

2004

annual report

Tasmanian Council of Social Service Inc.

vision:

social justice now and in the future



Annual Report 2004 **Contents**

Tasmanian Council of Social Service Inc.

2	From the Chair
4	From the Executive Director
7	Profile
13	2003 – 2004 Highlights & Significant Events
14	VISION The social justice agenda – now and in the future
17	Strengthening the sector
19	FOCUS Consumer Issues Project
21	Home and Community Care Project
24	Unemployed Workers Network
f.1 – f.5	Financial Report 2004



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Tasmanian Council of Social Service Inc.

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vision: social justice now and in the future

From the **Chair**

I am pleased to provide my third President's report for the TasCOSS Annual Report.

social justice now and in the future

During my time on the Board of TasCOSS, I have witnessed many changes in our organisation and in our focus of operation. The key to any council of social service's reason for existence is that of building a society where social justice is paramount - both now and into the future.

current environment

In an environment of significant social, economic and political change, it is important that we consider the work of TasCOSS in this broader context. We know that these are times of significant economic prosperity. But, we also know that there remains significant challenge to those Tasmanians and, indeed, Australians on low incomes. There is still a sense that our

basic income structures, taxation system and government policy in these areas are inadequate to meet the needs of individuals, families and communities who are homeless, unemployed, unwell and living in extreme social isolation.

The current Tasmanian Government's social agenda and its social investment are making some inroads to address important 'touchstone' issues - such as affordable housing and employment and the stronger economic performance of the State.

However, all Government levels cannot work in isolation to push for new direction in these areas. The notion of working together with all sectors, all levels of government in a collaborative way, seeking to create a

strong community for all is still paramount to the work of the Tasmanian and Australian Councils of Social Service.

governance

The Board, having set the direction for the organisation through the TasCOSS Strategic Plan 2004-06, has supported staff in its implementation. The plan ensures our focus remains on advancing social justice, supporting, strengthening and developing the sector, as well as strengthening TasCOSS as the peak for the community sector.

The Board continues to refine its governance model, and to review the structure, policy formulation, review and consultative mechanisms. Applying the Carver model of Policy Governance to a small non-government organisation brings with it challenges and



The key to any council of social service's reason for existence is that of building a society where social justice is paramount - both now and into the future.

rewards. As the peak body in this sector, we strive to do this effectively in order to provide a model structure for member organisations.

One of the ways we have endeavoured to do this over the past twelve months is in the clear differentiation between our governance roles and responsibilities and our social policy work. Formalising the brief of the Social Policy Council (our key policy advisory structure) in our Constitution is under way - with amendments being made in order to position ourselves for future Deductible Gift Recipient status.

On the Board's agenda for the next period is a board development and review program, a firming up and consolidating of our representative structures and improvements in the way the organisation is managed at a strategic level.

Key to initiating these improvements was our previous Executive Director, Lis deVries. Lis left TasCOSS for a move interstate in November after five years of exemplary service. She competently led TasCOSS during that time - significantly strengthened the organisation, and increased and improved our credibility in all areas of the community.

Lis also built and maintained good relationships with Government, our members and the media - carrying out her role with the best interests of Tasmania and for people who are disadvantaged and on low incomes in her sight. Lis also led the way to pursue some strong responses by the current Government to the issue of unemployment in our State - particularly for the long term unemployed.

thanks to staff and Board members

Ann Hughes agreed to take on the role as Interim Executive Director whilst the Board attended to finding the next Executive Director. The Board sincerely thanks Ann for her valuable time in this role, and helping to bridge the gap between Executive Directors.

A new TasCOSS era began in January this year with Mat Rowell taking on the role of Executive Director. Mat brings a breadth of experience to the position from working within Government as well as the community sector.

Since his appointment, Mat has given priority to the TasCOSS secretariat and broader structures. This will ensure the organisation has a very solid base to cover the range of issues and work that is generated from a small and dedicated team. As well, he has put considerable effort into establishing strong relationships with key stakeholders in order to progress the TasCOSS agenda.

On behalf of the Board of TasCOSS, our thanks go out to all of the staff, members and volunteers who have contributed so much to our essential work over the past twelve months.

I take great pleasure in commending this Annual Report to you as a record of our achievements and our vision being realised over the past year.

Sue Ham
Board Chair

From the **Executive Director**

In presenting my first TasCOSS Annual Report, it is worth casting our thoughts towards the work of our organisation - in the past 12 months and into the future.

social justice now and in the future

TasCOSS has worked for over 42 years to achieve social justice for all. All well and good - but what does it actually mean? For me it means that at the core of the work that we do, we must continue to pursue dialogue, structural change and policy initiatives. These are firmly grounded in improving participation, increasing opportunities and improving the quality of life for Tasmanians who are on low-income or in some way disadvantaged.

