



Annual Report 2024-25



**migrant
resource
centre**
TASMANIA



Acknowledgement of Country

Migrant Resource Centre Tasmania acknowledges the Palawa/Pakana people as traditional custodians of the lands throughout Lutruwita/Tasmania on which we live and work. We pay respect to elders past and present and recognise their continuing connection with country and community.

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Our Patron: Her Excellency Professor the
Honourable Barbara Baker AC, Governor of Tasmania.



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About Us

Who we are

Migrant Resource Centre Tasmania (MRC Tas) is a not-for-profit organisation that works alongside people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. We provide effective, targeted and meaningful services throughout the State from offices in the South, North and North West.

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

Our vision:

A vibrant and diverse Lutruwita/Tasmania where everyone is included and everyone belongs.

Our mission:

To work alongside people from refugee and migrant backgrounds, so individuals and communities throughout Lutruwita/Tasmania thrive.

Our values:

Respect
Inclusion
Compassion
Integrity
Innovation
Collaboration

What we do

MRC Tas offers a wide range of specialised services and projects to build the skills, knowledge and capacity of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) community members so they can live well and thrive in Tasmanian society. These include:

- Humanitarian and migrant settlement
- Capacity building
- Community development
- Counselling and mental health support
- Employment and education support
- Individual and group case management
- Health and life skills programs and services
- Support for older people and people with a disability and their carers
- Support for young people
- Accommodation
- Cultural Capability Training

Chair Report

What an exciting and busy year it has been.

I would like to start by thanking my fellow board members for their dedication, support and commitment.

I especially want to acknowledge our CEO Gillian Long and her dedicated team of staff and volunteers for their tireless efforts. It has been a remarkable year, and their leadership and hard work have been outstanding.

On behalf of the board, I extend our thanks to the entire team across the State. Your commitment to supporting our communities helps people to grow and thrive.

As an organisation I am very pleased that we continue to expand our services to support people from refugee and migrant backgrounds build lives for themselves across Tasmania. We have also continued to grow important partnerships with stakeholders and organisations to further amplify our advocacy around challenging racism in Tasmania.

After walking from Burnie to Hobart in The Walk – Step Up Together, I undertook a national challenge, The Walk – Better Together, walking from Launceston to Canberra to once again highlight the positive contributions that people from migrant and refugee backgrounds make to our community. We will continue to promote the message that we are Better Together in coming years by undertaking an annual 'Big Tassie Walk' a month-long walking and fundraising challenge that will be held every October.

Building on these important conversations we also supported the six Greater Hobart councils' campaign 'We Stand Together Against Racism'. I was proud to walk alongside representatives from all six councils, along with other organisations and MRC Tas staff at the launch of this campaign to send a strong message of solidarity and support with our communities against racism.



Our revenue continues to grow and our financial position is ahead of our budgeted targets. This position demonstrates to our funding partners our strong financial management and that we remain an organisation that can be trusted to responsibly deliver the services we are funded for. For audit purposes, we once again have reported revenue under AASB 1058 and these impacts are reflected in our financial statements and explained in the accompanying notes.

I want to finish where I began and again thank everyone who has supported us and been involved with the organisation throughout the year. You have all been outstanding.

To our CEO Gillian Long, her executive team, our staff and volunteers: every day through your hard work, compassion and your tireless commitment to helping others, you improve people's lives and make the world a better place.

Thank you.

The Hon Peter Gutwein
Chair

CEO Report

I'm pleased to present the Migrant Resource Centre Tasmania Annual Report for the year ending 30 June 2025.

Although much of our time is spent looking ahead—developing new approaches and strategies to meet the evolving needs of individuals and communities—this report offers an important opportunity to pause and reflect on a remarkable year of achievement, growth, and impact.

Over the past 12 months, MRC Tas has experienced significant growth across all areas of the organisation, increasing our capacity to meet community needs, strengthening our influence, and delivering measurable progress against our strategic plan. Our quality service delivery and steadfast resolve to focus on our mission – to support people from migrant and refugee backgrounds to settle, thrive, and contribute to a vibrant and inclusive Lutruwita/Tasmania – has solidified the organisation's positioning in the sector, both within Tasmania and nationally.

This year alone, we welcomed over 1200 individuals, families, and community members through our offices in Glenorchy, Launceston, and Burnie. Thousands more participated in our training, community events, and forums, resided in our accommodation, or connected with us in other meaningful ways.

A highlight of the year has been the significant expansion of programs across the North and North West, including SETS, and the introduction of new initiatives such as Play Our Way: Women United, Bridge to Belonging, and Cultural Bridges—extending our reach to areas of great need.

Civic participation has been enhanced through the delivery of highly successful information sessions on Australia's voting system and electoral processes.

Our successful employment-focused programs—including the Migrant Network and Migrant Employment Energiser Program (MEEP)—combined with industry-specific training in hospitality, building, and construction, have opened new opportunities for participants to gain skills, traineeships, and meaningful employment.



We also implemented key system upgrades, enabling us to respond efficiently to the needs of a growing workforce and increased reporting and compliance requirements. These investments position us well for upcoming sector reforms, including in Aged Care, and ensure we can demonstrate our impact with confidence.

Accommodation initiatives, including our Springvale Accommodation Centre, have provided housing for skilled workers from the Philippines whose expertise has supported Incat's construction of the world's largest battery-electric ship. The MRC Tas Goodwood Accommodation Centre – providing a welcoming first home for humanitarian arrivals – has received important upgrades, with much credit going to the generosity of volunteers who have contributed countless hours of support.

Addressing racism has been a key organisational priority. This year, we delivered a broad suite of initiatives—from counselling and group support to community education, training, and advocacy through The Walk – Better Together campaign—to foster inclusion and safety for all.

Proceeds from fundraising enabled our Cultural Competency Training program's reach to grow, equipping service providers, government,



employers, and businesses to engage effectively with Tasmania's increasingly multicultural population. Our evidence-based learning, featuring interactive exercises and expert guidance to build genuine cultural understanding and communication skills, consistently receives high praise.

The Walk – Better Together, which followed the success of The Walk – Step Up Together the previous year, was a signature event for the organisation. Our Chair's eight-day walk from Launceston to Canberra via Sydney, culminating in meetings with the Prime Minister, Minister for Immigration, and the Leader of the Opposition and Governor-General, provided a platform for our political leaders to demonstrate their support for our multicultural communities and publicly recognise the positive contributions migrants and refugees make to our nation. The platform created through The Walk campaigns will continue to serve as a cornerstone for our awareness and fundraising efforts, amplifying the voices of multicultural communities for years to come.

MRC Tas continues to be recognised as a dynamic, supportive, and joyful workplace. From Lunar New Year celebrations featuring a roaming red dragon, to cultural celebrations such as Honduran Independence Day and All Staff Days

filled with learning, laughter, and connection, our organisational culture embodies pride, collaboration, and belonging.

