Background - MYAN National Youth Settlement Framework - and more...

**For more information and to register for a workshop, visit [www.mrctas.org.au/training](http://www.mrctas.org.au/training)**



## What are our clients passionate about?



**"When you are passionate about something, actually learning becomes much easier. If you aren't passionate about it then you will be more reluctant to do it. For me, it's seven days what I like to do."**

### MAHAD

**"My passion is about three things; gardening plants; parks; wildlife and animals. Also, I like teaching people, it is one thing I'm most passionate about, besides learning what I've learnt, it's actually sharing that knowledge with people."**

I study horticulture. I've been studying for the last three and a half years and I've liked it since from the beginning. I discovered my passion through Ute (Phoenix Centre Personal Helpers and Mentors (PHaMs) Worker), who helped me out, to actually look at the TAFE website, because I was talking about it for months and months. I think probably for over a year. When we first met, Ute asked me what I was passionate about, and it was gardening... It was

actually one of the things I could concentrate on and get my life back on track was enrolling in the horticulture course.

I had a hard time when I first arrived to Tasmania. I wasn't getting along with many people, I was hanging around with people who were not a good influence on me. The best way I could figure it out was to study. I thought I wouldn't last a week because of how scared I was.

When you are passionate about something actually learning becomes much easier. If you aren't passionate about it then you will be more reluctant to do it. For me, it's seven days what I like to do.

Knowledge is very powerful and that's one thing I would like to share with my whole community. You know? If we can all do part of it, we can all succeed. That's why I like plants. Because if we chop up wood we can use it for home or for this and that. Actually learning to grow food – this is the generation we are living in. Everyone wants to have their own garden at home, rather than going to the supermarket and buying it. Yes we can do that, but actually putting in some effort, the result is that you get to eat the fruit of your labour.

I'm going to be studying for another couple of years. I'm in it for the long run, until they get sick and tired of me! (laughs). I would like to use my qualifications to help others. I am already doing a bit of volunteer work with elderly people. Some elderly people can't do their gardens anymore, so I help to maintain them. Someone I helped to learn about gardening is now supplying the local coffee shops with organic vegetables, as their backyard is very organic. I help another person out on the weekends, and in exchange they are giving me guitar lessons. It's all about giving and taking, you know?"



## VICTORIA

**Victoria, aged 70, arrived with her son and his family in Tasmania after fleeing Iraq with nothing but the clothes on her back. Nearly two years on and Victoria is very happy in her new home and is able to pursue many of her passions.**

Victoria enjoys cooking traditional foods as well as sewing her own Karakush (Iraqi) traditional clothes. "It is the same as my mum used to wear." Victoria is self-taught and hopes to pass this knowledge on to her grandchildren one day.

Victoria is passionate about learning and enjoys learning English at TasTAFE. "I am always happy when I am learning new things. I am too old to find work, but it is good what I am learning," she said.

Every Tuesday she attends university. "The priest (at my church) takes us to university to learn. I have done 4 courses now. A course that I did was drawing landscapes. Also Psychology about children. Now I am learning about Philosophy."

Through MRC Tas Aged Care services, Victoria enjoys attending the Healthy Living Group on Wednesdays and the Multicultural Day Centre on Fridays. "I go to the Multicultural club on Fridays. I am the only one from Iraq. The others are from Australia, Italy, Croatia and Poland. I only speak English at the Multicultural club, so it is good practice for me."

Victoria is very enthusiastic about her excursions with the Healthy Living Group, as she loves seeing more of Tasmania and only eats out when she is with the group. "Everywhere we go is nice. I loved Richmond. There is the old bridge, and a beautiful old Catholic church. The oldest one in Tasmania. I also enjoyed going to the Margate train. All these places are very good, very beautiful."

"I love living in Tasmania. It's all beautiful. The people are very beautiful. They are happy with me and I am happy with them."

"Taking newly arrived people to their appointments and showing them around was my favourite part of the placement, as we shared our first experiences in this new place. On the way to appointments we would exchange stories and laugh."



### OM

**As part of MY Step into Work, a program of Multicultural Youth Tasmania and funded by the Scanlon Foundation, a number of Youth clients undertook employment skills workshops and Work Experience placements at either an external local business or at the MRC Tas office in Glenorchy. Om, who is passionate about helping others in the community, had the opportunity to complete a placement with the Phoenix Centre team.**

"My name is Om, I am 19 years old, from Nepal and have been living in Tasmania since 2013. I am currently studying English at TasTAFE. In my work experience placement with the Phoenix Centre, I had a chance to meet people and build friendships. I really appreciate the people who supported me. They took their time to explain things to me and made me feel warmly welcomed. It was not easy to do a work experience placement as a student but everyone's patience helped me learn.