It is pertinent to remind ourselves of why we exist as a council. We need to remind ourselves to what end do we write policy, lobby government and government agencies, bring together community organisations, support our peak bodies, and speak publicly about the range of issues on which our views are constantly sought. The reason has to be, on every occasion, to pursue equality for all Tasmanians.



ion:
l justice now and in the future

Expectations for the next twelve months - both levels of Government to continue to invest in essential health services, a continued investment in and commitment to the next stages of the Affordable Housing Strategy, and a continued focus on improving our unemployment rate.

social justice outcomes

One of the key ways we work for positive social change each year is through our Budget Priority Statement - which goes to the State Government in order to influence the Government budget process. This statement (with its recommendations) is based on widespread consultation with our membership and with our stakeholders.

In this year's budget, it was evident that our written statement, our public advocacy and our lobbying of government in relation to these messages do have some impact. The Affordable Housing Strategy, the continuation (even if not expansion) of the Partnerships to Jobs Program, and the investment in skills development and training opportunities geared towards employability were all policy directions we have continued to advocate for over the past two years.

However, the Federal Budget delivered a different response for Tasmanians. Tax cuts announced missed 80 per cent of Tasmanians, and

one-off bonuses in relation to Family Tax Benefit and Carers were poorly targeted in how they were delivered. We do believe that increases in income support payments to Tasmanians are necessary. But, one-off spending sprees don't ensure long term quality of life improvements for the many Tasmanians still living below the poverty line, and dependent upon these payments every fortnight rather than once a year.

Our expectations for the next twelve months are for both levels of Government to continue to invest in essential health services, a continued investment in and commitment to the next stages of the Affordable Housing Strategy, and a continued focus on improving our unemployment rate.

social justice vision

Essential to achieving these goals at a policy and structural level is the introduction of our new three-year strategic plan. This plan clearly outlines a process for TasCOSS and the Tasmanian community to work towards a social vision of equality in the Tasmanian community.

The plan was released during this financial year to widespread support of our work. Similarly, we signed a Partnership Agreement with Tasmania Together Progress Board to work collaboratively with Government to address 12 of the benchmarks in the Tasmanian Together Plan. This agreement outlines our efforts to achieve the indicators in relation to poverty, employment and gambling.

sector development – collaboration, dialogue and outcomes

Our member organisations in the Tasmanian non-government community services sector form a key role in helping TasCOSS achieve its vision and mission. These are the organisations for whom we lobby and advocate in relation to industry specific policy (Work Value Claim, Service Agreements, Governance support, Indexation).

We have continued our focus on whole of sector development by strengthening key links and communication structures between our sector and the State Government, and



in creating constructive dialogue between these two essential service sectors. With a Department of Health and Human Services that invests over \$100 million dollars per annum in our sector, these consultative and collaborative structures are essential to achieve a strong, resourced and effective non-government sector, and to gaining positive social outcomes for low-income and disadvantaged Tasmanians.

national vision

Participation in the national network of Councils of Social Service, and our alignment with the work and vision of the Australian Council of Social Service ensures that we are able to capture national standards, and have an influence in the work that ACOSS does at a Federal level. TasCOSS's vision is well aligned with that of ACOSS, and we have strong representation at that level with our President holding the position of Deputy President of ACOSS. This relationship allows us to contribute local experiences in policy and sector development in national decision making processes.

future continuous improvement of the organisation

A strong and thriving organisation provides us with the foundation to undertake our work to further the social justice agenda. Taking on the role of Executive Director of a small, but essential, non-government organisation has its own challenges. High on my agenda for the coming year is to create an organisation that can model effective practices at staff and Board level. Internally, we continue to make progress in developing services for members, creating meaningful consultative structures and a strong and powerful social policy agenda through our Social Policy Council.

financial condition

Resources and finances are critical to ensuring that we have the capacity to do this work, and the financial reports presented in this Annual Report indicate that we are in a strong position. There have been some challenges with changes of staff and varying ways of attending to accounts, planning and budgeting and expenditure. But, with a core grant and a

number of projects we are able to attend to our core business well.

A healthy accumulated surplus provides us with the opportunity to reinvest in the organisation, the membership, the services we provide to members, and in our social policy work. We are in good stead for the coming year with more rigorous and meaningful financial reporting to the Board now in place.

thanks to President, Board members, staff and member organisations

Finally, it is essential for me to pay thanks to the team at TasCOSS, and to the staff who have worked with us over the past twelve months.

Office support staff Sandra Faulkner and Catherine Cooper left us, and we warmly welcome Lynne Browning in this area. Carol Dorgelo left the HACC Consumer Project, and we farewelled Ruth Virth from the Communications Officer position. All have contributed to our work over the past twelve months. Of particular attention is Vince McCormack. Vince has tirelessly worked in the Unemployed Workers Network over the past three years. Funding for this project ceased on June 30 and Vince leaves us to take it a bit easier - we wish him well.

