



Annual Report 2025-26



**migrant
resource
centre**
TASMANIA



Acknowledgement of Country

Migrant Resource Centre Tasmania acknowledges the Palawa, the Traditional Custodians and enduring caretakers of Lutruwita/Tasmania, and pays our respects to Elders past and present.

We recognise the deep and continuing connection of Tasmanian Aboriginal people to Country, including its lands, waters and skies, maintained across generations. We acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded and recognise the enduring impacts of invasion and colonisation, including the dispossession of land and the attempted erasure of culture, language and identity.

As people from many places who live and work on this Country, we honour Palawa knowledge, stories, traditions and culture. We commit to listening, learning and walking together in truth, respect and solidarity towards a future that recognises and celebrates Aboriginal culture and self-determination.

Migrant Resource Centre Tasmania
ABN 63 028 115 942

Glenorchy Office:

KGV Sports and Community Centre
Level 2, 1a Anfield Street, Glenorchy, TAS 7010
Phone: 03 6221 0999

Launceston Office:

53 Elizabeth Street, Launceston, TAS 7250
Phone: 03 6221 0999

Burnie Office:

80 Wilson Street, Burnie, TAS 7320
Phone: 03 6221 0999

Email: reception@mrctas.org.au

Website: mrctas.org.au

Facebook: @mrctasmania

Our Patron: Her Excellency Professor the
Honourable Barbara Baker AC, Governor of Tasmania (until 15 June 2026)



Contents

- 04** About Us
- 05** Chair Report
- 06** CEO Report
- 08** Our Impact
- 10** Strategic Plan 2026-2031
- 12** Everyone Belongs
- 14** Employment and Learning
- 16** Health and Wellbeing
- 18** Connection and Inclusion
- 20** Capacity Building and Advocacy
- 22** The Big Tassie Walk 2025
- 24** Humanitarian Arrival Services
- 26** Aged and Community Services
- 28** Multicultural Youth Tasmania
- 30** Settlement Services
- 32** The Phoenix Centre
- 34** Accommodation
- 36** Training & Engagement
- 38** Volunteer Program
- 39** Our Staff
- 41** Our Board
- 42** Our Funders

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.

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

Our vision:

A thriving and diverse Lutruwita/Tasmania where everyone is valued, and everyone belongs.

Our purpose:

To ensure people from migrant and refugee backgrounds in Lutruwita/Tasmania are safe, included, and are shaping decisions that affect their lives.

Our values:

- Safety
- Respect
- Compassion
- Collaboration
- Belonging

Our Strategic Direction

MRC Tasmania exists to support migrant communities to thrive in Tasmania and to strengthen the systems that enable safety, belonging and participation.

Our strategy focuses on four interconnected pillars:

1. Thriving migrant communities across Tasmania
2. Addressing needs and amplifying strengths
3. Leadership and partnerships
4. Organisational sustainability and capability

Chair Report

Another eventful but successful year has passed.

I would, first, like to thank my fellow board members for their expertise and commitment to our collective strategic direction and purpose. I want to acknowledge the CEO Gillian Long, the leadership team at MRC Tas and all the staff and volunteers across Tasmania for their continued effort and passion.

MRC Tas continues to go from strength to strength, and it is due to the quality and dedication of our people.

We continue to grow in a sustainable way guided by a strong strategic plan. This has enabled us to maintain and extend our services, which have been much needed during a year that has seen many in our communities unsettled by an unhelpful political and media narrative.

In October 2025, we initiated the Big Tassie Walk, our annual month-long walking and fundraising challenge, and we were blown away by the fantastic response we received from Tasmanians. We had almost 400 people from across the state join us as fundraisers and walkers, and collectively we raised over \$85,000. I specifically want to thank all the wonderful individuals, businesses, schools, councils and community organisations who joined us by entering teams or coming on board as sponsors.

Through the Big Tassie Walk, I saw the kindness and compassion that Tasmania is capable of, I saw stories and connections, and I saw hope for an inclusive, stronger Tasmania. We will continue the Big Tassie Walk again this year, and hope Tasmanians walk together, build connections with each other, and become a more inclusive and stronger society.



In 2025-2026, our revenue continued to grow, and we were pleased to declare revenue of almost \$11 million. At MRC Tas, we have focused on sustainable financial governance and management, and because of that, our funders and stakeholders continue to place their trust in us to deliver effective services. For audit purposes, we have reported our revenue under AASB 1058, and our financial statements are available on our website.

I would like to leave you with a call to action to actively stand against racism and divisive rhetoric. This past year has been very complex and difficult for multicultural communities, with many different and unhelpful political and media narratives. I want us to remember that Australia is built on the efforts of migrants, and we continue to emphasise that no matter where you are from, *Everyone Belongs*.

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 2026.

It has been a year of genuine achievement and growth for MRC Tas, but also one that has tested us. As public discourse around migration in Australia has grown louder and, at times, more divisive, our work has mattered more than ever and I've been proud to watch our staff, board and community continue our work with skill, care and resolve.

Across the organisation we've had many highlights, many of which are presented in this Annual Report, however I'd like to focus on the following key initiatives:

- Early in 2026 we launched our Strategic Plan 2026–2031, a five-year roadmap that will guide the organisation over the coming half-decade. The Plan is built around four interconnected pillars: thriving migrant communities across Tasmania, addressing needs and amplifying strengths, leadership and partnerships, and organisational sustainability and capability. It gives us a clear and shared sense of direction grounded in the lived experience and leadership of people from migrant and refugee backgrounds, as we work towards our vision of a thriving and diverse Lutruwita/Tasmania where everyone is valued and everyone belongs.
- October 2025 saw the implementation of the Big Tassie Walk, our first month-long peer-to-peer fundraising and awareness campaign, inviting Tasmanians to walk 45km, 90km, 180km or a distance of their own choosing in support of migrants and refugees rebuilding their lives here. Building on the success of our Chair's walks in 2024, the 2025 event brought together individuals, families, workplaces and community groups from across the state, with strong backing from the Tasmanian Government, corporate partners including St Lukes, and local councils.



The Walk has become more than a fundraiser. It is now a visible, physical demonstration that Tasmanians support cultural diversity in the State and want to stand alongside and support people from migrant and refugee backgrounds. I want to thank every individual, team and sponsor who took part, and particularly our Chair, the Hon. Peter Gutwein, whose leadership of The Walk since its inception continues to give it such public reach and credibility.

- In late 2025 we commenced Career Navigator, a philanthropically funded program developed in partnership with Refugee Education Australia. The program connects skilled people from refugee backgrounds with meaningful employment pathways in Tasmania. The program takes a co-design approach, working directly with industry, education and training providers to map current and emerging skills gaps and build profession-specific pathways that allow people to gain recognition for existing qualifications and rebuild careers in their fields.

Career Navigator reflects exactly the kind of work MRC Tas exists to do: recognising that people arriving in Tasmania bring skills, qualifications and experience that our state badly needs, and removing the barriers that too often stand between that talent and the jobs it should be filling.

- This has also been a year of continued growth across the State. Our services in the North and North West have expanded significantly. This growth matters because of growing need in regional areas where diversity and skilled migration is increasing. This growth reflects our determination to ensure that quality settlement and community support shouldn't depend on where in Tasmania someone happens to live.
- This year we also completed the implementation of CSnet, our new client management system, which is now fully live across the organisation. CSnet has significantly strengthened our reporting to funders and enabled a more rigorous evaluation of our services, giving us a clearer picture of the impact we're having and a stronger evidence base to support future funding and program design.
- Our Accommodation Program has again played a vital role this year, providing safe and stable housing to migrants and refugees across our facilities, including the Multicultural Accommodation Centre at Goodwood and the Springvale Accommodation Centre.

I want to particularly acknowledge our partnership with Incat Tasmania, through which we continue to provide accommodation for skilled welders from the Philippines supporting the construction of Incat's world-leading battery-electric ships. This partnership is a powerful, practical example of one of the things MRC Tas does best: forming partnerships and delivering services and support which enable migrants to thrive, while helping Tasmanian industry support the talent it needs to succeed on the world stage.