I experienced how it felt sitting behind the desk, using a computer and managing folders. I had the opportunity to get to know both staff and clients at MRC Tas, who come from many different countries. This gave me an excellent opportunity to learn about different cultures, foods and stories.

Before I did work placement, I thought MRC Tas only did settlement programs, but there are many things that MRC Tas does to help people from migrant and refugee backgrounds. I really enjoyed working and learning what MRC Tas does and who they help, and I look forward to stepping in to a job in Community Services one day. For me this opportunity has taught me skills to add towards my future career as a Police Officer."



## OUR TEAM



**7.5%**

of Households speak a language other than English at home

**20.4%**

of residents are born overseas

**14.7%**

of residents have both parents born overseas

**1.2%**

The dominant language, other than English, is Nepali



Top languages, other than English, spoken in Launceston: Nepali, Mandarin, Persian, Arabic, German

## Launceston Office

**In 2017-18 new program developments enabled MRC Tas to have a greater statewide presence, resulting in a new office located in the hub of Launceston; 27 Paterson Street.**

Services provided out of our Launceston office include:

- Support services for adults and children who have fled persecution, torture and war related trauma through the Phoenix Centre. These services include counselling and suicide prevention activities.
- The Humanitarian Settlement Program, which supports newly arrived people from refugee and humanitarian backgrounds to begin their new lives in Australia, and build their skills to participate in Australia's economic and social life.

**"Working in a smaller, regional area like Launceston comes with many unique challenges, but also some wonderful opportunities. Working with a smaller team enables us to work closely together and think outside the box in terms of the best ways to support our clients."**

**Mary Binks and Kelli Charles**

Phoenix Centre  
Counsellors and  
Project Officers

## OUR VOLUNTEERS

**With the introduction of the Humanitarian Settlement Program in October 2017, many new and existing volunteers have worked tirelessly to assist new families to settle in Launceston and Hobart.**

The skills, knowledge and experience of our volunteers has provided invaluable support to new arrivals with the Humanitarian Settlement Program, and clients across all program areas. We would like to thank every volunteer for their commitment and dedication to the work of MRC Tasmania.



**Name: Nadia**

**Volunteer role:** Project Support for the Driver Mentor Program

**I volunteer because:**

"I want to help newly arrived people settle within the community and help them feel welcome in Tasmania. Many of my family members are migrants and some are refugees, so I care about this issue and the value of multiculturalism, and diversity in general."

**My volunteering has:**

"Given me really valuable skills and experience, as well as insight into some of the struggles faced by migrant communities and how organisations like MRC Tas support and help them."

**Volunteering is:**

"Very rewarding and fulfilling. It's also an awesome way to meet interesting people!"





**Name: Benji**

**Volunteer role:** Housing Drop-in volunteer for the Humanitarian Settlement Program

**I volunteer because:**

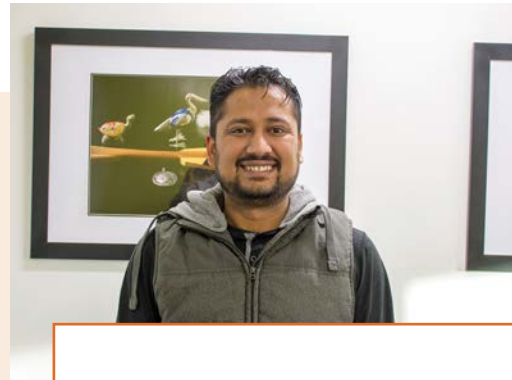
"I am very concerned about the resettlement issue of new immigrants because I was once a member of this vulnerable group when I was an international student. I share similar confusion, helplessness, and worry with these newcomers in an unfamiliar community and country. Now I hope to help them eliminate discomfort and smoothly integrate into new communities and start a new life by sharing my experiences and volunteer activities."

**My volunteering has:**

"Given me the opportunity to reach out to many new arrivals, as well as the rich and colourful multiculturalism behind them. I work with my volunteer colleagues and supervisor to provide clients with a range of accommodation and placement assistance, and gradually develop their ability to use resources independently to solve problems to help them actively participate in social activities."

**Volunteering is:**

Something I am willing to keep doing to help others no matter when, where, what form it takes. It is gratifying and pleasing for me to hear people say 'Thank you'.