Finally, thanks to the Board of management, volunteers who have worked with us and to the member organisations who have provided us with essential contributions on a daily basis over the past twelve months.

Mat Rowell
Executive Director

Profile

Mission:
The mission of TasCOSS is to represent and uphold the interests of low-income and disadvantaged people in Tasmania.

TasCOSS – the organisation

The Tasmanian Council of Social Service Inc. strives for an equitable and just Tasmanian community by providing a voice for low-income and disadvantaged Tasmanians, and acts as a peak organisation for the non-government community services sector.

Focus on the cause not just the symptom

TasCOSS looks beyond the symptoms of social inequality by identifying how poverty and disadvantage are created and maintained by a range of social, political and economic factors within local and national environments.

Collaboration and consultation - dialogue in the public forum

Through collaborative and consultative relationships within the Tasmanian community - the sector, Government, low-income and socially disadvantaged Tasmanians and a range of relevant stakeholders – TasCOSS identifies a range of goals and strategies to

improve equality in the Tasmania community. Through this process, TasCOSS can identify the best policy solutions for sustainable positive social change.

But the catalyst for this change requires whole community awareness and commitment. TasCOSS furthers this agenda by placing current social issues and recommended solutions in the public sphere by stimulating debate through the general media and other public forums.

A strong sector – services in the community

Whilst maintaining the social justice agenda, TasCOSS is equally committed to strengthening non-government community services that support people living in poverty and social disadvantage. The organisation works with the sector to build on resources and structures that deliver responsive and effective services to Tasmanians in need.

Aims

TasCOSS as a peak council for the community welfare sector fulfils its mission by:

- Establishing effective representative structures
- Consulting with low income and disadvantaged people and the sector
- Providing strategic advice to government and other bodies through research and social policy development and analysis
- Systemic advocacy to effect social change
- Providing leadership in shaping community opinion
- Supporting sector development
- Maintaining a well governed, well managed and well resourced organisation

Past and present – over forty years commitment to social justice

With the national social justice agenda already in motion with the establishment of the Australian Council of Social Service in 1956 and a roll out of State and Territory councils in progress, it was only a matter of time before a council would also be established in Tasmania to address poverty and social disadvantage.

In 1961, Tasmania joined the new national network of Councils of Social Service, and progressed the social justice agenda over the next 15 years with little funding support.

Values

- Equality of civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights and participation for all individuals and communities
- The equal consideration of social, economic and environmental goals to improve community living standards for all in a fair and sustainable manner
- The expertise and experience of people living on a low income and experiencing disadvantage, their communities and the sector organisations who work with them
- Working with people affected by poverty and inequality in a consultative, collaborative and participatory way on issues which impact on their lives
- Good governance and organisational management and the independent non-party political nature of the organisation.



But, in 1975 TasCOSS reached a significant organisation milestone with the appointment of a paid project worker. In recent times, TasCOSS has increased its resource capacity to currently maintain a paid staff of four policy and project workers, administrative and communications support, and an Executive Director.

The national network - a national agenda and a commitment to best practice

TasCOSS's role in furthering the social justice agenda goes beyond a local commitment.

As part of a national network, TasCOSS works with the Australian Council of Social Service to ensure local input in national decision-making processes in key policy areas.

TasCOSS's capacity to provide leadership in social policy development and support to the sector is also strengthened

by its role in a national network of Councils of Social Service. The network provides opportunities for State and Territory councils to share experiences in community and government relationships, policy development, organisational continuous improvement, and sector development. And, at times, provides a unified and strong national voice in relation to policy issues that affect all States and Territories.

Governance – Board and staff roles and responsibilities

TasCOSS's organisational capacity and development is largely influenced by its Constitution and shaped within a Policy Governance framework and process.

In 2001, TasCOSS Board decided to improve organisational efficiency by adapting and applying principles of the Carver model of governance. The Carver model provides the Board and

staff members with policies and procedures defining their roles, responsibilities, limitations and respective processes.

The model improves efficiency through clearly distinguishing the Board's role to govern, and the Executive Director's role to oversee operational matters and staff responsibilities.

This framework ensures that the Board is mandated to develop and monitor TasCOSS's strategic direction, to set limitations on the activities of the Executive Director and to design appropriate board operational processes to ensure transparency and accountability.

Board – profile

The TasCOSS Board consists of the position of President and 14 members, including representation from three state-wide regions (North, North-West, and South) – two organisation members and one individual member



from each region, three peak body members, and two organisation general members.

During the 2003-2004 year, the Board membership included the President, 10 members and four vacant memberships - one Individual North, two organisation North and one organisation North-West memberships.