I would be remiss not to acknowledge that this has been a harder year in some respects than those before it. Rhetoric around migration, both nationally and within parts of the Tasmanian community, has at times grown more hostile and less informed. This has placed additional pressure on the people we work alongside, and on our staff, who continue to advocate, educate and support communities with patience and professionalism, even as the public conversation around their work becomes more difficult.

It has made our advocacy and community education work, including our Cultural Capability Training and trauma recovery counselling, as well as our ongoing efforts through The Walk even more important. Our voice at the national level has also continued to grow, with MRC Tas represented on the boards of a range of key national bodies, including the Settlement Council of Australia, the Refugee Council of Australia, the Forum of Australian Services for Survivors of Torture and Trauma, and the Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network. This representation ensures Tasmania's perspective – and the perspective of the communities we work alongside – is heard and reflected in national policy and advocacy.

None of this year's achievements would have been possible without our extraordinary staff, whose professionalism, compassion and hard work I see every day, or without our Board, whose guidance and support, including their visible presence at community events and consultations throughout the year, sends an important message that MRC Tas's commitment to community operates at every level of the organisation. I'd particularly like to thank the Executive Team for their steady leadership, judgement and support throughout a demanding and important year.

I'd particularly like to thank our board Chair, the Hon. Peter Gutwein, and our Executive Team for their steady leadership, judgement and support throughout a demanding and important year.

Thank you also to our volunteers, funders, partners and supporters. Together, we have built genuine momentum this year, and I look forward to building further on it in the year ahead.

As we move into 2026–2027, our focus will remain on strengthening services across Tasmania, deepening partnerships that create practical opportunities for migrants and people from refugee backgrounds, and continuing to advocate for a community where diversity is recognised as one of our state's greatest strengths.

Gillian Long
Chief Executive Officer

Impact



1700+

**CLIENTS
SUPPORTED
THIS YEAR**

78

**COUNTRIES OF
ORIGIN**

58

**LANGUAGES
SPOKEN BY
CLIENTS**

72

**CLIENTS RECEIVED
EMPLOYMENT PATHWAY
TRAINING AND SUPPORT**

24 in Construction

20 in Hospitality

7 in Early Childhood Learning

21 referred to the Career
Navigator program

171

**INDIVIDUALS ATTENDED
CAREER COACHING SESSIONS,
DELIVERED WEEKLY**

21

**PEOPLE
GOT THEIR
P1 LICENCE**



50

**Learners
supported**

1402

**Learner
Driver hours
logged**

24

**Driver
mentors**

101

**DROP-IN SESSIONS HELD
ACROSS THE STATE**

40 | NORTH

41 | SOUTH

20 | NORTH WEST

73

**WEEKLY WOMEN'S
GROUP SESSIONS**

40 NORTH

33 SOUTH

50

**WEEKLY MEN'S
GROUP SESSIONS**

38 NORTH

12 SOUTH



HUMANITARIAN SETTLEMENT PROGRAM

36 Newly arrived families
secured long term
accommodation

111 Clients housed



AGED CARE

210 Older people supported to
live independently

ACCOMMODATION

119 Clients housed at our
Goodwood Multicultural
Accommodation Centre

75 Skilled workers filling
critical skill gaps housed
at our Springvale
Accommodation Centre



PHOENIX CENTRE

2,077

Counselling and
related individual
support sessions
provided

546

People
participated in
structured
groupwork
programs

MULTICULTURAL YOUTH TASMANIA

74 Multicultural Youth
drop-in sessions held
across the state

156 Individual young
people attended

35 NORTH 39 SOUTH



TRAINING

400 People attended
Cultural Capability
Training sessions

Cultural Capability Training
participants said their cultural
awareness increased from:

6.6 TO **8.5**
(ON A 10 POINT SCALE)





Strategic Plan 2026-2031

Our Strategic Direction

MRC Tasmania exists to support migrant communities to thrive in Tasmania and to strengthen the systems that enable safety, belonging and participation.

Our strategy focuses on four interconnected pillars:

1. Thriving migrant communities across Tasmania
2. Addressing needs and amplifying strengths
3. Leadership and partnerships
4. Organisational sustainability and capability

Together, these pillars support our *Theory of Change*, reflecting the priorities, experiences and aspirations of migrant communities across Tasmania.

STRATEGIC PILLARS

Pillar objectives

THRIVING MIGRANT COMMUNITIES ACROSS TASMANIA

People from migrant and refugee backgrounds have agency, are connected, and are able to contribute to Tasmanian society.

ADDRESSING NEEDS & AMPLIFYING STRENGTHS

People from migrant and refugee backgrounds can access the right supports at the right time through culturally responsive services and community-based responses.

LEADERSHIP & PARTNERSHIPS

Through advocacy, influence and partnerships, systems in Tasmania become more inclusive, culturally responsive and effective.

ORGANISATIONAL CAPABILITY & SUSTAINABILITY

Migrant Resource Centre Tasmania remains a strong, trusted and sustainable organisation able to deliver impact over the long term.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

1.1 LIVED EXPERIENCE, VOICE AND COMMUNITY STRENGTH

The leadership and lived experience of people from migrant and refugee backgrounds shapes organisational decisions, community initiatives and advocacy, and grassroots organisations and networks are strong and capable.

1.2 WELLBEING

People from migrant and refugee backgrounds experience improved wellbeing through stronger social inclusion, community connection and improved mental and physical health.

1.3 SAFETY AND BELONGING

People from migrant and refugee backgrounds experience safety, dignity and belonging within their communities and broader Tasmanian society. Racism and discrimination are challenged and reduced through stronger community awareness, institutional accountability and inclusive practices.

1.4 INCLUSION AND PARTICIPATION

People from migrant and refugee backgrounds are actively participating in community life, civic processes and leadership across Tasmania.

2.1 SETTLEMENT SUPPORT

Migrants and refugees have a positive settlement experience, can exercise increasing independence, and choose to make Tasmania their long term home.

2.2 MENTAL HEALTH

People from migrant and refugee backgrounds have access to culturally responsive mental health and psychosocial supports, contributing to lower rates of mental distress and improved wellbeing.

2.3 YOUTH

Young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds are supported to thrive in education and across life transitions.

2.4 EMPLOYMENT

People from migrant and refugee backgrounds are increasingly able to access employment and business opportunities that recognise their skills and strengths, resulting in higher levels of labour market participation.

2.5 ACCOMMODATION

People from migrant and refugee backgrounds experience improved access to stable and appropriate housing and accommodation pathways.

2.6 AGED CARE

Older people from migrant and refugee backgrounds, and their families, can access culturally responsive aged care supports that enable dignity, wellbeing and connection.

3.1 POLICY AND SYSTEMIC ADVOCACY

Public policy, institutional practices and funding priorities increasingly reflect the needs and experiences of people from migrant and refugee backgrounds.

3.2 TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Mainstream organisations and services are increasingly capable of working effectively with people from migrant and refugee backgrounds.

3.3 MIGRANT AND REFUGEE STORIES

Public understanding of the experiences and contributions of people from migrant and refugee backgrounds is strengthened through authentic storytelling and communications.

3.4 ACTIVATING RELATIONSHIPS

Strong partnerships across government, community, industry and institutions improve outcomes for people from migrant and refugee backgrounds.

4.1 PEOPLE AND CULTURE

A skilled, diverse and supported workforce with access to career pathways contributes to a strong organisational culture and high-quality services.

4.2 GOVERNANCE AND COMPLIANCE

Maintain strong governance, accountability, organisational integrity and strategic focus.

4.3 FINANCE AND RISK

Strengthen financial sustainability, build asset value, diversify revenue and manage organisational risks.

4.4 INFRASTRUCTURE AND SYSTEMS

Invest in facilities, technology and systems that support effective service delivery and organisational resilience.

4.5 FUNDRAISING

Community fundraising initiatives, events and philanthropic partnerships increase resources and public support for people from migrant and refugee backgrounds in Tasmania.