Behind every achievement are countless stories of resilience, compassion, and collaboration. While we are proud of our progress, we know there is more to do. Global and local challenges continue to shape the landscape in which we operate – but they also inspire us to adapt, innovate, and lead. In the year ahead, we will continue to build on our achievements, through strengthened partnerships and deepened impact, to ensure Tasmania remains a place where all people can belong and thrive.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to our board, staff, volunteers, partners, funders, and supporters. Your unwavering commitment makes our success possible. Together, we have achieved a great deal and together we will continue to create a stronger, more inclusive future for all. Thank you for being part of our journey. I would particularly like to thank our Chair, the Hon. Peter Gutwein, and the MRC Tas Executive Team - you inspire me each day and make me incredibly proud.

Gillian Long
Chief Executive Officer

Our Impact

1240

Clients supported this year,
distributed across:

330

YOUTH
SERVICES

733

SETTLEMENT

252

AGED AND
COMMUNITY
CARE

278

PHOENIX
CENTRE



70

Different
countries of
origin of
clients

11,337

Individual Client
Sessions

New Clients
1052

47

Languages
spoken by
clients

163 Clients
housed at our
Goodwood
multicultural
accommodation
centre

252

Older people supported by
the aged and community
services team to live
independently



672 People

attended cultural
competency training
sessions

1000+

Community
members provided
with electoral
education in the
lead up to the
Federal Election

**Cultural
Competency
Training**
participants said
their cultural
awareness
increased from a
6.5 to an 8.5
(on a 10 point scale)



45 clients received employment pathway support

23 in Construction
22 in Hospitality



31 skilled workers filling critical skills gaps housed at our Springvale accommodation

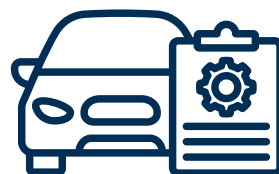
20

People got their P1 licenses

57 learners supported by 22 Driver mentors

1039

Learner driver hours logged



300

people participated in structured therapeutic groupwork

Long term accommodation secured for 25 families, housing 76 clients



2000+

counselling and related individual support sessions provided through Phoenix Centre

73

Multicultural Youth drop-in sessions held across the state

Individual young people supported

173

Weekly Women's Group Sessions

70



NORTH

34

SOUTH

36

Weekly Men's Group Sessions

86



NORTH

45

SOUTH

41

The Walk, Better Together

A National Step Towards Unity

In October 2024, the MRC Tas Chair, the Hon. Peter Gutwein, took a bold step to lead a national conversation about the power and promise of multiculturalism in Australia.

The Walk, Better Together followed on from Peter's earlier 335-kilometre journey across Tasmania (Step Up Together) in June 2024, which took him from Burnie to Hobart. That walk sparked overwhelming community support and deep conversations about belonging, identity, and inclusion. Building on that momentum, Peter was inspired to take the message to the national stage. On 1 October, he set out once again, this time from our office in Launceston, walking to Launceston Airport before flying to Sydney and then continuing on foot to Parliament House in Canberra. Over 330 kilometres and more than 430,000 steps later, Peter arrived in the nation's capital, having walked through Camden, Renwick, Moss Vale, Goulburn, and Collector, connecting with everyday Australians from diverse backgrounds.

"Regardless of colour, regardless of race, regardless of circumstance or background, we are all Australians – and we are simply better when we are together," said Peter.

At every stop, communities opened their doors and shared their stories. From young mothers building new lives to professionals contributing their skills and culture, the walk celebrated the people who enrich our society every day. One of the most touching moments came from Pastor Kelepi, who joined a community gathering and offered a powerful metaphor:



"Peter is like a flower vase, and we are the beautiful flowers from every garden."

This beautiful imagery captured the spirit of The Walk, Better Together – an initiative grounded in unity, inclusion, and shared belonging. The walk carried a clear and actionable goal: to secure bipartisan reaffirmation of Australia's commitment to multiculturalism. That goal was met. Upon arriving in Canberra, Peter met with Prime Minister the Hon. Anthony Albanese and former Opposition Leader the Hon. Peter Dutton – both of whom publicly reaffirmed their support for a multicultural Australia, as outlined in the Multicultural Framework Review.





"I congratulate Mr Gutwein on his leadership in undertaking this big journey. His journey, his walk, is similar to the walk that Australia has taken towards this modern, vibrant, dynamic, multicultural society that we are. We can't take it for granted. We need to cherish it and we need to nurture it," said Prime Minister Albanese

Peter was also warmly welcomed by Her Excellency the Governor-General, the Hon. Sam Mostyn, further reinforcing the national significance of the initiative.

The success of The Walk, Better Together, was made possible by the generosity and encouragement of so many supporters. We extend our deepest gratitude to:

- Launceston Airport and Canberra Airport, for their outstanding hospitality
- Downer Transport & Infrastructure and Altus Traffic Australia, for ensuring Peter's safety on the road
- Australian Hotels Association (AHA), Football Australia, and the GWS Giants, for their steadfast support

- Western Sydney MRC, Sydney Multicultural Services, FECCA, Multicultural NSW, and Joseph La Posta, for their advocacy and partnership
- And to the many individuals, families, and communities who walked with Peter, hosted him, and shared their stories along the way

"Multiculturalism brings global perspectives, innovation, and growth," said Peter.

"But most importantly, it brings understanding. It leads to more accepting, more connected communities. That's what The Walk is about." When it comes to building a better Australia, we are truly better together.



Everyone Belongs

Refugee Week 2025: Finding Freedom – Where Everyone Belongs

This year, Refugee Week was a vibrant celebration of the resilience, strength, and contributions of people from refugee backgrounds – anchored by the powerful theme: “Finding Freedom: Diversity in Community.” Across Tasmania, we came together to honour what it truly means to be free, and to belong.

For many of our clients, freedom begins with escaping conflict or persecution. But real freedom is not only about safety, it's about finding community. And this Refugee Week, we celebrated the inclusive, welcoming spaces that allow people of all backgrounds to be heard, valued, and embraced.

Art took centre stage in both Hobart and Launceston, as local artists from refugee backgrounds showcased works that spoke to identity, displacement, hope, and belonging.

In Hobart, we held a stunning exhibition in partnership with the Moonah Arts Centre from 6–28 June. The Refugee Week celebration event on Thursday 19 June welcomed clients, artists, donors, partners, and community members in a powerful evening of connection and storytelling.

The event began with a heartfelt Welcome to Country from Niara Mansell and pakana kanaplila, grounding us in place and purpose. Our CEO, Dr Gillian Long shared powerful reflections on the journeys of people with refugee backgrounds, highlighting their contributions and the importance of creating spaces where diversity is not only accepted but celebrated.



“Diversity isn’t something to be tolerated, it’s something to be celebrated. Because when our communities reflect all of us, they are stronger, more compassionate, and more capable of facing challenges together.”