Executive

- President – Sue Ham – Colony 47
- Vice President – Dave Willans – Peak – Youth Network of Tasmania
- Secretary – Sandra Kent – Peak – Tasmanian Association of Community Legal Services
- Treasurer – Chris Jones – Organisation General - Anglicare Tasmania Inc.

Current Board

- Michael Voumard – Organisation South – Drug Education Network of Tasmania
- Pattie Chugg – Peak – Shelter Tasmania
- Ronda McIntyre – Organisation General – Salvation Army
- Michelle Swallow – Organisation South – Family Planning Tasmania
- Mark Stemm – Organisation North-West – Tandarra Lodge
- Marina Campbell – Individual - South

Past Board

- Esme Murphy – Individual South

Membership

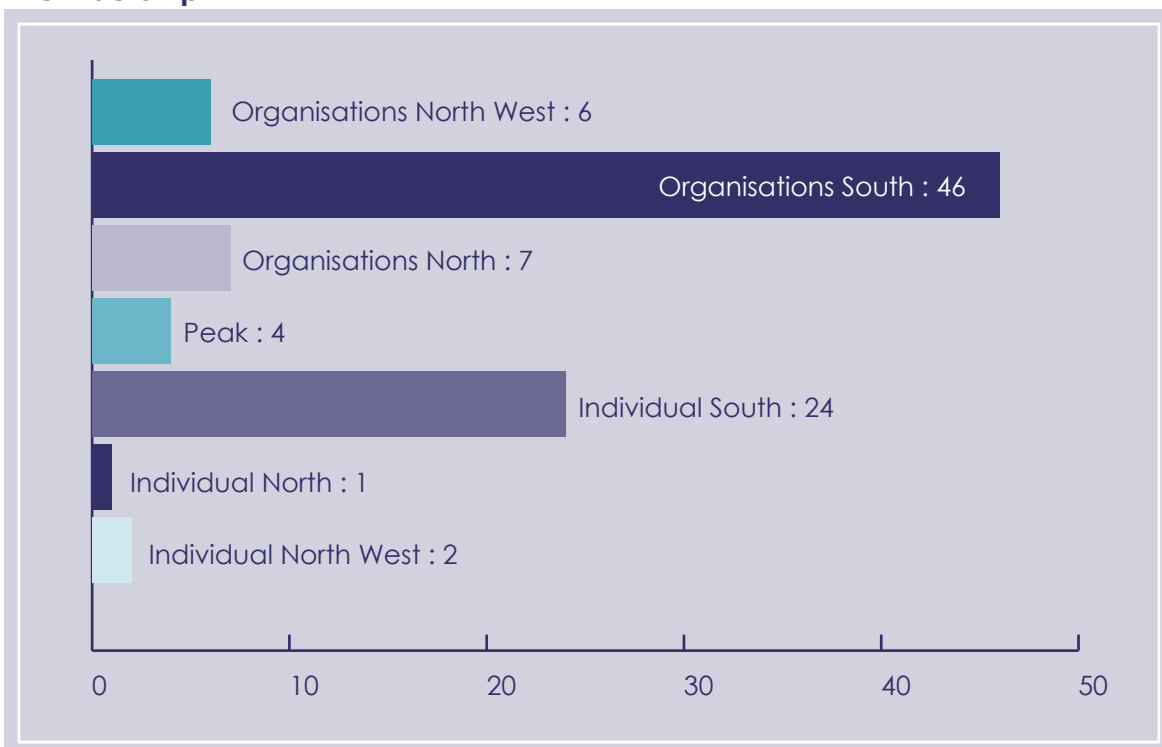
TasCOSS's resources and capacity to identify sustainable policy solutions is strengthened through its diverse membership base.

The organisation strives to inform and consult widely with a range of individuals and organisations working in the sector, and who share TasCOSS's commitment

to create positive and sustainable social change.

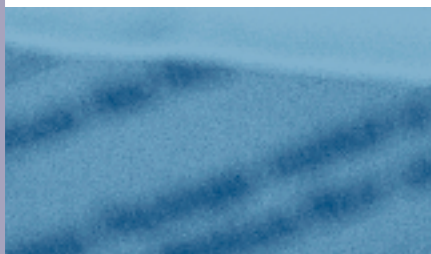
TasCOSS 2003-2004 Membership consisted of 90 members - including community services sector organisations and individuals across the State and three life members.

Membership



Staff Profile – 03-04 : Current

Mat Rowell – Executive Director (February 04 – present)
 David Owen – Policy Officer
 Kath McLean – Project Officer
 Vince McCormack – Project Officer
 Angela Maccallini - Home and Community Care (HACC) Project Officer (February 04 – present)
 Stacey van Dongen – Communications Officer (Acting Feb 04 – June 04, June 04- present)
 Lynne Browning – Administrative Officer (February 04 – present)



Staff Profile – 03-04 : Past

Lis de Vries – Executive Director (until November 03)
 Ann Hughes – Acting Executive Director (November 03-January 04)
 Carol Dorgelo – Home and Community Care (HACC) Project Officer (until November 03)
 Ruth Virth – Communications Officer (until June 04)
 Sandra Faulkner – Administrative Officer (until November 03)
 Catherine Cooper – Administrative Assistant (until February 04)



Funding & resource support

TasCOSS's funding profile includes a range of significant funding sources.