Everyone Belongs

MY Pathways | Football3

Empowering Youth through Case Work and Innovative Sports Methodologies

Multicultural Youth Tasmania (MYT)

MY Pathways | Football3 was a youth-centred, strength-based, trauma informed program designed to engage and support multicultural youth residing in greater Launceston at risk of disengagement or risky behaviour. The program aimed at supporting young people to build important life skills, resilience and increase their social participation and engagement. The program also engaged with schools, families and other relevant services to coordinate support and advocate for the young people.

The program offered intensive strengths-based and preventative support, case management and pathway planning aligned with individual needs and goals combined with a Football3 component, an innovative methodology using football for social change.

Football3 is a unique way of playing, developed by Streetfootballworld – an international network of non-profit organisations using football to tackle social challenges. It is named after its 'three halves' consisting of a pre-match discussion, the football game itself, and a post-match discussion. Players collectively decide on the rules before the game, and following the match they reflect on their own behaviour and that of their opponents. Through this framework, Football3 supports connections and fun, while incorporating life skills development such as leadership, teamwork, conflict resolution, and values around fair play, gender equality and respect into every match and off the pitch.



The program was well-attended, supporting 23 young individuals this year through case management, and even more young people attending the Football3 component, which was offered weekly and during school holidays, where participants brought their friends and families. The program also engaged newly arrived young people, increasing confidence to participate in community activities and broader sporting opportunities.

Several program participants were supported to form and join local soccer and futsal teams, now playing at the Northern Sunday League. Some of the participants also joined the United and Riverside Soccer Clubs.

"I learned so many things. How to solve problems more easily, and then my self-confidence. How to talk with people, how to deal with a problem or something."

Program participant

Participants self-reported a **45%** increase in leadership skills such as organisational skills, problem-solving skills, self-confidence and self-reflection.

Participants self-reported a **29%** increase in conflict management skills such as communication skills, compromise, tolerance of frustration, and ability to cope with conflict.

Participants reported a **61%** increase in social participation across work, education, and social and community life.

"When I first came here I was quite shy and didn't want to talk to people. When I started this program, started coming here, I saw a change in myself. My confidence, conversation skills, how to start a conversation. I feel more comfortable and relaxed."

Program participant

International Women's Day Celebrations



Our International Women's Day celebrations in Hobart and Launceston provided an opportunity to recognise the strength, resilience, diversity and contributions of women in our communities.

In Hobart, we hosted a special event at our Glenorchy office, bringing together almost 70 women from migrant and refugee backgrounds, staff, community members and supporters. The afternoon featured powerful personal stories from women who spoke about migration, overcoming challenges, rebuilding their lives and finding belonging in Tasmania. Our CEO reflected on the

importance of supporting women from migrant and refugee backgrounds to establish strong community connections and build new futures. We also heard from Board Secretary Daniela Ruiz and community members Hajare, Athraa and Arezo, whose experiences highlighted the courage and determination required to start again in a new country. The event concluded with a vibrant cultural runway celebrating the many cultures represented within our community.

In Launceston, approximately 60 people attended an International Women's Day session featuring seven speakers from diverse backgrounds. Speakers included Members of Parliament, board members, representatives from Laurel House and Women's Legal Service Tasmania, a long-term local volunteer with UNHCR, and a representative from Anti-Slavery Australia. Bicultural workers, participants and community representatives joined the discussion, creating a valuable space for connection, learning and shared perspectives.

We thank everyone who contributed to both events, including our staff, volunteers, speakers and community partners. We also acknowledge Lush Cosmetics for donating gifts for participants.

Together, these celebrations reinforced our commitment to supporting women and girls to experience fairness, safety, opportunity and belonging.



This event was supported by the Tasmanian Government, Department of Premier and Cabinet through the International Women's Day Small Grants Program.

Employment and Learning

Career Navigator

An innovative pilot supporting people from refugee backgrounds to build meaningful career pathways in Tasmania, developed in partnership with national not-for-profit Refugee Education Australia.

Settlement Services

The Career Navigator program was established to address the persistent underemployment and skills wastage experienced by people from refugee backgrounds settling in Tasmania. People arriving with qualifications, professional experience and valuable skills can face significant barriers to transferring these into the Australian workforce. Supporting people to find meaningful, skilled employment is important not only for economic participation, but also for wellbeing, independence, confidence and successful long-term settlement.

Delivered over three years, Career Navigator provides specialised career planning that connects participants' existing skills, qualifications and aspirations with local labour market opportunities. The program aims to support people from refugee backgrounds to move towards meaningful and sustainable work and further education, while helping employers and education providers better understand and utilise the skills already present within Tasmania's refugee communities.

The project commenced in October 2025 with an extensive survey of 118 current and former Tasmanian Humanitarian Settlement Program clients and people seeking asylum. The survey generated a unique local dataset covering participants' previous employment and qualifications, current employment, job satisfaction and retention, education and training experiences, career aspirations, perceived employability, wellbeing and sense of belonging.



The findings highlighted both the barriers and significant potential within Tasmania's refugee communities. Many respondents were working in roles below their skills and qualifications, while expressing strong aspirations for further study, career progression, and greater contribution to Tasmania's workforce and community.

The survey was followed by stakeholder roundtables in February, bringing together employers, industry representatives, education providers, government agencies and employment services to explore practical ways to better connect skills and experience with workforce needs. Participants included Asuria, Civil Contractors Federation Tasmania, the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, Local Jobs Task Force, genU, Jobs Hubs, Department of Home Affairs, Hazell Bros, Master Builders Tasmania, Multicultural Council of Tasmania, Migration Tasmania, Searson Buck, Sentinel Boats, TasTAFE, Tasmanian Building Group Apprenticeship Scheme, the University of Tasmania, Work and Training and Workskills Tasmania.

Participant intake commenced in March, with 21 people referred to the program during the year. Working closely with the Career Navigator Officer, participants mapped career pathways based on their existing skills and qualifications, personal aspirations and opportunities within Tasmania's labour market. Participants included people with backgrounds and career ambitions in civil and mechanical engineering, nursing and community support – sectors experiencing skills shortages and emerging workforce demand.



A pathway from skills to opportunity

Hayelom* is a Tigrayan man who recently arrived on a humanitarian visa, with a high level of English proficiency, a Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Engineering, a Master of Technology in Hydrology and a strong desire to undertake a PhD degree in Hydrology. The renewable energy sector in Tasmania is expanding and faces critical skills shortages, presenting a huge opportunity. He was referred into the pilot and worked with the Career Navigator to map his career pathway, including contacting potential supervisors for a PhD project, identifying scholarships offered by UTAS and industry, and connecting him with an engineering scholar at UTAS for mentoring.

*name changed

Building a Lasting Resource

As part of the project, Refugee Education Australia is using the information and insights generated through Career Navigator to develop a tailored online pathway tool. The resource will help individuals and career advisers identify personalised education and employment pathways, including relevant scholarships, support services, English-language requirements and other opportunities based on an individual's skills, experience and circumstances.

The project will continue to build on this work through ongoing career navigation support, industry steering groups, engagement with education providers to identify entry and progression pathways and Recognition of Prior Learning opportunities, and resources for employers outlining available supports for people from refugee backgrounds pursuing careers in Tasmania.

A comprehensive evaluation and longitudinal data collection will also help demonstrate the effectiveness of the Career Navigator model, identify what works and inform its ongoing development.

What the data told us

- **60%** of humanitarian arrivals surveyed had overseas work experience in professions with transferable skills and knowledge relevant to the Tasmanian workforce.
- **16%** had completed Year 12 or higher education prior to resettlement, including university qualifications, that can support a direct pathway into higher education and skilled employment.
- **81%** aspired to undertake further study in Australia.
- **41%** had already commenced or completed study in Australia beyond English language education.
- **45%** aspired to achieve a certificate or diploma.
- **34%** aspired to achieve a university degree.

Health and Wellbeing

Resources to Know – Alcohol and Other Drugs

Supporting multicultural communities to prevent and address health risks associated with alcohol and drug use through co-designed culturally appropriate education and resources.