Dr Gillian Long

Our Board Chair, the Hon. Peter Gutwein, offered heartfelt thanks to our supporters, donors, and artists, acknowledging their commitment to creating a Tasmania where everyone belongs. He spoke of the vital role they play in enabling people from refugee backgrounds to not just survive, but to thrive, and to share their stories through art, culture, and connection.



The artwork on display moved many to tears. A standout piece was "For Hser La Wee," a tribute by one of our bicultural workers, ThaDah Shay to her mother's journey from Myanmar to Australia – told through painting and poetry. It captured the essence of this year's theme: finding freedom in the arms of community.

The evening was elevated by performances from the Karen Choir, Mambo Africa Trio, and DJ Denz, who brought the crowd to their feet with music, dancing, and pure joy. Delicious catering from Kaza Miza and Farhat provided not just food, but a taste of culture, memory, and home.

In Launceston, we held a two-day Refugee Week Art Exhibition at Door of Hope on 21–22 June. The exhibition was the result of a month-long creative workshop facilitated by our Phoenix Centre, where clients shared their experiences and identities through visual storytelling. The result was an exhibition full of powerful, heartfelt pieces reflecting freedom, strength, and the search for belonging.

We also hosted our Launceston Refugee Week celebration on 19 June, bringing together community members, artists, local politicians, and staff for a moving gathering. The event echoed the message heard across the state: everyone belongs.

Refugee Week 2025 reminded us that freedom isn't found in isolation, it's found in community. It's found in the voices that are heard, the hands that are held, and the stories that are shared.

We are deeply grateful to:

- Moonah Arts Centre, Glenorchy City Council and Door of Hope for their generosity and hospitality
- Our amazing clients for their courage, creativity, and contributions
- Our donors, partners, and supporters – your support makes this work possible
- Artists, performers, staff and volunteers who brought energy and heart to each event
- The wider Tasmanian community for showing what true welcome looks like.

As we look ahead, we carry this message with us: when we make space for one another, we build stronger, freer, more compassionate communities. And in those communities – everyone belongs.

Employment and Learning

Migrant Employment Energiser Program 2024

Settlement Services

This year saw another iteration of the extremely successful Migrant Employment Energiser Program (MEEP). Recognising the importance of employment for financial independence, social connections and a positive settlement experience, this program supports people from refugee and migrant backgrounds to gain employment or access further training to improve their ability to secure long-term employment. The program focused on key sectors for the Tasmanian economy: Building & Construction and Hospitality & Tourism.

The program helped bridge access to training and employment opportunities through pathway planning, supporting participants skills and knowledge, and addressing barriers. Employment Officers also provided support to employers to ensure both they and their new employees felt supported.

Over two intake rounds, a total of 23 clients enrolled in the Building & Construction stream, and 22 clients in Hospitality & Tourism.

The Building & Construction stream

Participants in this stream went through a 12 week CALD Apprenticeship Preparation Program, with modules including Work Health and Safety, Hazard and Risks, Safety Signs and Tags and special topic



modules on Asbestos and Scaffolding. These modules were complemented with White Card training, industry talks on opportunities in Building & Construction, as well as construction site visits. Some participants furthermore undertook two days' work experience with Sentinel Boats. By the end of the financial year, this stream saw seven successful job outcomes.

The Hospitality & Tourism stream

Participants in this stream undertook 12 weeks of industry training, covering topics such as Effective Communication Essentials, Food Safety and Hygiene Fundamentals, Chemical Safety Awareness, Introduction to the Kitchen, Table Service Fundamentals and Health & Wellbeing in hospitality. Practical training was done in our commercial kitchen, and included cooking, baking, barista skills and customer and table services. Participants also participated in work experience with Grand Chancellor and Old Woolstore Hotel, after which four participants were offered employment.

Participants in both streams took part in a weekly industry English class and workshops on understanding Australian workplace culture and further education opportunities. The program also provided career pathway planning and support,



resume and job application writing, interview practice, and assistance in applying for positions or further education. Participants were also supported to attend the Network and Career Expo 2025 in MyState Bank Arena, Organized by Glenorchy Jobs Hub.

We held the graduation for the first round of intakes on June 12, with six graduates from the Building & Construction stream, and five graduates in Hospitality & Tourism. Participants came together for the celebrations, cooking and sharing cultural food, including injera with chicken doro wat (stew) and white cheese, Eritrean beef stew, Daal Tarka, Atayef (filled and syrup-soaked Middle Eastern pancake), Gosh-e fil (Persian fried pastry), Bangladeshi vegetable soup, Afghan samosas and Bolani (Afghan stuffed flatbread). Graduates were then presented with their MEEP certificates. After completing the training, participants received warm referrals to employment partners and other employers. Several participants went into employment or pursued further education.

We are deeply appreciative of our external trainers in both streams, Master Builder Tasmania (Building & Construction) and Peter Handy (Hospitality & Tourism), who skillfully guided and supported our participants through some parts of the training. We also extend our appreciation to our program

volunteers, Rachael, Sehar and Tony, who provided additional support to participants throughout the program.

This program could not take place without our wonderful partners: Asuria, Bucaan Neighbourhood House, Civil Contractors Federation Tasmania, Hotel Grand Chancellor Hobart, Glenorchy City Council, Hobart Football Club, Master Plumber Tas, Tasmania Hospitality Association (THA), Tasmanian Hospitality and Tourism Academy, Tas TAFE, Sentinel Boats, Sunlight Kitchen project, UTas Food Hub, and Women in Tourism and Hospitality (WITH).



Health and Wellbeing

Co-Creating Culturally Meaningful Mental Health Resources

Phoenix Centre

At the heart of our mission to support the wellbeing of Tasmania's culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, the Phoenix Centre has continued to innovate and strengthen mental health support through collaborative, community-led resource development.

As part of the successful MUMPALS program, Phoenix Centre launched a MUMPALS video delivered in multiple languages which provided practical tips for newly arrived mothers on caring for their own wellbeing alongside the wellbeing of their children. Introduced at a community launch attended by 45 women, these videos are now widely available via social media, the MRC Tas website, and in-person sessions. The resources are available in five languages – English, Farsi, Nepali, Amharic, and Spanish – ensuring that the information is accessible to a broad audience.

The Phoenix Centre also partnered with Embrace Multicultural Mental Health to co-design mental health resources that are culturally meaningful, accessible, and directly responsive to the needs of migrant and refugee communities in Tasmania. This partnership became a powerful process of connection and storytelling for the women involved. Women from Eritrean, Burmese, and Nepalese backgrounds played an integral role by participating in podcasts conducted in their own languages. These conversations were rich with personal insights and cultural contexts, making mental health discussions relatable and authentic for their communities. Participants expressed great pride in contributing to materials they knew would be useful to others navigating similar experiences.