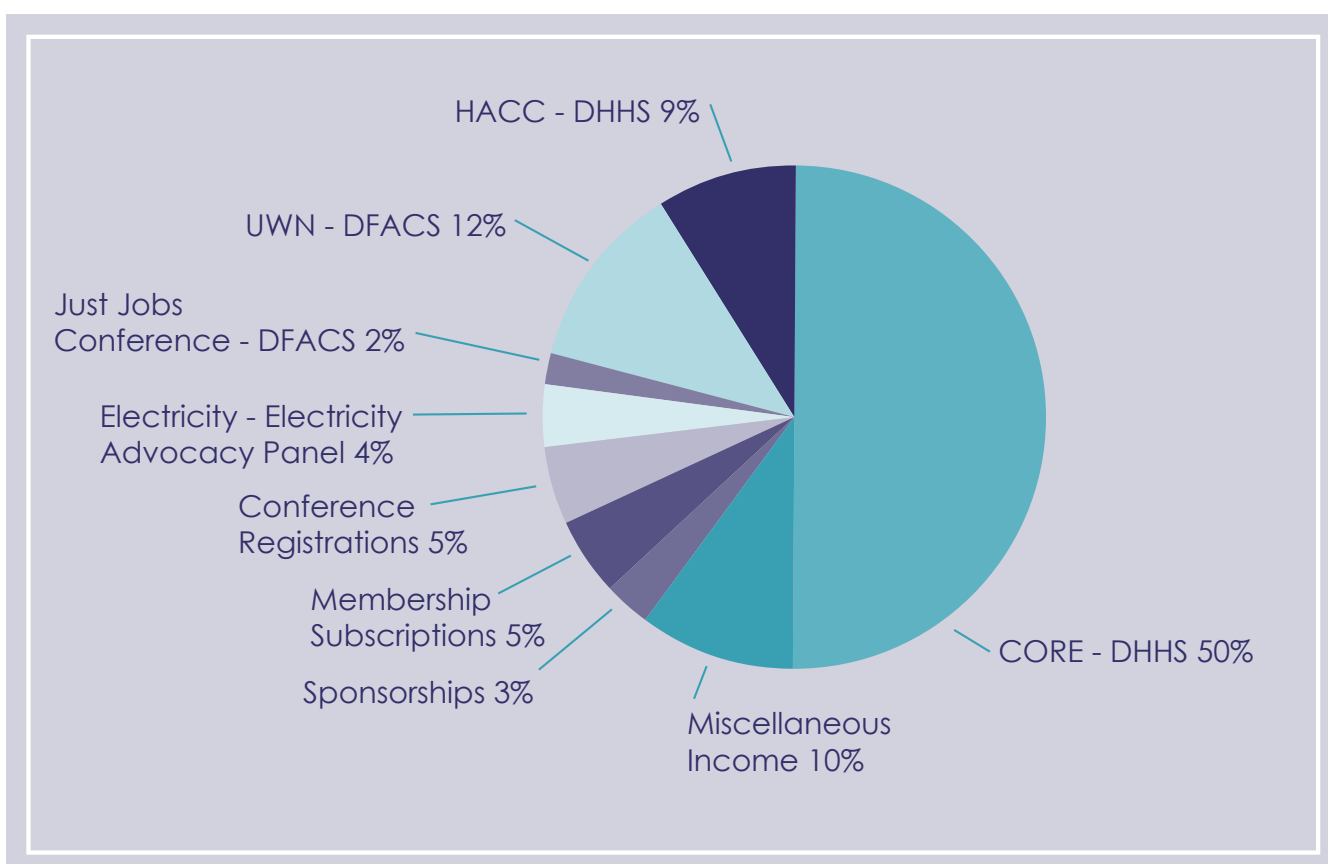
Although TasCOSS works independently of government and has no political affiliation, the organisation is partly funded by both the State and Federal Governments to address significant and current social issues and to strengthen service provision.

Since the 1980's, the State Government has provided funding support to TasCOSS to work with State Government departments and the community services sector to

further develop strong and responsive service provision to Tasmanians living in poverty and social disadvantage.

During 2003-2004, the Federal Government provided funding for TasCOSS to conduct research, service provision development and employment creation through community development initiatives throughout the State.

TasCOSS's resources are also boosted through sponsorship and pro-bono support. The current corporate support profile includes Hesta, Aurora, Murdoch Clarke Barristers and Solicitors and Newprint.