Phoenix Centre

The Resources to Know program worked with Nepalese, Bhutanese, Afghan, Chin/Karen and Ethiopian communities in the South, North and North West of Tasmania to increase community knowledge and understanding of alcohol and other drugs (AoD) use, increase confidence to discuss AoD use within the community, reduce stigma and improve help-seeking behaviours.

Consultation and service delivery have shown consistent and ongoing concern with various issues with AoD, including AoD misuse or harm and differences in cultural norms around acceptable substance use, and that communities consider alcohol and substance abuse prevention a high-priority issue. Multicultural communities are at increased risk of experiencing AoD related harms as they face numerous pre- and post-migration and acculturation stressors and barriers to prevention and help-seeking.

In response, Resources to Know was designed as a culturally relevant and sensitive prevention program, supporting targeted at-risk refugee communities in Tasmania to make informed choices about, and reduce harm from alcohol and other drug use. The program was initiated with co-design activities with communities to understand risk and protective factors related to AoD use, health literacy regarding AoD use, underlying reasons for AoD use, gaps in knowledge, preferred language, types of messages likely to be effective, preferred media and means of communication.



Informed by the co-design, the program delivered:

Information Sessions

Sessions were designed with professional input from the Drug Education Network. The sessions were led by trained bicultural workers, experienced in moderation of community discussions around difficult and taboo subject areas such as mental health challenges and in contextualising the audience's ethnicity, cultural identity, and migration/settlement experience.

Resource Design

Culturally specific in-language AoD resources were developed, utilising culturally appropriate messaging and media channels as advised in the co-design sessions. The resources raised awareness of potential harm of AoD use and presented harm reduction strategies and support pathways.

Program evaluation showed that the program contributed greatly to increased knowledge of health risks associated with AoD use, where to seek help, and the confidence to have conversations about AoD in families and the communities.



- **99%** of participants reported that the session had a high or very high impact on their improved understanding of alcohol and drug health risk.
- **95%** reported that the session had a high or very high impact on their understanding of where to find appropriate information.
- **93%** reported a high or very high impact on their health literacy to help them make safer choices about AoD use.
- **97%** said that the session made them feel more confident to discuss AoD use with their family or within their community, helping towards addressing stigma.
- **100%** reported feeling more confident and comfortable seeking help for AoD concerns, either for themselves or for concerns about others.

"The most important thing I learned today is we shouldn't bottle it in when we are in a stressful situation. We should always ask for help!"

(Information session participant)

"[The most important thing I learned today was] the helplines when you or someone you know needs help."

(Information session participant)

This program was funded by a grant from the Tasmanian Government Department of Health as part of their Healthy Focus grant opportunity.

We would also like to thank the Drug Education Network for their partnership and expert feedback on presentations and resources and ongoing support for reaching multicultural communities.

Connection and Inclusion



Amplifying Connection and Safety

Supporting the safety and social participation needs of Palestinian, Muslim and Arab Communities across Tasmania, affected by the Hamas-Israel conflict.

Phoenix Centre

The Amplifying Connection and Safety Program was directed at creating a safe place for Tasmanian women from Palestinian, Muslim and Arab backgrounds to come together to improve social connections, participation, and mental wellbeing.

Since the outbreak of the Hamas-Israel conflict, these communities have reported an increase in discrimination and racism, significantly impacting their mental health and sense of belonging, often leaving individuals isolated without established support networks and community connections.

The Amplifying Connection and Safety program formed groups across Hobart, Launceston and Burnie, where local women co-designed the format and content of the sessions, ensuring that activities were relevant to the interests, requirements and challenges they experienced. The sessions included self-care activities such as exercise in dedicated

female-only spaces, education on mental wellbeing strategies, social outings and visits to services and community sites. The sessions also featured stakeholder visits from Tasmania Police and the Office of the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner, to raise awareness of rights and responses to discrimination and racism, and foster trust and support a sense of safety. Barriers to participation were addressed through provision of language support and child-friendly spaces.

Evaluation of the Amplifying Connection and Safety Program outcomes showed tangible impacts for the participants. Some group participants connected deeply with each other, continuing to meet up for different self-organised activities after program activities ended.

“These sessions enhanced my understanding of the barriers faced by Muslim women in particular — including the challenges, stereotypes, and misconceptions they encounter, as well as the realities of their day to day experiences living in Tasmania.”
(Stakeholder)

"[In the program], we are socialising, we talk about the things [we have in common], our multicultural backgrounds, the things that are challenging us in Australia. At the beginning, we felt that 10 weeks were going to be so long. At the end of the program, we were sad that we are not going to meet each other [in this program] again. To be honest, we were in tears at the end of it."

(Program Participant)



"After finishing the program, I feel myself being more confident and able to form connections with my community and other communities, because everyone they were very helpful, very welcoming, [...] and I would really recommend this program for everyone, because it was helpful in all aspects, understanding racism, helping our confidence, how to meet lots of new people" (Program participant)



- The program supported **67** women and **34** children from Palestinian, Muslim and Arab backgrounds across the state.
- Participation in community activities increased from **18% to 76%** post-program.
- Understanding of intolerance, discrimination and racism increased from **4.8 to an 8.9/10**.
- Overall Personal wellbeing for participants increased from a **7.2 to an 8.7/10**.

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



Capacity Building and Advocacy

TTMHN Annual Forum 2026 – The Impact of Global Conflict on Mental Health

Phoenix Centre

In June 2026, the Phoenix Centre hosted the annual Tasmanian Transcultural Mental Health Network (TTMHN) Forum at C3 Convention Centre in South Hobart. The forum provides an important space for practitioners, researchers, community workers and people with lived experience to learn, reflect and connect.

This year's theme, "The Impact of Global Conflict on Mental Health" explored the often complex and lasting effects of conflict on people and communities, including those experiencing conflict from afar through family, community and cultural connections.

Phoenix Centre and MYT Peer Mentor and Tasmanian Young Achiever Award finalist Sumaiya Shahreen served as MC, guiding the day with warmth and professionalism.

The keynote was delivered by Professor Susan Rees, Professor of Psychiatry and Mental Health at UNSW and a leading researcher in the mental health of conflict-affected populations. Drawing on longitudinal research involving communities connected to Lebanon, Gaza and the Palestinian Territories, she presented findings on the mental health impacts of global conflict on refugees and migrants resettling in Australia.

Her presentation highlighted how sustained exposure to conflict overseas can have significant mental health impacts, even when people are physically removed from the conflict. She also explored the implications for how practitioners assess, understand and support people affected by global events, and the importance of culturally responsive practice and advocacy.

The keynote was followed by a lived experience presentation and Q&A, providing an opportunity



to centre personal perspectives alongside research and professional knowledge. Workshops and facilitated sessions explored culturally responsive approaches to supporting people affected by global conflict; and strategies for managing burnout and strengthening workforce wellbeing. The day concluded on a reflective and uplifting note with a beautiful musical performance by a Phoenix Centre staff member.

The TTMHN Forum continues to provide an important platform for strengthening Tasmania's mental health workforce, sharing knowledge and ensuring that culturally responsive and lived-experience-informed approaches remain central to supporting our diverse communities.

"I enjoyed the lived experience presentations and want to thank Marzi and Mori for sharing their stories with us. Everything was really good – all the speakers were wonderful and very informative."

TTMHN is funded by the Crown through the Department of Health Tasmania.



Building Cultural Capability in Primary Health Care

Strategy & Development

MRC Tas collaborated with Primary Health Tasmania (PHT) to develop a six-part video series designed to strengthen cultural capability and skills in working with interpreters among GPs, practice staff and other primary health professionals across Tasmania.

Tasmania is home to people from more than 177 countries, with one in five Tasmanians born overseas and 14% speaking a language other than English at home. This diversity highlights the importance of health services being able to respond appropriately to different cultural and linguistic needs.

The video series was developed to support health professionals to better understand how culture, migration and settlement experiences can influence communication, behaviours, expectations and decision-making in a healthcare setting.