Service providers across Tasmania have also noted the tremendous value of having these genuine, community-driven resources to share with their clients.

Culturally tailored mental health information matters because it acknowledges that individuals' experiences, histories, and cultural frameworks deeply influence how they understand and respond to mental health challenges. By embedding community voices at every stage, these resources build trust and relevance, fostering a stronger connection between service providers and the communities they serve.

Print and Practical Resources Supporting Wellbeing

Alongside audio materials, the Phoenix Centre developed a series of practical print resources in multiple languages to support mental health and wellbeing:

- **Pain Management Cards:** Featuring the "Infinity Breathing Exercise," these cards guide users through a calming technique to manage pain or feelings of overwhelm. The gentle instructions and reassuring messages encourage moments of self-care and softening.
- **Affirmation Cards:** Drawing from CALD community members' own coping strategies, these cards offer practical tips for managing stress and worry, such as connecting with friends, engaging in outdoor activities, and listening to music. Blank cards are included for personal reflection and empowerment.
- **Trauma-Informed Yoga Poses:** A gentle introduction to trauma-sensitive yoga, including poses like Constructive Rest, Cat-Cow Flow, and Resting Relaxation (Savasana), encourages users to release tension and reconnect with their bodies safely and at their own pace.



- **Racism Response Cards:** These clearly define racism and provide step-by-step guidance on responding safely to racist incidents, including seeking support and practicing self-care. Contact details for relevant support services such as the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner and Lifeline are included.
- **5 Senses Grounding Technique Cards:** Designed to help individuals manage anxiety or trauma responses by focusing on sensory experiences, this tool helps users ground themselves in the present and foster a sense of safety.

These are also available in digital format on the MRC Tas website.



The Phoenix Centre remains committed to co-creating mental health and wellbeing resources that reflect the lived experiences of Tasmania's diverse communities. By prioritising cultural relevance and community engagement, we continue to build trust, empower individuals, and foster greater mental health literacy across Tasmania.

Embrace project was tendered by Mental Health Australia and is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care.

The MUMPALS project was funded by the Paul Ramsay Foundation.

Racism card was funded by the Department Of Premier and Cabinet, Tasmanian Government.

Other resources listed above were funded by the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing through the PASTT program.

Connection and Inclusion

Active citizenship: Empowering electoral participation

Strategy and Development

In the months leading up to the federal election on 3 May, MRC Tas delivered electoral education to community members as part of the Australian Electoral Commission's (AEC) Multicultural Electoral Education Project. The AEC trained 26 MRC Tas staff and bicultural workers as educational facilitators, who then delivered 34 educational sessions empowering more than 1,000 community members to understand the Australian parliamentary democracy, electoral procedures and exercise their civic duty. The sessions were delivered in 17 different languages across South, North and North West Tasmania, covering the electorates of Franklin, Clark, Bass and Braddon. Sessions had different formats to ensure a wide reach, including in-language class-room style sessions at MRC Tas offices, facilitators joining community-led events and gatherings, and hosting large community dinners with lots of other fun activities. The project received widespread attention with multiple mentions in radio and print media.

The electoral education covered topics such as the importance of voting, levels of government, different voting options and what to expect on election day and covered the differences between the House of Representatives and the Senate and how government is formed. A practical mock voting activity (using Australian animals in place of candidates) demonstrated how preferential voting works, how to complete a formal ballot paper, and how votes are counted. The project also provided support for enrolling to vote, promoted paid work opportunities to work at the election, as well as delivering important information about informing one's vote and avoiding misinformation.



"Really interesting and helpful session. The demonstration of voting and counting votes helped me to understand and visualise the process."

Community member



Evaluations showed that participants rated the sessions 4.7 stars out of 5, with 97.5% of participants responding that they understood elections and voting in Australia better after the session. In most sessions you could almost hear the 'aha' moment as participants grasped how the counting for preferential voting worked, and why their votes were so powerful.

The AEC Tally Room, accessible online for the public to access the official, formally declared results of the election, showed a 1.8-3 percent point increase in formal votes across the four electoral targeted by MRC Tas, with no change in the electorate that we did not reach with this project. This increase was characterised as an anomaly by the AEC and attributed to the multicultural education project, demonstrating the project's direct and tangible impact on empowering electoral participation.

Interactions with community members throughout the sessions were an important reminder that some Tasmanians have not previously had the right or opportunity to vote before, or they may distrust the practical application of democracy in their country of origin. Teaching Australian democracy to migrants is crucial for fostering an inclusive and informed society and empowering them to become active and engaged members of our community and contributing to public discourse.

This program was funded by the Australian Electoral Commission.

"I learned a lot about elections in this session, I learned what to do when I vote."

Community member

34 sessions held

Totalling 17 different languages

More than 1,000 community members reached

Capacity Building and Advocacy

Keeping communities safe with Community Advocates

Settlement Services

The Multicultural Community Advocates pilot program sought to build communities general awareness of violent extremism, and strengthen their response to extremism including racism and prejudice-motivated crime.

In recent years, Tasmania has seen an increase in racially motivated attacks on people and property, and when communities are not equipped to respond to incidents, it puts them at further risk and leads to underreporting of crimes. This makes it difficult to monitor data and provide legislative and preventative strategies to improve community safety.

This innovative pilot project recruited and trained multicultural community advocates to become champions for safety and resilience within their communities. Apart from receiving bespoke training to identify, respond to and prevent risky behaviours provoked by racially motivated discrimination, abuse and violence, the project connected advocates with important stakeholders for responding to abuse, including Tasmania Police (Tas Pol) and the Office of the Antidiscrimination Commissioner (OADC), to ensure improved two-way communication between communities and agencies responding to incidents.

As well as their advocacy work as embedded members in their community, the community advocates hosted informational community safety forums, where community members also got the chance to meet with Tas Pol and OADC.

The program contributed greatly towards increased awareness and understanding of extremist and prejudice-motivated behaviour, and ensured that community members were more confident and felt

supported when reporting. The program also had a positive impact on improving connections, trust and cross-cultural understanding between communities and agencies responding to incidents, using the advocates as a conduit for communication.

Tas Pol has since called on advocates to support victims of violence through the complaints process at numerous occasions, to great benefit for the person at risk.

The advocacy work around extremism and prejudice motivated incidents and crimes across Tasmania helps build more resilient and safe communities. The pilot was a huge success, and 2025-26 will see expansion of the model with advocates training in other pressing safety concerns such as Family and Sexual Violence and Alcohol and Other Drugs.

This project was funded by a grant from the Australian Government, Department of Home Affairs.





"The Community advocate work, I would say, if that wasn't there, there would be a lot of people unsupported in the community."

(Tasmania Police Representative. CSA program stakeholder)

"I am now more confident to support my community and know how to look after myself as well."