2003-2004 Highlights & Significant Events

A year of milestones - a TasCOSS leader hangs up her coat, community enterprise employment initiatives on show, and a major advance in tackling the increasing housing crisis.

August

Budget Priorities Statement – consultations conducted with the community services sector and others to identify policy recommendations to be submitted to the State Government Budget submission process in October.

November

Lis de Vries - TasCOSS staff, the community services sector, Government departmental staff and friends of TasCOSS celebrate the end of an era at the farewell of TasCOSS Executive Director Lis de Vries.

December

Affordable Housing Strategy – the State Government's strategy to challenge the deepening housing crisis is launched. TasCOSS welcomes the Government's initiative to inject \$45 million into developing short and long-term sustainable housing solutions.

February

AfriTAS – Hobart restaurant
AfriTAS opens its doors. The opening heralded the achievement of an employment initiative brought about by community collaboration, networking and resource sharing. TasCOSS's Unemployed Workers Network Project supported the initiative.

May

Federal Budget – The 2004 Budget included a number of family support initiatives, but failed to provide tax relief to 80 per cent of the Tasmanian population.

State Budget – 'The Heart of Silver' Budget also revealed a 'mixed bag' for low-income and socially disadvantaged Tasmanians. TasCOSS welcomed the Government's continuing

commitment to address the housing crisis, and to further develop training and skill development opportunities in the labour market. But, voiced concern at the lack of funding to health services - specifically the scope of mental health provision.

June

Tasmania *Together* Agreement – TasCOSS and the Tasmania *Together* Progress Board agree on working towards 12 social benchmarks that will strengthen the Tasmania *Together* 20-year social vision and parallel TasCOSS's 2004-2006 Strategic Plan.

Just Jobs 2 Conference – Enterprising Communities Creating Work – 180 participants come together to share experiences, knowledge and information on developing enterprising work creation initiatives.

VISION The Social Justice agenda - now and in the future

The past year has seen significant State Government advancement in tackling the critical housing crisis, and further attention to strengthen employment opportunities in the Tasmanian labour market.

But in the next year, TasCOSS will be looking for a whole of State Government response to challenge homelessness and the continuing housing crisis, sustainable and meaningful employment creation and opportunities, and tackling a health system that is maintaining vulnerability and hardship for some Tasmanians.

Collaboration, consultation and dialogue
TasCOSS's move to address these current social issues through sustainable and workable social policy solutions is spearheaded by the Tasmanian Social Policy Council. TasCOSS Policy Officer David Owen reports on the changing dynamics, continuous improvement and vision of the council in the past year.



“Ultimately, the real strengths of the TSPC will derive from the efforts of the various working groups that are tackling specific policy issues.”

David Owen

The TSPC has now been meeting since February 2003. The TasCOSS Board is currently assessing the most appropriate structure for the ongoing operation of the Council.

While structural changes may occur, there is little doubt that the TSPC is here to stay in one form or another. TasCOSS is committed to ensuring that our community service organisations and peak bodies have a forum in which they can collectively develop policy positions for our advocacy work.

TSPC meetings have been held on a regular monthly basis and have been well attended, with representatives of all CSO peak organisations participating through the year. This representation has ensured that a wide range of important policy issues has been discussed. Most of the meetings have been enriched by the contributions of guest speakers who have generously shared their expertise and participated in often-lively follow-on discussions. We are especially grateful to DHHS Secretary John Ramsay for his presentation, and for ensuring that TSPC members

were provided with a full post-Budget briefing by senior Departmental managers.

Ultimately, the real strengths of the TSPC will derive from the efforts of the various working groups that are tackling specific policy issues. We currently have working groups focusing on: disability planning, housing, employment, families/relationships, gambling and consumer issues. These working groups provide an opportunity for any TasCOSS member — individual or organisational — to participate in the policy development process.

VISION The Social Justice agenda - now and in the future

Some light at the end of the tunnel

The announcement of the State Government's Affordable Housing Strategy signified to the Tasmanian community that the housing crisis required an immediate and substantial challenge. For those working in the community services sector, the strategy indicated a long-awaited and much needed government response - reflected in the injection of \$45 million funding into immediate and long-term housing solutions.



“Are we happy with the level of resourcing for local employment creation enterprises? Of course not - there is much more to be done.” David Owen

David Owen reflects on the key policy advances in the critical areas of social health - housing and employment. But, points out that there is much to be done in the coming year's social justice agenda...