A key focus of the series was helping health professionals recognise that there is no single way that patients will respond to healthcare. Cultural background and previous experiences can influence how people understand health services, communicate with practitioners and participate in consultations. For example, a patient may wish to have family members involved in their healthcare, have different expectations around appointment times, or interpret referrals to specialists differently based on their previous experiences of healthcare systems.

The series also emphasised that cultural capability is not about knowing everything about every culture. Rather, it involves developing the skills to ask respectful questions, reflect on our own assumptions, adapt communication and create an environment where patients feel safe, understood and respected.

Working effectively with interpreters was another important component. PHT identifies the use of qualified interpreters as an important part of providing high-quality care to patients who have limited English proficiency, with benefits including improved understanding, patient safety and more accurate diagnosis.

The project brought together expertise from across the health and multicultural sectors. MRC Tas staff and bicultural workers contributed their knowledge and lived experience, while doctors from the Royal Hobart Hospital generously volunteered their time and clinical expertise to support the production of the videos.

The completed resources provide practical, Tasmania-specific learning for health professionals and will support the broader rollout of culturally responsive practice across primary care. The project demonstrates the value of collaboration between community organisations and the health sector in building services that are more accessible, inclusive and responsive to Tasmania's increasingly diverse population.

This project was funded and supported by Primary Health Tasmania.

The Big Tassie Walk: Walking Together for a More Inclusive Tasmania



In October 2025, MRC Tas launched The Big Tassie Walk, our inaugural statewide peer-to-peer fundraising campaign, bringing Tasmanians together throughout October to get active, connect with their communities and walk in support of a more inclusive, multicultural Tasmania.

What began as a new fundraising initiative quickly became something much bigger: a shared movement built around health, community, belonging and the belief that everyone has a place in Tasmania.

The campaign built on the momentum of two major awareness walks undertaken by MRC Tas Chair, the Hon. Peter Gutwein, in 2024. In June, Mr Gutwein walked 335 kilometres from Burnie to Hobart for *The Walk: Step Up Together*. In October, he completed *The Walk: Better Together*, travelling more than 330 kilometres from Canberra to Sydney to advocate for national inclusion.

The Big Tassie Walk brought that spirit into communities across the state, inviting people to participate in a way that worked for them. Individuals, workplaces, sporting clubs, schools, community organisations and local councils formed teams, walked together and encouraged others to take part.

At the campaign launch, Mr Gutwein said it was “incredibly heartening” to see Tasmanians stepping up together again, this time in their own neighbourhoods. He described the campaign as

an opportunity to get fitter while standing up for a Tasmania that is inclusive, welcoming and proud of its multicultural communities.

A campaign that moved Tasmania

The response to the Big Tassie Walk exceeded expectations. 399 Tasmanians participated, with 54 teams, 26 organisations and 9 corporate sponsors joining the campaign. Together, participants walked 42,000 kilometres – covering the circumference of the Earth – and raised \$85,720 to support MRC Tas’s work with migrant and refugee communities.

MRC Tas staff and volunteers played an important role in establishing The Big Tassie Walk as a visible, values-led campaign. 39 staff and seven volunteers signed up to participate, with colleagues taking part in mini-walks, workplace activities and community events throughout the month.

For many participants, the walk carried a deeply personal meaning. One participant reflected:

“Migrants often live in two worlds... Belonging isn’t a luxury. It’s a lifeline. And through this walk, I’ve felt it more strongly than ever.”

Others spoke about the contribution of cultural diversity, the migrant experience and the importance of everyday actions in creating welcoming communities. For some, the walk was a tribute to family:



Campaign Snapshot

399 walkers | \$85,720 raised

42,000 km walked

"I'm doing this walk in honour of my mum and dad who were migrants to this great country."

Others reflected on the strength that diversity brings to workplaces and communities:

"Different cultural perspectives can strengthen us in a world that's changing faster than ever."

And for many, participation was about recognising that creating inclusion does not always require a grand gesture:

"We can all create a positive ripple effect. You may not want to walk 180 km, but you can say yes in other ways."

The campaign generated strong earned media coverage across television, radio, print and online platforms, including WIN News, 7 News, SBS, ABC Radio, The Examiner, The Advocate, Pulse Tasmania and The Mercury. This extended the campaign's reach well beyond our own channels and helped bring its message of inclusion, belonging and community to a statewide audience.

Across October, campaign activities included the statewide launch, partner events with Brighton Council, St Lukes and Tony White Group, staff and community walks, and a final walk and thank-you event. Each activity created opportunities for people to connect, get active and show their support for a more inclusive Tasmania.

We extend our sincere thanks to our Gold sponsors St Lukes, Tony White Group and Hospitality Tasmania; Silver sponsor Aussie Launceston; and Bronze sponsors Hazell Bros, Bank of Us, TasNetworks, Incat and Launceston Airport. We also acknowledge the generous contribution from the Premier Jeremy Rockliff's Office, Launceston Preparatory School, and the support of Glenorchy City Council, Clarence City Council and Brighton Council; the Tasmania Devils and Jack Jumpers; and the many other sporting clubs, businesses and community organisations that walked, sponsored, promoted and championed the campaign.

The inaugural Big Tassie Walk demonstrated the power of bringing purpose, people and participation together. Every kilometre walked, dollar raised and conversation started contributed to a bigger message: Tasmania is stronger when everyone has the opportunity to belong.

Following the success of its inaugural year, The Big Tassie Walk is now an annual MRC Tas campaign, continuing to bring Tasmanians together through movement, connection and a shared commitment to a more inclusive and welcoming community.



Humanitarian Arrival Services

Our Humanitarian Arrival Services support humanitarian entrants and eligible visa holders to successfully settle and build a new life in Australia. In Tasmania, MRC Tas delivers the Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP) 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.

The HSP team works closely with MRC Tas Accommodation Services, Settlement programs and the Phoenix Centre to provide holistic support and connect newly arrived Tasmanians to education, employment and English language support as well as social and wellbeing programs. The HSP team delivers support to clients using an individualised case management approach tailored to their needs, strengths and goals.

Small Packs, Big Impact – Ready-for-School Appeal

For every child, starting school should be a time of excitement, possibility and belonging. But for children from refugee backgrounds who are newly settling in Tasmania, the transition can come with practical challenges, including not having the essential items needed to start school with confidence.

This year, we launched our Ready-for-School Appeal, a targeted fundraising initiative to help newly arrived children begin their school journey feeling prepared, included and ready to learn.

We distributed more than 30 backpacks filled with essential school supplies, along with shoe vouchers and parent diaries, to families from refugee backgrounds. The impact of these packs went well beyond the provision of practical items, as they helped remove one more barrier for families



navigating the many challenges that come with starting a new life in Tasmania.

Parents told us how relieved they felt knowing their children had what they needed to start school alongside their classmates. For the children, receiving their own school pack brought excitement and a sense of confidence as they prepared for a new chapter.

The Ready-for-School Appeal is a simple example of how practical support can make a meaningful difference. By helping children arrive at school prepared and included, we are helping create a stronger foundation for learning, connection and belonging from their very first day.

Safer Online – New Cyber Security Module

When new humanitarian clients arrive in Tasmania, the HSP team provide a series of orientation information modules to introduce them to life in Australia and support their initial settlement.

Due to the increasing risk of online threats the HSP team has been working on the development and delivery of a new core orientation module on 'Cyber Security Awareness' for new arrivals. Humanitarian entrants tend to be more vulnerable to cyber



security and privacy threats due to language and digital literacy barriers, leading to an urgency to provide essential knowledge and tools to help ensure safer settlement.

This module was co-designed with community leaders, through discussions around the cyber security issues experienced by their community members and what could be done to counter this. The module helps educate clients about the basics of cyber-crime, attacks, scams and phishing, identity theft, and everyday best security practices when using online spaces and applications.

The module uses relatable analogies about personal physical security to explain the importance of cyber security, making sure that even abstract concepts in online safety can be readily understood.