(Community Safety Advocate)

78% of community members participating in the community safety forums reported greatly improved understanding of violent extremism behaviour.

87% of participants had greatly improved knowledge and understanding of where to report concerns and get support, and 78% had much improved confidence in making a report.

87% of participants reported greatly improved trust in systems and authorities, including police, after the community safety forum.

74% reported that they were much more likely to make a report in the future.

Humanitarian Settlement Program

The Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP) supports humanitarian entrants and eligible visa holders to successfully settle and build a new life in Australia. In Tasmania, MRC Tas delivers the program under a subcontracting agreement with AMES Australia. Through tailored support, the program equips clients with the skills and knowledge they need to become confident and independent members of the community.

Program Highlights:

Orientation: Learning About Life in Tasmania

Orientation is at the heart of the HSP journey, giving clients the tools they need to navigate daily life in a new country. Through orientation activities, clients learn how to use public transport, open bank accounts, shop for groceries, and access key services such as Service Australia, Service Tasmania, and local libraries. Clients also take part in structured information sessions covering a wide range of settlement topics including housing, health and wellbeing, money management, family functioning, social support, Australian law, and cyber safety.

Supporting essential material needs

The HSP team also support clients by sourcing a range of essential material aids. Many families arrive without clothing appropriate for the Tasmanian climate. This year, the team collaborated with the Hobart Clothing Hub to provide suitable clothing for adults, and continued our ongoing partnership with Tassie Mums, who provide children's clothing, toiletries, and toys to help families with young children settle more comfortably. In addition to these partnerships, we also reached out to the broader community for donations of warm clothing



and bedding for families facing their first Tasmanian winter. Our HSP staff and volunteers sort and prepare these generously donated items to ensure they reach the families who need them most.

Advocacy for Long-Term Accommodation

Finding housing in Tasmania can be a major challenge for newly arrived families. The HSP team works closely with MRC Tas Accommodation Services to provide short-term housing on arrival, and advocate strongly on behalf of clients by arranging and attending inspections, assisting with rental applications, and helping with background checks such as credit history. In the last financial year, the HSP team supported 25 households to move into safe, secure, and affordable long-term accommodation. Much of this success has been made possible through strong collaboration with local real estate agents. A special thank you goes to Elle and Gabby from Crowther Richards Real Estate, who have gone above and beyond to ensure our clients are considered fairly alongside other applicants, helping dozens of families in southern Tasmania find a place to call home.



Education: Opening Doors for the Future

Education is another vital pathway to empowerment for HSP clients, many of whom arrive with unique talents, skills, and ambitions. One standout story this year was that of Mohammed Albarqouni, a recent arrival accepted into the University of Tasmania's School of Medicine. With strong advocacy and guidance from his Case Manager, Mohammed was awarded a generous 55% scholarship. His dream is to become a doctor, save lives, and contribute meaningfully to his new community in Tasmania.



Aged and Community Services

MRC Tas Aged and Community Services connects older people, and people with disability and their carers with support services to continue to live at home and stay connected with community. Our services focus on cultural needs, wellness, independence, and reablement, empowering individuals to maintain or regain their abilities and live a good life.

Our services include Home Care Packages (HCP), Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP), and Home and Community Care (HACC). Under CHSP funding, we have three social support groups, social support for shopping assistance, domestic assistance, and social work. Home care packages provide multiple service types such as domestic assistance, social support, equipment, allied health and clinical care and includes case management by our very experienced staff.

Program Highlights:

Supporting CALD Seniors Through Social Activities

Our regular social group activities are a cornerstone of connection and wellbeing for older clients from refugee and migrant backgrounds. We offer a welcoming space where clients can participate in a range of enjoyable and culturally inclusive activities that nurture physical health, emotional wellbeing, and social connection.

Each week, our clients come together for indoor games, gentle exercise, and occasional lunch outings. Our exercise sessions are designed to be gentle and inclusive, supporting mobility and overall health in a safe and encouraging environment. Outings provide a refreshing change of scenery and a chance to enjoy Tasmania's local sights while sharing a meal.



Beyond physical activity, these groups are spaces where stories are shared, friendships are formed, and cultures are celebrated. Many of our clients face barriers such as language, social isolation, or reduced mobility, and the social groups provide a much-needed lifeline to community and connection. They offer a culturally safe space where clients can speak their own languages, share meals, and celebrate key cultural events, reinforcing their sense of identity and belonging.

Over the past year, we have seen strong participation and consistently positive feedback from attendees. Clients often express how the groups give them something to look forward to, reduce feelings of loneliness, and boost their confidence and wellbeing. The shared experiences foster not only peer support but also trust in the broader aged care system.

The impact of these groups goes far beyond the activity itself. It is about building a community that uplifts and empowers older CALD individuals. As we continue to develop these programs based on client interests and cultural needs, our focus remains on creating meaningful experiences that support ageing with dignity, purpose, and connection.



Supporting Culturally Inclusive Aged Care

MRC Tas is proud to lead the Partners in Culturally Appropriate Care (PICAC) program in Tasmania, supporting the aged care sector to better meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) older people. In 2024–2025, PICAC Tasmania made significant progress in promoting culturally inclusive aged care practices through education, collaboration, and system-wide engagement.

A key achievement was the development of a new Aged Care Information Tool and Checklist, tailored for aged care providers supporting newly arrived migrants and refugees aged 65+. This resource was translated into five languages and distributed across Tasmania. In response to sector needs, we also delivered four CALD community forums attended by 134 participants, covering critical topics such as My Aged Care access, interpreter use, and aged care reforms.

PICAC Tas engaged in national PICAC Alliance meetings, research consultations with the University of Queensland, and 12 state-wide sector forums.

We partnered with local aged care providers and maintained active collaborations with peak bodies, including COTA, FECCA, and the Multicultural Council of Tasmania, to advance policy and practice improvements.

To raise awareness, PICAC Tas participated in major public events including Carers Week, Dementia Action Week, and Seniors' Week. We also led a TIS National awareness campaign promoting translated services and interpreter use across all sector engagement.

A CALD sector-wide survey revealed challenges in communication and highlighted the importance of bilingual staff and translated resources. These findings informed our advocacy and support efforts.

By embedding cultural competence at every level of aged care, from frontline services to national policy, PICAC Tasmania continues to champion inclusive, respectful, and accessible care for Tasmania's diverse ageing population.

Multicultural Youth Tasmania

The Multicultural Youth Tasmania (MYT) program provides targeted services and projects to support young people aged up to 25 years from multicultural backgrounds to reach their full potential and thrive as members of the Tasmanian community. MYT services and programs focus on sport and recreation, education, employment, and wellbeing, providing an opportunity for young people to develop a strong sense of belonging and resilience during settlement and beyond.

Program Highlights

Closing the Digital Gap for Multicultural Young People

Access to technology is no longer a luxury; it's a necessity for education, connection, and opportunity. But for many migrant and refugee families, the cost of devices and internet access remains a major barrier to full participation in school and community life.