The announcement in December 2003 of the Affordable Housing Strategy and the commitment of an additional \$45 million in funding was a clear indication of the value of our sector persisting in its key advocacy work. TasCOSS had worked closely with Shelter Tas, the Tenants Union, Anglicare Tasmania, Colony 47 and other non-government organisations during the previous year to convince the Tasmanian Government that our State was facing a major housing crisis for low-income households. Just as importantly, we worked closely with Housing Tasmania to help develop the key elements of the eventual strategy.



revenue – too important to be left just to economists

TasCOSS was the public voice calling not only for additional expenditure, but also for the specific use of windfall stamp duty revenue for that purpose. We were delighted when the Tasmanian Government chose this course of action. We recognise that it is ultimately not enough for our sector to just point to the need for more expenditure on key social issues. We also have some responsibility to address the question of where resources should come from, and it is likely that TasCOSS will play an increased role in advocating for equitable and sustainable revenue solutions at the Tasmanian Government

level. Issues like taxation are too important to be left to economists!

creating sustainable employment

The May 2004 Budget also saw a welcome 'top up' to the Partnerships to Jobs program initiated in 2003. This program was an important outcome of the TasCOSS Just Jobs Conference, and we are now beginning to see funding flow to a range of local job-creation enterprise projects across the State. The additional \$1m for the program will ensure that momentum within this exciting 'movement' is not lost. TasCOSS can justifiably claim credit for nudging the Tasmanian Government

towards a more proactive role in local-level job creation.

Are we happy with the level of resourcing for local enterprises? Of course not - there is much more to be done. But we need to recognise that even two years ago there appeared to be little prospect of these local enterprises being funded. We do have an impact!

VISION Strengthening the sector

TasCOSS's Changing Relationships Project laid the foundation for improved and constructive communication pathways between the non-government community services sector and the State Government Department of Health and Human Services. In the past year, TasCOSS has built on this foundation by making this relationship one of the key focuses of the organisation. As well as facilitating social policy development, TasCOSS staff and the Executive Director continue to work with the sector and Government to strengthen service provision in the community services sector.

A changing relationship

Once upon a time there was the Changing Relationships Project, which morphed into the Partnerships Project, then back to Changing Relationships again. Now? Now we don't think of our linkage with DHHS as a project, rather as a core part of TasCOSS business. We spend a lot of time working to ensure that our member and constituent community service organisations have an opportunity to participate in discussions with DHHS on policy and practice issues. We also devote a fair amount of effort trying to ensure that the valuable time contributed by Community Service Organisations and Departmental staff is

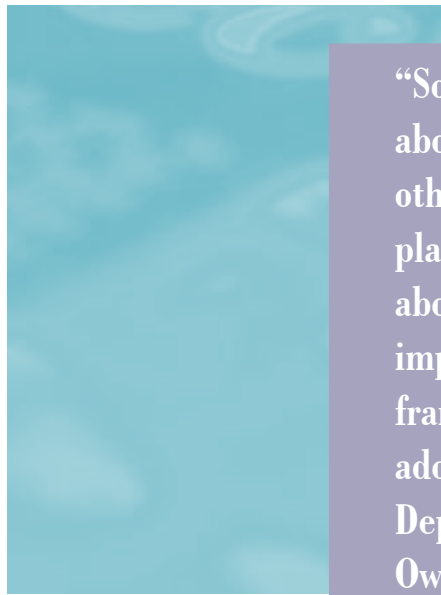
not wasted — 'process for process's sake'.

The past year has been an instructive one. We have seen a significant shift in emphasis within the various forums and working groups that constitute the structure of our relationship with DHHS. Whereas that structure was once built around the Department's own divisional hierarchy - with each division having a regular consultative forum of some sort in addition to the overarching Agency-Sector Forum - now there is a focus on issues. The forums and working groups now have more of a project focus with a greater emphasis on outcomes rather than process.

On paper, we now have a large and impressive list of forums and working groups. At one stage this year, the total reached 22 different groupings - some ongoing forums, others ad hoc working groups destined to only meet on a couple of occasions. Some forums are about developing policy, others about practice planning, still others about monitoring the implementation of frameworks already adopted by the Department.

change and reflection

While the list of forums may be impressive, the reality is a little less so. Many of the new structures have begun with a flourish and then died away to very low levels of activity.



“Some forums are about developing policy, others about practice planning, still others about monitoring the implementation of frameworks already adopted by the Department.” David Owen

Unfortunately, the 'historical' sector issue of stretching resources to address all needs is still alive and well. CSO's are still struggling with devoting enough resources to sector development and the competing day-to-day demands of service provision. The Department has also struggled with devoting enough staff resources to maintain sustained interaction with the sector. But, despite these challenges, TasCOSS will continue to work with the Department to continually improve channels of communication between Government and the sector.

valuable structures

Many of the forums have been valuable for all concerned - contributing to shared perspectives that can only strengthen the capacity of our various service systems. We are confident that the coming year will see a consolidation of these structures, and that there will emerge valuable

outcomes for our sector as well as for DHHS.