This module has been delivered to new arrivals across the state. Participant feedback has demonstrated the usefulness of the sessions: Before the session, participants rated their cyber security awareness an average of 1.6 on a 5-point scale, increasing to a 5 after the session, with 99% of participants requesting additional sessions.

The cyber security module will be delivered as part of all future new arrival orientation. Furthermore, the project has commissioned the development of a comic book on the topic, which will be produced in-language.

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

Aged and Community Services

MRC Tas Aged Care 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, supporting individuals to maintain or regain their abilities and live a good life.

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

Sector Reforms – Support at Home

This year, the Aged Care and Community Services team prepared for significant sector reform, with the commencement of the Support at Home program in November 2025, replacing existing Home Care Packages program. This transition represents an important shift in the way in-home aged care services are delivered, with a stronger focus on coordinated, person-centred support that enables older people to remain living safely and independently in their homes and connected to their communities.

For MRC Tas, the reform has provided an opportunity to further strengthen our culturally responsive service model. Our team has worked closely with clients, families and carers to explain the changes, support informed decision-making and maintain continuity of care throughout the transition. Workforce planning, staff development and clear communication have remained central to ensuring older people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds can confidently navigate the new arrangements and continue to receive safe, respectful and inclusive support that reflects their individual needs, preferences and cultural backgrounds.



Support at Home is funded by the Australian Government, Department of Health, Disability and Ageing.



Elder Abuse – Spreading the Word

During this financial year, we continued to deliver the Elder Abuse program, strengthening community awareness and building the capacity of culturally and linguistically diverse communities to recognise, prevent and respond to elder abuse.

Eight bicultural workers completed the Elder Abuse Train the Trainer program and went on to facilitate information sessions across the state with Afghan, Bhutanese, Nepali, Eritrean, Ethiopian, Sudanese, Iranian and Karen communities. Participants reported increased knowledge and confidence to identify signs of elder abuse, understand their rights and connect with appropriate support services.

The bicultural workers also gained a deeper understanding of how elder abuse may present within CALD communities and the cultural, language and other barriers that can prevent people from seeking help. This learning

has supported more culturally responsive communication and engagement with clients and communities.

To strengthen access to information, we also developed in-language audio resources and wallet cards. These practical tools provide accessible information for community members and help open conversations about respect, safety and support.

The project will continue into the next financial year, with further community education, resources and support to strengthen awareness and help ensure older people can live with dignity, safety and respect.

This project was funded by the Tasmanian Government, Department of Premier and Cabinet.

Multicultural Youth Tasmania

Multicultural Youth Tasmania (MYT) provides targeted services 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.

Culture to Thrive

Culture to Thrive (CTT) is a youth empowerment program designed to support multicultural young people by strengthening cultural safety, connection and belonging. Using a flexible, strengths-based approach, the program supports young people to identify their own goals, build practical life skills and develop a stronger sense of identity through a cultural lens.

This year, the program supported more than 20 young people through individual casework and pathway planning. Young people also participated in a diverse range of activities, from arts-based reflection and cultural expression to



group excursions, outdoor activities and sport. These activities were intentionally connected to participants' individual goals and everyday lives, using sport and creative activities to build teamwork, leadership, communication, problem-solving and conflict resolution skills. Participants received certificates to recognise commitment, care, responsibility and progress.

The program worked alongside schools, community organisations and specialist services to provide coordinated support that responds to each young person's circumstances and cultural identity. This collaborative approach has helped young people who have experienced social isolation or challenges engaging with education and community to build positive relationships, establish healthy boundaries and reconnect with education and training.

Importantly, the program creates space for young people to have a voice in their own development. Through goal-setting, decision-making and participation, young people are supported to recognise their strengths, build confidence and develop a greater sense of agency in shaping their future.

This program was funded by a grant from the Australian Government, Department of Industry, Science and Resources.





Multicultural Youth Festival – Youth Week

As part of National Youth Week in April, MYT delivered a multi-day Multicultural Youth Festival, bringing young people together through sport, creativity, culture and community connection. The festival included two sporting events and culminated in an outdoor celebration at Tolosa Park, attended by more than 75 young people and supported by 12 services and community organisations.

The festival featured a range of activities, including a silent disco, drumming workshops, art activities and spray painting, creating an inclusive and welcoming space for young people to connect, express themselves and try something new.

Young people were central to shaping the festival. Following consultations through MYT's Youth Drop-Ins, five young people aged 18 to 24 took an active role in planning and delivering the events. They contributed to discussions about activities and partnerships, participated in planning meetings, promoted the festival to their peers and took on practical leadership roles during the events.

Their involvement ensured the festival reflected what young people wanted to see and do, while providing a valuable opportunity to develop leadership, communication, teamwork and event-management skills. The festival demonstrated the impact of giving young people genuine opportunities to influence decisions and create spaces where their cultures, ideas and contributions are valued.



This event was funded by a grant from the Tasmanian Government, coordinated by the Youth Network of Tasmania.

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 spaces, delivered under the Settlement, Engagement and Transition Support (SETS) Program, funded by the Australian Government, Department of Home Affairs. The Settlement team collaborate with mainstream services, advocating for the needs and rights of new Tasmanians.

Settlement 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.

Bridge to Belonging (B2B)

B2B is a statewide peer-led community program supporting CALD people with disability, their families and carers to participate in, contribute to and benefit from community, arts and recreation activities.

CALD individuals with disability can face compounded barriers to participation. B2B responds to these barriers by training and embedding lived-experience peer workers who act as 'bridges', helping participants build confidence, connect with communities and access opportunities to participate in activities that support wellbeing and sense of belonging.

This year, we delivered more than 60 activities across Hobart, Launceston, Burnie and Devonport, co-designed with participants to ensure activities reflected the types of activities they wanted to participate in and were suitable for their individual needs. Activities ranged from badminton and



volleyball to Kokedama, a traditional Japanese ornamental plant art form, and pickling workshops.

With more than 140 participants taking part this year, B2B created opportunities for people to connect with their local communities, build relationships and develop confidence, skills and agency. Participants were able to try new activities, meet new people and strengthen their connections in welcoming and inclusive environments.

The program has also had a measurable impact on the confidence and skills of peer workers, supporting them to plan and deliver project activities more independently. Through their involvement, peer workers have developed leadership, community engagement and activity delivery skills, while drawing on their own lived experience to support others.

Through peer-led support and inclusive participation, B2B continues to help CALD people with disability, their families and carers build stronger connections and enjoy opportunities to participate in community life.

This program was funded by a grant from the Australian Government Department of Social Services as part of their Information, Linkages and Capacity Building grant opportunity.





Migrant Network

The Migrant Network has continued to support skilled migrants and refugees in Southern Tasmania to access employment pathways and strengthen their connection to local opportunities, professional networks and Jobs Hub support. The network delivers a range of activities designed to help CALD communities find meaningful employment, including weekly career coaching, meet-ups, showcases and hands-on industry tours.

Career Coaching

Weekly career coaching provides one-on-one support to help clients build their job-search skills through resume development, job search and application practice, mock interviews, and information and referrals to Jobs Hub services. This year, we delivered 32 sessions, attended by 8-10 participants each week, with 12 skilled migrants securing roles in their professional field.

The Showcase

The Migrant Network Showcase brings together employers, industry representatives, local government and skilled migrants and people from refugee backgrounds to build connections, share information and support pathways into employment. This year, guest speakers from Business, Industry and Regional Outreach (BIRO)

and the Department of Home Affairs provided information to employers about visa pathways and common misconceptions. Almost 60 CALD participants and 32 employer and industry representatives attended, creating valuable opportunities for information sharing and connections that support employment outcomes.

Industry Tours

Industry Tours provide clients with opportunity to gain a hands-on understanding of different industries, explore career pathways and connect directly with local employers.

In partnership with Master Builders Tasmania, clients attended Agfest, where they toured the festival and gained insight into Tasmania's building and construction industry. They spoke with building and construction businesses about growing areas of the industry, career opportunities and pathways, while building connections with local employers.