Through the Tech4Kids program MRC Tas were supported by Work Ventures to donate 170 refurbished laptops to primary and high school students in Tasmania from refugee backgrounds, to help bridge the digital divide. The program was supported by the Tasmanian Community Fund (TCF), Tasmanian Council of Social Service (TasCOSS), Tas Networks, and other partners committed to digital inclusion.

The initiative complemented our Digital Connection program, which builds digital confidence among parents. Many families who received laptops had already participated in Digital Connection – creating a powerful intergenerational impact. Parents gained the skills to support their children's education, while students accessed the tools they needed to succeed. All families were connected to the School Student Broadband Initiative, providing

free internet access at home. The laptop recipients also received coaching and support to set up and use their devices confidently and safely.

The impact was far-reaching. Students reported being better able to complete homework, research assignments, and stayed engaged with school. Older youth are using their laptops to prepare resumes, apply for jobs, and explore career and tertiary pathways – helping them build independence and take steps toward life after school.

For young people navigating a new culture and school system, access to digital tools is critical to successful settlement. With the right support, these tools become not only educational lifelines – but bridges to opportunity, connection, and a stronger future.

"I wanted to help my boys with their schoolwork, but we had only one phone between us. Now they can both learn at home. I never thought this would be possible."

Parent

Women United: Creating Inclusive Pathways in Sport for CALD Women and Girls

Launched in February 2025 as part of the national Play Our Way initiative, Women United is empowering young women and girls from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds to engage meaningfully in sport with a focus on access, leadership, and inclusion through sport.

In the past year, Women United has supported more than 100 women and girls through tailored initiatives including pre-season clinics, co-designed



sessions, and access to soccer and basketball scholarships. A peer-led model supported by trained program staff has ensured culturally safe, community-informed engagement. This includes practical assistance with registrations, uniforms, equipment, and transport – often the very barriers that limit participation.

Key partnerships have been instrumental to the program's success. To deliver the program in the north MRC TAS partnered with Launceston Basketball Association (LBA). The program also collaborates closely with Launceston United Soccer Club, Hobart United Football Club, Football Tasmania, and Reclink Australia. Across both regions, 13 scholarships were awarded – 12 in soccer and one in basketball – highlighting the high demand for and popularity of soccer within multicultural communities.

To strengthen our partners' capacity for inclusion, MRC Tas also delivered Anti-Racism in Sport and Cultural Awareness Training. This program will run until 2027 with a commitment to expanding access, building leadership pathways, and fostering a new generation of confident, connected CALD women and girls through sport.

We're proud to be driving inclusion through sport, and even prouder of the young women and girls who are stepping up, playing hard, and leading the way.

- 100+ CALD women and girls engaged across Hobart & Launceston
- 13 sport scholarships awarded
 - 12 in soccer (7 in Launceston, 5 in Hobart)
 - 1 in basketball (Launceston)
- 7 'Come and Try' sessions delivered in partnership with clubs
- 5 school holiday clinics run across both regions
- 5 young women now playing for Hobart United youth teams

Before this program, I didn't think I could play at a club level, let alone make a state team. Women United gave me the chance to prove to myself what I'm capable of. Now, I'm not just playing, I'm leading, learning, and giving back.

Samantha, 16, Basketball Scholarship Recipient*

Play Our Way program received grant funding from the Australian Government, Department of Health, Disability and Ageing

Settlement Services

MRC Tas Settlement Services equip clients with the skills and confidence needed to address their settlement needs and thrive as active members of the Tasmanian community. Services include direct client work as well as sector development in the youth, education, and community space. The Settlement team collaborate with mainstream services, advocating for the needs and rights of new Tasmanians. Programs focus on health and wellbeing, education, employment, civic participation support, driving and wellbeing, and aim to develop opportunities to build a sense of belonging in Tasmania and Australia.

Program Highlights

Building Cultural Bridges in the Northwest

The past year marked an important milestone for MRC Tas with the launch of Cultural Bridges, our first program in Tasmania's Northwest. Designed to reduce isolation and foster belonging, the program brought together recently arrived migrant families and the broader community through shared activities, cultural exchange, and skill-building opportunities.

From its beginnings in Burnie and Ulverstone, Cultural Bridges delivered a wide range of events. Community BBQs, Ramadan Iftar dinners, women's health workshops, leadership training, and recreational activities like beach volleyball, swimming lessons, and laser tag were just some of the highlights. These events supported wellbeing and created welcoming spaces for connection across cultures and generations.

The program had life-changing impact. One participant, once unsure of how to share her ideas, gained the confidence to apply for community grants. Another overcame deep social isolation by



building new friendships and reconnecting with her community.

While challenges such as language barriers and cultural misunderstandings arose, these were met with culturally safe practices, bicultural support, and co-designed programming that centered community voices. Strong local partnerships were key to the program's success and we were proud to collaborate with organisations including Burnie and Ulverstone Councils, Red Cross, Reclink, Surf Life Saving Tasmania, Burnie Aquatic Centre, the Tasmanian Community Fund, and the Northwest Islamic Association.

Cultural Bridges has laid a solid foundation for long-term inclusion and cohesion in the Northwest, one built on mutual respect, trust, and the power of community connection.

- 100+ participants engaged
- 86% reported stronger community connection
- 100% felt their culture was respected and celebrated

Cultural Bridges program was funded by Social Policy Group.



Digital Connection: Empowering Parents to Support Their Children's Education

In 2024, MRC Tas partnered with Libraries Tasmania to deliver Digital Connection, a practical program designed to help parents from migrant and refugee backgrounds support their children's education in an increasingly digital world.

Many families face challenges engaging with the school system due to language barriers, unfamiliar technology, and limited digital literacy. Developed in response to these needs, Digital Connection focused on building the skills and confidence parents need to navigate school portals, communicate with teachers, and understand their children's learning platforms, especially Canvas, used widely in Tasmanian schools.

Each session was supported by bicultural workers who provided language and cultural support, creating a safe, inclusive environment. Participants also explored topics such as online safety, scam awareness, managing devices and internet access at home. The structured weekly sessions were held in dedicated spaces provided by Libraries Tasmania, offering consistency, access to laptops, and a welcoming learning environment.

For many parents, this was their first time using a laptop. By the end of the program, participants were not only more digitally confident, but also more empowered to be active in their children's education.

Some participants also received laptops, extending the impact of the program beyond the classroom and into their homes.

Digital Connection demonstrated the importance of culturally safe, community-informed learning. With growing demand for digital skills across all areas of life, we hope to expand similar programs to reach more parents, young people, and communities, helping build stronger connections, greater independence, and a lasting sense of belonging.

"Thank you for making me feel confident to be a part of my children's education."