**Name: Rajender**

**Volunteer role/s:** Digi Drop-in, Housing Drop-in volunteer for the Humanitarian Settlement Program

**I volunteer because:**

"I enjoy helping others and giving back to the community."

**Volunteering is:**

"Not just a one-way concept. It goes two ways. In the process of giving something to the community as a volunteer you also receive an enormous amount of happiness to your heart and in addition, you also meet people from many cultural backgrounds, build friendships, grow your network, develop new skills and also gain valuable experience."

## OUR PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

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

### Get Outside

During the year Multicultural Youth Tasmania (MYT), a program of MRC Tas, collaborated with the Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service Get Outside Program to provide young people with leadership training whilst also learning about the Tasmanian wilderness and building their capacity to pass on this knowledge to their communities. In March, 10 youth clients participated in a weekend leadership camp, which involved activities such as climbing Hartz Mountain and visiting Hastings caves.

### AMES Australia

MRC Tasmania was pleased to formalise a connection with AMES Australia this year under an arrangement for the delivery of the Humanitarian Settlement Program in Tasmania. AMES Australia is one of Australia's leading settlement agencies and provide services to over 50,000 clients each year. As an organisation whose values are closely aligned with those of MRC Tas, we are pleased to be able to work closely with AMES Australia and look forward to opportunities for further collaboration.



### Max Employment – Launceston

Phoenix Centre Counsellors have been working collaboratively with Max Employment – the providers of the AMEP (Adult Migrant English Program) to deliver wellbeing sessions to AMEP students. The sessions introduce Phoenix Centre Services and provide information on what our services can do to assist in improving emotional wellbeing.





## Aged Care Brokered Services

MRC Tas Aged Care Services takes a holistic approach to care, collaborating with 11 brokered services for personal care, cleaning, gardening, transport, massage, and podiatry. Provision of these services ensures that clients are well supported in all aspects of their care needs.

"Hartz Peak was the best part of the camping for me, 8 kilometre walking to the top of the Hartz Peak. Every one of us was responsible to lead the group in different parts of our walking."

**Mohammad**

Get Outside Leadership  
Camp participant

## Red Cross

The Phoenix Centre and Red Cross Australia's Bicultural Health Program collaborate to deliver a Men's Group program to improve health and well-being for men from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The group focuses on therapeutic support and client centred discussions and activities including recreational outings to help men explore issues specific to them and engage in the broader community. The group operates every second week and is run by Phoenix Centre Counsellors, and Red Cross and MRC Tas bicultural workers.

*Image top:  
Get Outside  
Leadership Camp*



## OUR BOARD



**Helen Burnet**

Chairperson

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



**Allison Burrows-Cheng**

Vice Chairperson

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



**Jeanette Banks**

Secretary

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



**Chris Stennard**

Treasurer

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



**Nick Bedding**

Second Treasurer

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

\*Nick was appointed as Chair of the Board in August 2018.



**Alison O'Neill**

Board Member

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



**Shafiq Mohamed**

Board Member

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



**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.





### **Victor Stojcevski**

Board Member

Victor has a Macedonian background and joined the MRC Tas 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 teenaged daughters. He is the Coronial Division Manager at the Magistrates Court of Tasmania. Victor's varied background includes leadership roles within the justice sector, particularly in law reform and therapeutic jurisprudence. Victor is a member of the Asia Pacific Coroners' Society.



### **Jes Kenth**

Board Member

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

### **Thank you to retiring Directors**

Thank you to Jamila Fontana and Kacee Johnstone, MRC Tasmania Directors who concluded their Board role during the year.

In accordance with the Constitution, from time to time the Board appoints subcommittees and working groups with specific terms of reference to support the activities of MRC Tasmania. During the year a number of Board members participated on standing Board Subcommittees, including the Finance, Audit and Risk and Governance and Human Resources. In addition, the implementation of the HSP Program in 2017 was overseen by a HSP Working Group to guide organisational transition.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

**MRC Tas would like to thank the many organisations, businesses and individuals who supported and donated time, expertise and financial resources to us during the 2017-18 financial year. In particular, we thank the following for their support:**

Department of Social Services

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Department of Health

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Department of Premier and Cabinet

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Department of Health and Human Services

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Department of State Growth

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Skills Tasmania

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Tasmanian Community Fund

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Tasmania Police

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Anglicare Tasmania

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CatholicCare

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Red Cross

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TasTAFE

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AMES Australia

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Primary Health Tasmania

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Scanlon Foundation

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Inspiring and  
supporting culturally  
diverse communities to  
reach their full potential

[MRCTAS.ORG.AU](https://mrctas.org.au)