In June, in partnership with Hydro Tasmania, clients visited the Repulse Power Station in Ouse, where they received safety equipment and took part in an interactive tour of Tasmania's sustainable energy industry. The visit provided insight into hydroelectric history, power station operations, industry career pathways, future employment opportunities and Tasmania's renewable energy sector.

The Migrant Network was funded by a grant from the Glenorchy City Council.

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, recovery and capacity building activities. It provides specialist support to survivors of torture and other traumatic experiences and their communities under the Program of Assistance for Survivors of Torture and Trauma, funded by Australian Government, Department of Health, Disability and Ageing.

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.

Express Ability – Health Care Rights and Self-Advocacy

This year, the Phoenix Centre delivered Express Ability, a statewide initiative supporting CALD individuals and their families to better understand their healthcare rights, build confidence in self-

advocacy, and navigate health and social service systems in Tasmania.

The program was informed by consultation with more than 700 CALD community members in 2023, which identified access to culturally appropriate mental health and psychosocial supports, and understanding and advocacy around health-related rights as key areas of concern. The program was delivered by two program officers and 15 peer mentors with lived experience of psychosocial disability across Tasmania's South, North and North West settlement regions.

Peer mentors received tailored training in the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights, Mental Health First Aid, lived-experience leadership and group facilitation, community engagement, activity delivery and participant support. This equipped mentors to provide culturally safe, practical peer support, facilitate information sessions in community languages, and support CALD participants and carers through an eight-session group program focused on building self-advocacy skills.

In 2025 and 2026, Express Ability delivered eight community information sessions, reaching 71 participants, and seven group-work series, engaging 60 participants. The program also delivered a two-day Student Workshop Series at the University of Tasmania, Sandy Bay campus in Hobart for international students.

The program continues to build its reach across Tasmania, and has supported Hazara, Bangladeshi, Vietnamese, Arabic- and Mandarin-speaking communities, as well as a Muslim women's group in the North West.

The next phase of Express Ability includes co-developing in-language resources featuring practical self-advocacy strategies, helping CALD communities access clear, relevant information about their healthcare rights and feel more confident navigating Tasmania's health and support systems.

“The most significant change I have seen in myself is increased confidence in applying a person-centred approach. The Express Ability training involved induction, getting to know the program itself, mental health first aid and some other leadership trainings as well which broadened my understanding of how to support people who may feel afraid, hesitant or unable to express themselves.”

Express Ability Peer Mentor

This program was funded by a grant from the Australian Government Department of Social Services.

R U OK? Day

On 11 September 2025, MRC Tas marked R U OK? Day with community events in Hobart and Launceston, bringing together people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds to connect, share experiences and learn how to support one another through meaningful conversations about mental health and wellbeing.

More than 60 people attended the Hobart event, including members of the Karen, Amharic, Tigrinya, Farsi, Bhutanese, Nepali and Arabic-speaking communities. A further 39 people attended the Launceston event, with participants from the Farsi, Nepali and Karen communities.



A highlight of the Hobart event was a cultural icebreaker led by Phoenix Counsellor Agnes. Participants were invited to demonstrate how elders are traditionally greeted in their communities. The activity provided an opportunity to learn about different cultural practices, including bowing, handshaking and respectful verbal greetings, while highlighting the importance of elders and intergenerational relationships across many communities.

The events focused on practical ways to check in with someone who may not be feeling okay. Participants explored how to recognise signs that someone may be struggling, listen actively, give people time and space to talk, and respond without judgement. They also discussed how to have an R U OK? conversation in a way that is culturally respectful and appropriate, as well as the importance of looking after their own mental health and wellbeing.

Art activities were incorporated into both events, giving participants an accessible and creative way to express emotions, connect with others, and open conversations about mental health.

All participants said they felt prepared to ask another community member if they were okay.

The events provided an opportunity for multicultural communities to build confidence in talking about mental health and to strengthen connections and support within their communities.

This event was funded by Primary Health Tasmania under the Suicide Prevention Program.

Accommodation

MRC Tas's Accommodation Program supports migrants and people from refugee 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.

The Multicultural Accommodation Centre in Goodwood

The Goodwood Multicultural Accommodation Centre is our primary accommodation site. It houses recently arrived humanitarian entrants, offering a community-style living environment where residents can engage in activities like gardening and social gatherings. As well as offering a safe place to stay, the accommodation centre aims to provide new arrivals with the fundamental skills of maintaining a rental home, understanding their rights and responsibilities, and building a strong rental history to help secure longer-term housing.

The facilities at the centre continue to be expanded, thanks to the invaluable voluntary support from our community partners, C3 Church and Welcome Gardeners Tasmania. This year, C3 Church built a new multi-purpose soccer pitch below the beloved bright mural in the outdoor space, offering the residents a place to play football and other games together. A place to safely exercise and play has brought even more joy and vitality to the centre, especially for the kids. Additionally, Welcome Gardeners Tasmania have been providing ongoing gardening services, facilitating the weekly gardening program every Thursday with residents. Alongside gardening support, they keep an abundantly stocked seed library for people from migrant and refugee backgrounds to help themselves for free at the Glenorchy Office, encouraging independence and food autonomy when setting up their new homes.



These additions, large and small, reflect the steady dedication of our community partners and our work at MRC Tas.

Full House at Springvale Skilled Worker Accommodation Centre

The Springvale Accommodation Centre provides short-term housing for skilled migrant workers who are contributing to the state's industries through working on important local projects. The Centre has been housing skilled welders from the Philippines, brought in to support the construction of electric boats at Incat.

This year saw a great increase in skilled-migrant residents at the centre, housing 75 people throughout the year. The centre is now at full capacity with a total of 63 current residents. Hitting full capacity shows just how important and successful innovative housing models are for both local employers and the migrant employees. Temporary skilled migrants continue to play an important role in Tasmania's workforce landscape and will continue to do so as demand continues to increase.

National Recognition of Local Innovation – National Housing Conference

The Accommodation team presented at the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) Innovative Housing Solutions event at the National Housing Conference 2025.

This opportunity allowed the Accommodation Manager to showcase the different housing models MRC Tas has developed as a direct response to the needs of our clients and our unique housing landscape. The models explored were:

- **The Multicultural Accommodation Centre in Goodwood** – *Giving families a safe first home in Australia and a strong start to their settlement journey.*
- **The Springvale Skilled Worker Accommodation Centre** – *Affordable and supported accommodation for workers on skilled or working visas*
- **The Homestay Program** – *Turning spare rooms into community assets*



These models have in common that they reuse existing housing stock and provide pathways for long-term housing through tenancy education and rental history, helping new arrivals build their future. The Accommodation Manager took the opportunity to inform the broader housing industry of the additional barriers faced by refugee and migrant cohorts to securing appropriate and affordable housing, and how we have responded to these wicked housing problems in Tasmania.

“Our approach focuses on practical, sustainable solutions – providing transitional housing that goes beyond shelter, by building capacity through tenancy education, community connection, and fostering social cohesion.”

Mae Shell De Sesto, Accommodation Manager

Training & Engagement

MRC Tas has been delivering training to support the cultural responsiveness of mainstream services and organisations for over 25 years. The Training & Engagement team works to build capacity across all Tasmanian sectors, enabling them to deliver culturally sensitive and inclusive services while fostering cultural competence at both individual and organisational levels.

Our training is grounded in lived experience and shaped by Tasmanian-specific data, stories and research. Through our work supporting people to settle in Tasmania, we bring a deep understanding of the local challenges and strengths within our diverse communities. While the core content may remain consistent, no two training sessions are the same because each is informed by the people, communities and issues present in the room.

Building Cultural Capability Across Tasmania

This year our Training and Engagement team partnered with the Phoenix Centre to deliver high impact cross-cultural trainings to more than 400 individuals across the state.

Building on our regular monthly Cultural Capability training, this year's program expanded to include Working with Interpreters, Trauma-Informed Practice and Incidental Counselling. Together, these sessions provided participants with a broader set of practical skills to deliver safe, inclusive and effective services and support.