Parent

- 47 parents completed the program
- 100% reported increased digital confidence
- 47 laptops distributed to participating families
- 64 hours of facilitated, in-language training

This program was funded by the Tasmanian Government, Department for Education, Children and Young People.

The Phoenix Centre

The Phoenix Centre provides therapeutic mental health and wellbeing support to people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. The Centre focuses on mental health promotion, prevention, early intervention, trauma focussed intervention and capacity building activities. It provides specialist support to survivors of torture and other traumatic experiences and their communities, funded by the Program of Assistance for Survivors of Torture and Trauma. Services are delivered statewide and include counselling, group psychoeducation work, capacity building, social connection programs and community development activities. The Phoenix Centre also provides training and support to services and is the host agency for the Tasmanian Transcultural Mental Health Network.

TTMHN Forum: The Impact of Racism on Mental Health

A powerful, statewide conversation on trauma, racism, and culturally safe care.

On 26 June, the Phoenix Centre hosted the annual Tasmanian Transcultural Mental Health Network (TTMHN) Forum at the Tailrace Centre, Riverside. Over 40 participants came together to explore “The Impact of Racism on Mental Health” and to reflect on how systemic racism compounds trauma and affects wellbeing across generations. Guest speakers included Errol Amerasekera, Dr. Catherine Muburi, Students Against Racism, Warren Mason, and Daven Ong from the Office of the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner in Tasmania. Warren, a First Nations man, spoke movingly about the intergenerational impacts of racism, sharing how he lost his language after his father was required to raise his family within a white community — a powerful reminder of the lifelong effects of exclusion and assimilation.



Participants described the depth and authenticity of lived experience and professional expertise shared on the day as powerful and inspiring. A strong message that resonated was that the responsibility for addressing racism and creating inclusive, culturally safe systems rests with the whole of society, not only multicultural communities. The forum also marked the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture with a Hope Bracelet Workshop, reinforcing resilience, connection, and healing. These conversations will continue to inform cross-sector practice and advocacy, helping shape a more inclusive and equitable mental health system in Tasmania.

The event builds on the Network’s broader work over the past year, which has included bi-monthly meetings to strengthen the cultural competency and responsiveness of the mental health workforce. These sessions have covered a wide range of topics, from working with LGBTQI+ CALD communities to the benefits of art therapy. By bringing agencies together in dialogue and practice-sharing, the Network continues to foster collaboration, systemic awareness, and commitment to meaningful change.

The forum was funded by funding from the Tasmanian Department of Health.



Supporting Wellbeing Through Movement and Connection

This year, the Phoenix Centre delivered two powerful movement-based initiatives – Yoga and Pilates for Women – both designed to support mental health, physical wellbeing, and social connection in safe, culturally inclusive environments.

The six-week Yoga Group, facilitated by yoga teacher Danae Giardini with support from a counsellor and a bicultural worker, welcomed women primarily from Farsi- and Somali-speaking backgrounds. Participants engaged in gentle movement, mindfulness, and relaxation techniques in a trauma-informed, culturally responsive setting. With attendance reaching up to 17 participants in one session, the group provided a consistent space for self-care and healing. Participants shared that the sessions helped reduce anxiety and improved their overall sense of wellbeing:

“These sessions really help my anxiety.”

“Everyone is welcoming, and a relaxing environment was created.”

To extend the impact, guided meditation recordings in Farsi and Arabic, and a trauma-informed yoga guide were developed to support continued wellbeing beyond the sessions.

The Pilates for Women program, co-facilitated by the Phoenix Centre and LYFT Gym, offered a women-only space for participants from Afghanistan, Nepal, Sudan, and other African backgrounds. Many experienced a gym setting for the first time. Sessions focused on body confidence, movement, and emotional resilience, with strong emphasis on modesty, privacy, and cultural sensitivity.

“I tell myself always: I am beautiful just the way I am.”

“I have peace within myself that it takes time for my body to heal after I gave birth to my child.”

Both programs achieved exceptional outcomes, with 100% of participants reporting they felt heard, respected, and supported.

Together, these programs demonstrate the power of culturally informed physical wellbeing initiatives in building confidence, connection, and healing for women from refugee and migrant backgrounds.

The initiative was part of the Program of Assistance for Survivors of Torture and Trauma, funded by Australian Government, Department of Health, Disability and Ageing.

Accommodation

MRC Tas's Accommodation Program supports migrants and refugees from diverse backgrounds to find suitable accommodation and helps them to settle comfortably in Tasmania. We deliver support to people from CALD communities through a range of accommodation options.

Multicultural Accommodation Centre at Goodwood

The Multicultural Accommodation Centre at Goodwood caters for recently arrived humanitarian entrants and offers a community-style living environment. It is a gated facility where residents engage in activities like gardening and resident gatherings. The primary goal is to provide new arrivals with the fundamentals of maintaining a rental home, understanding their rights and responsibilities, and building a strong rental history to help secure longer-term housing.

This year, the Centre was transformed into a more vibrant and inviting space, thanks to the support of a local artist, volunteers, and our team. One of the most visually striking additions is a bold mural at the Centre's entrance, created by local artist Tom Deams. Featuring two colourful parrots and the words "Welcome to Tassie", the mural has quickly become a beloved feature. Children and adults often stop to admire it and take photos. The mural symbolises hope, belonging, and the beginning of a new chapter, sending a powerful message for newly arrived refugees and migrants.

Outdoor spaces have also been refreshed through volunteer efforts from MONA and C3 South Hobart, who helped with gardening, cleaning, and general upkeep. Young people from our Multicultural Youth Tasmania (MYT) program repurposed an old boat into a sandpit and play space, offering younger residents a place to play and connect.

These changes, large and small, reflect the spirit of welcome that defines our work at MRC Tas.





Program Highlights

Celebrating Culture and Community

On 4 April, residents gathered for a multicultural celebration that brought together Eid, Easter, and Nowruz. The garden was alive with laughter as children took part in an Easter egg hunt, while adults shared food, stories, and took part in an Ethiopian coffee ceremony hosted by residents. It was a powerful reminder of the role the Centre plays in creating shared moments of joy, culture, and connection.

As we reflect on the past year, we are grateful for the support of the broader community in helping us make the Centre not just a place of shelter, but a place of welcome, healing, and new beginnings.

Supporting Global Talent in Tasmanian Innovation

The Springvale Accommodation Centre, operated by MRC Tas, plays an important role in Tasmania's workforce landscape.

The site provides short-term housing for skilled migrant workers who are contributing to the state's industries through working on important local projects. In the past year, the Centre housed 30 skilled workers from the Philippines, brought in

to support the construction of Incat Tasmania's Hull 096 – the world's largest battery-electric ship. Launched in May, the vessel represents a major step forward in sustainable shipbuilding. The workers' specialised expertise played a key role in this groundbreaking project, and MRC Tas was proud to be part of their journey. MRC Tas CEO Dr Gillian Long, Accommodation Manager and staff attended the official launch event to celebrate this important milestone and recognise the significant contributions of migrant workers to Tasmania's innovation and industry.