"[The most useful parts were the] complexities of the experience of transitioning into Australian life/culture, the unseen burden of trauma that can affect how a person shows up or reacts."

Trauma Informed Practice Participant



Cultural Capability Training provides the knowledge and understanding needed to work effectively with people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, encouraging participants to approach cultural difference with curiosity, awareness and respect.

Working With Interpreter Training builds the knowledge and skills needed to work effectively with interpreters when providing services to people who speak little or no English.

Incidental Counselling Training develops skills for responding to difficult and distressing situations, supporting people from humanitarian backgrounds across a range of settings.

Trauma Informed Practice provides an understanding of the impacts of trauma and practical strategies to support people from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds in a safe and responsive way.

Our Training & Engagement Officer led Cultural Capability and Working with Interpreters sessions alongside lived-experience bicultural workers, who shared their stories and perspectives. Phoenix Centre staff delivered Trauma-Informed Practice and Incidental Counselling training.

Sessions were highly engaging, providing safe spaces for participants to share experiences, ask questions and reflect on their own practice. Feedback demonstrated shifts in understanding of migrant and refugee experiences and increased confidence in applying new perspectives to their work.

With racist incidents continuing to be a concern, there has also been a growing need for practical strategies to recognise and counter racism. This year, in partnership with the Settlement and Youth team, an Anti-Racism Training was developed and delivered. To lead by example, we began by delivering the 'Courageous Conversations: Race & Anti-racism in the Workplace' training to the MRC Tas Board. The training enabled board members to articulate shared language around race and racism, understand and be aware of sociohistorical contexts and identify anti-racist behaviours and actions that could be deployed in the workplace. The training was subsequently delivered to sporting organisations in the North, including Launceston Basketball Association and Launceston United Soccer Club, supporting their efforts to address racism in sport.

We thank everyone who participated in our training this year and trusted us to support their learning. We are particularly grateful to those who contributed openly, shared their experiences and committed to taking this knowledge back into their workplaces, communities and practice – helping create space for conversations that can shift perspectives and strengthen inclusion.



This year we have worked with a broad range of organisations, including:

- Tasmania Police
- The University of Tasmania
- Early Childhood Inclusion Services
- SASS – Sexual Assault Support Services
- THS – Population Screening and Breast Cancer Team
- Langford Support Services
- Positive Solutions
- AFL Tasmania
- WLF Accounting
- Hobart City Mission
- Tasmanian Health Service
- Red Cross
- Multicultural Council of Tasmania
- Scarlet Alliance
- Platypus Group
- Mission Australia

“Excellent presentation by presenters who have lived experience. Teaching us to continue learning, showing empathy and respecting cultural differences.”
Cultural Capability Training Participant

Volunteer Program

The MRC Tas Volunteer Program oversees all aspects of volunteer engagement, including recruitment, onboarding, induction, training, and ongoing support. Volunteers are at the heart of our organisation, bringing valuable skills, experience, and commitment to programs and events across the state. Volunteering at MRC Tas offers a unique opportunity to connect with people from diverse cultural backgrounds and contribute to creating positive outcomes for communities.

Pastoral Care Residency for Skilled Migrants at Springvale

This year, Pastor Joel has been volunteering to build a positive and inclusive environment for residents in our Springvale Accommodation Centre. He was first inspired to volunteer when he heard that the Accommodation Centre would be housing overseas Filipino workers.

"I saw this as an opportunity to serve both personally and organisationally, representing the Philippine Australian Community of Tasmania (PACT, Inc.). [...] As a Filipino and an immigrant myself, I felt that I could offer meaningful support [...] during their stay at Springvale [Accommodation Centre] and while they worked at Incat here in Hobart. I understand, to some extent, the sacrifices that migrant workers make for the betterment of their families and the contribution they make to the economy of the Philippines. My motivation to volunteer, however, is also deeply rooted in my Christian faith and the teachings of Jesus—to love my neighbour as myself."

During weekly visits to Springvale, Pastor Joel provides emotional support, facilitates social activities, strengthens community connections, supports access to services and encourages adjustment and confidence in residents. As part of building relationships and trust with residents,



he also helps out in the community kitchen, which leads to opportunities for meaningful conversations, where residents share their stories, challenges and concerns about their families back home.

He sees his contribution primarily through being present, approachable, and willing to listen:

"Sometimes, pastoral care does not require having all the answers. It is simply about being there, listening to their stories, and helping people feel that they are not alone while they are away from their families and familiar surroundings."

"For me, volunteering is ultimately about people. It is about creating a welcoming space, building trust, listening with compassion, and offering practical support. I am thankful that MRC has given me the opportunity to serve in this way."

We are grateful for Pastor Joel's commitment and care in his volunteer role, as we are grateful to all our volunteers for the time, care and heart they bring to the volunteer work, making our community a better place through their contributions.

Thank you for making a difference.

Our Staff

We value our diverse workforce, which represents a range of perspectives, experiences, cultures, genders, and ages. 90% of MRC Tas employees are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and there are approximately 42 different ethnicities represented by 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.



Kim Phong's Retirement after 30 years with MRC Tas

In February, we said goodbye to Kim Phong, who retired after 30 years with MRC Tas. In this time Kim worked across our aged care services in many different roles: A bilingual worker at the day centre, client worker in the Home and Community Care program, a connection between Chinese clients and nursing homes at Partners in Culturally Appropriate Care and a care manager in the Support at Home program. In every role, Kim always provided support to our seniors with patience, respect, compassion, understanding, and tolerance.

At her farewell party, Kim provided a moving reflection on her years working with us:

"I can't believe I have been working in MRC over the past 30 years. Time has gone so fast. When I first started, I never imagined I would stay this long, but here I am."

I have met so many wonderful people. We worked hard together, supported each other, and shared many memories — happy times and challenging times too. I am grateful for all the friendships and teamwork we have had along the way.

Working here has been more than just a job for me. It has been an important part of my life. I have learned a lot, grown a lot, and I will always be thankful for the opportunities and support I received from MRC.

Although I am leaving, I will always carry these memories with me and I continue to stay connected with the community, I look forward to learning new skill to keep my mind active, and I will be changing my role from staff member to a client of MRC."

Thank you, Kim, for all your work and your love for the community.

Sumaiya's Community Achievement Award

In April, MRC Tas peer worker, Sumaiya Shahreen, was named a finalist in the Tasmanian Young Achiever of the Year Award, in the Take A Minute – Mental Health and Wellbeing Award category.

Sumaiya first trained as a peer worker in the Bridge to Belonging program, and has since been integral to the program's success, providing empathetic, thoughtful and impactful peer support and advocacy for clients.

She now works across multiple programs, supporting the wellbeing and mental health of young people, migrants and refugees through outreach, events and one-on-one support, creating safe and inclusive spaces for all. This year, she supported more than 100 individuals from diverse backgrounds to access mental health support, helping challenge stigma and encourage open conversations.

Her dedication, commitment, and genuine care shine through in everything she does, and her approach to client support and program delivery is nothing short of inspiring. We could not be prouder to have her as part of the MRC Tas team.

Congratulations, Sumaiya, on this well-deserved recognition!



"I felt really encouraged and honoured by MRC Tas as the organisation has supported me throughout my journey and I want to continue supporting our clients and give back to our organisation as much as I can."



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



Chris Stennard
(LOA from April 2026)



**Iha Diwan
Patney**



Ruth Chalk



**Catherine
Stubberfield**



**Archana
Brammall**



**Dr Krishna K
Kalpurath**

Our Funders

Australian Government

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

Tasmanian Government

- Department of Health
- Department of Premier and Cabinet
- Department of State Growth

Other

- Federation of Ethnic Communities Council of Australia
- Glenorchy City Council
- Primary Health Tasmania
- Tasmanian Community Fund

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.





Donate

Donate today and you will make a difference in the lives of former 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.

MRC Tas is endorsed as a deductible gift recipient. Eligible donations are tax deductible.

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

mrctas.org.au/donate



Everyone Belongs