The feedback from residents has been overwhelmingly positive. Workers reported feeling comfortable, safe, and supported. The accommodation is close to shops and schools, offers shared spaces for recreation, and provides a welcoming environment where many residents share a common language and culture, making it easy to connect with one another. This arrangement supports local industries by removing the burden of finding housing for employees, allowing them to focus on workforce development.

Providing housing for skilled migrants aligns with our mission to help people settle, connect, and thrive in Tasmania. Through Springvale, MRC Tas continues to support both community wellbeing and Tasmania's long-term economic success.

Training & Engagement

Central to MRC Tas's vision is our work to build a more inclusive, understanding, and culturally connected Tasmania through our training and engagement activities. As our island transitions into a multicultural state, part of our mission is to empower organisations to deliver culturally sensitive services while fostering cultural competence at both individual and organisational level.

Our cultural competency and capability training sessions, 'Cultural Conversations' explore cultural knowledge empathy, humanity, and the transformative power of understanding. With training grounded in lived experience and informed by rich, Tasmania-specific migration stories and data, we empower individuals and organisations to work more thoughtfully, inclusively, and effectively with people from refugee and migrant backgrounds.

Along with our regular cultural capability and working with interpreter sessions delivered in house, we have introduced a new Tasmanian Workplace Culture training package, developed for participants who were born overseas and are entering the Tasmanian workforce. This session builds their cross-cultural understanding through making explicit some of the assumptions built into Tasmanian and Australian workplace culture.

The majority of the training we deliver to service providers, businesses and government departments is bespoke and customised to relate directly to the work people do and who they work with.

Our training this year reached over 645 people across the state. From frontline services to corporate boardrooms, our bespoke training continues to inspire meaningful conversations and shift perspectives as we work together to achieve a stronger, more inclusive Tasmania for all.



This past year we provided training to many organisations including:

Department of Premier and Cabinet
Department of State growth
Rotary
Neighborhood Houses Tasmania
Primary Health Tasmania
Medecs Learning
Bejo
Terrapin
Seafood and Maritime Training
Hobart Airport
Hazell Bros
DECYP
Tasmania Police
Glenorchy City Council
Brighton City Council
Tasmanian Health Services
WLF – Accounting and Advisory
University of Tasmania

Volunteer Program

The MRC Tas Volunteer Program supports volunteer engagement across the organisation, coordinating recruitment, induction, training, and ongoing support. Volunteers are an essential part of our work, contributing their time, skills, and heart across programs and events. Volunteering at MRC Tas offers a unique opportunity to connect with people from diverse cultural backgrounds and make a real difference in the lives of others.

Volunteer Driver Mentors – Driving Change, Enabling Independence

At MRC Tas, our Volunteer Program continues to be a cornerstone of how we support new Tasmanians to thrive, and nowhere is this more evident than in our Volunteer Driver Mentor Program.

For many newly arrived migrants and refugees, a driver's licence is the key to independence, employment, education, and participation in community life. This is especially true for clients who work shifts, care for large families, or live in areas where public transport is limited or unreliable.

In the past financial year, 14 Volunteer Driver Mentors supported 57 unique learners, delivering a total of 1,039.5 hours of supervised on-road practice. Their collective effort helped 20 learners successfully obtain their P1 driver's licences, significantly improving their access to work, education, and community opportunities. The personal impact of this program is profound. Clients report a renewed sense of pride, freedom, and confidence. The benefits often extend beyond the individual. Parents can now support their children more easily, and one family member's success often inspires others to follow.

This year, we strengthened the program through new initiatives, including:

- 'Car Café' sessions: weekly peer learning and community connection



- Language-specific support in Arabic and Farsi
- Structured practice plans for learners nearing their test
- Updated training resources for mentors
- Flexible scheduling to support families and school holiday needs.

While we faced challenges like temporary vehicle downtime and increasing learner demand, the impact of the program is clear: it empowers clients to take control of their lives, support their families, and thrive in Tasmania.

We thank every volunteer who gave their time behind the wheel in the past year. You are truly driving change and helping people thrive. We are especially grateful to our long-term Volunteer Driver Mentors, whose consistency and commitment have been key to the program's ongoing success. Volunteers like Adrin Pyrke continue to make a lasting difference.

"Many people have no other way to gain driving experience. It's not difficult work, and I enjoy meeting such interesting and diverse people. For me, it's an easy and rewarding way to support the community."

Adrin Pyrke, Volunteer Mentor

The Learner Driver Mentor program was funded by Tasmanian Government, Department of State Growth.

Our Staff

We value our diverse workforce, which represents a range of perspectives, experiences, cultures, genders, and ages. There are over 45 different ethnicities represented by our staff.

MRC Tas staff are deeply connected to the organisation's purpose.

Many staff originally started out as volunteers, students, and even clients. We value diversity in ourselves and others. Our unique environment fosters creative people, with innovative solutions to address challenging issues.



Our Board

MRC Tas is governed by an experienced Board of Management which includes expertise and qualifications in politics, law, commerce, business administration, development and governance, and community services. Full details of our board are published on our website: <https://mrctas.org.au/our-board/>



Peter Gutwein,
Chair



George Elkhair,
Vice Chair



Fahim Chowdhury,
Treasurer



Daniela Ruiz,
Secretary



**Iha Diwan
Patney**



Ruth Chalk



Chris Stennard



**Dr Tania
Lado Insua**
(Past Member)



Victor Stojcevski
(Past Member)

Our Funders

Australian Government

- Department of Health, Disability and Ageing
- Department of Home Affairs
- Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources
- Department of Social Services

Tasmanian Government

- Department of Education Children and Young People
- Department of Health Tasmania
- Department of Premier and Cabinet
- Department of State Growth
- Libraries Tas

Other Funders

- Glenorchy City Council
- Australian Electoral Commission
- Mental Health Australia
- Primary Health Tasmania
- Paul Ramsay Foundation
- The Social Policy Group
- The Jetty Foundation

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.

Thank you to Her Excellency Professor the Honourable Barbara Baker AC, Governor of Tasmania for her support as patron of MRC Tas.



Hand of Hope artwork by the Women's Group.

**"Alone we can do so little,
together we can do so much."**

Helen Keller - activist and advocate



Donate

Donate today and you will make a difference in the lives of refugees and migrants. Our clients often face challenges as they settle into a new community and our capacity to provide assistance where it's needed most is greatly enriched by the generous financial support of others.

Funds from donors are used to provide resources, activities and opportunities which we would otherwise be unable to provide.

As a registered charity all donations \$2 and over are tax deductible.

If you would like to discuss donating to MRC Tasmania please get in touch.

mrctas.org.au/donate



Everyone Belongs