The Agency-Sector Forum (ASF) (the main agency-wide structure for managing the relationship between DHHS and its funded non-government organisations) continues to be an especially valuable structure. Sector representation at the forums has recently changed with an explicit focus on CSO peak bodies. We look forward to those peak bodies ensuring that issues of concern to their member organisations are given due prominence at ASF meetings, and that the information provided by the Department is quickly and reliably relayed back to those member organisations. Our thanks to those individuals who represented the non-government sector on the previous ASF structure for their dedication and, in the case of people like Ian Paterson of the ASU, their perseverance over a very long period!

FOCUS

Consumer Issues Project

Consumer issues in Tasmania took on greater focus for TasCOSS with the appointment of project worker Kath McLean in August of 2003. This focus has started processes that will further the rights of the State's most vulnerable consumers – low-income and socially disadvantaged Tasmanians.

In the past year the project has developed a consultative relationship with Aurora, moves towards an independent consumer information and advocacy service, research and representation in various national networks and committees.

Kath McLean reports on the beginning of TasCOSS's focus on consumer rights in Tasmania...

profile

For several years prior to August 2003, TasCOSS had functioned as a 'default' consumer voice in the absence of a dedicated non-government consumer presence in Tasmania. The part-time policy officer position has allowed TasCOSS to not only inform itself more fully, but also to get further involved and consult more widely on a range of consumer issues.

background

The project was initiated to direct attention to the concerns of Tasmania's most vulnerable consumers - those living on low incomes and otherwise disadvantaged. Tasmanians have the lowest average income in the country, and pay some of the highest prices for consumer goods and services. Day-to-day consumer choices in areas such as electricity, telecommunications,

insurance, superannuation and banking are increasingly complex, and can be crucial to standards of living for people on low incomes. Consumers need accessible information about the products and services they buy in order to make appropriate and sustainable choices.

collaboration

We have worked closely with community service and other government and non-government organisations to improve access to information for Tasmanian consumers, and to ensure that their concerns and voices are heard. We represent the interests of low-income and disadvantaged consumers on the Australian Competition and Consumers Commission (ACCC) Consumer Consultative Committee, on the Tasmanian Energy Regulator's Customer Consultative Committee and on the State Government's

“We continue to seek additional sources of funding for consumer issues and to make plans for activities we believe will benefit Tasmanian consumers.” Kath McLean



Passenger Transport Reference Group. This year we have established a Consumer Issues Working Group of the Tasmanian Social Policy Council that will draw on the experience of and engage interested community sector workers in policy analysis and development in this area.

outcomes

Late in 2003, we applied for funding from the State Attorney-General to establish a non-government consumer information and advocacy service and, although the submission was unsuccessful, we believe that having demonstrated the need for such a service, a second application at a more appropriate time in the State Government's budget cycle may prove to be more successful.

We have made a number of submissions on discussion papers concerning consumer issues including: product safety, regulation of motor vehicle sales, consumer protection in electricity supply, unfair contract terms and proposals for the transition to retail contestability in the electricity market. We have

also consulted closely with Aurora Energy on the development of strategies targeting low-income Tasmanians.

future

The Consumer Issues Project has extended its reach over the year by securing additional sources of funding, including a grant from the National Electricity Consumers Advocacy Panel (\$20,000) for a four-part training program for domestic consumers and their advocates in electricity supply and National Electricity Market issues. We have also received a Consumer Representation Grant (\$12,500) from the Federal Department of Communication, Information Technology and the Arts to run a short-term pilot project addressing information needs and concerns of consumers of telecommunications products and services in regional Tasmania. We continue to seek additional sources of funding for consumer issues and to make plans for activities we believe will benefit Tasmanian consumers.

TasCOSS will maintain the Consumer Issues Project for at

“Consumers need accessible information about the products and services they buy in order to make appropriate and sustainable choices.” Kath McLean

least another twelve months. The project will continue to raise awareness of consumer issues in Tasmania, consult Tasmanian consumers about their concerns, represent their interests and work alongside government and non-government organisations to get a better deal -especially for low-income and disadvantaged consumers. We plan to re-submit to the State Government for funding for a stand-alone, non-government consumer information and advocacy service in the State and to continue our policy and development work in this critical but under-resourced area.

FOCUS Home and Community Care Project

The Home and Community Care Project continued its consultations across the State with specific focus on people and carers living with dementia and in regional areas. In the past twelve months, the project has exposed the day-to-day hardships and service gaps facing young people with disabilities, the frail-aged and their carers.

Project worker Angela Maccallini reports on the stories of consumers in these areas, and describes some of the recommendations to improve services that will improve their quality of life.

profile

The Home and Community Care (HACC) Consumer Consultation Project consults with consumers and potential consumers of HACC services across the State. These consultations are aimed at identifying service gaps, the quality of service provision and the current utilisation of services from a consumer viewpoint. This information is then structured into an Annual Report that assists the HACC unit to develop their annual plan.

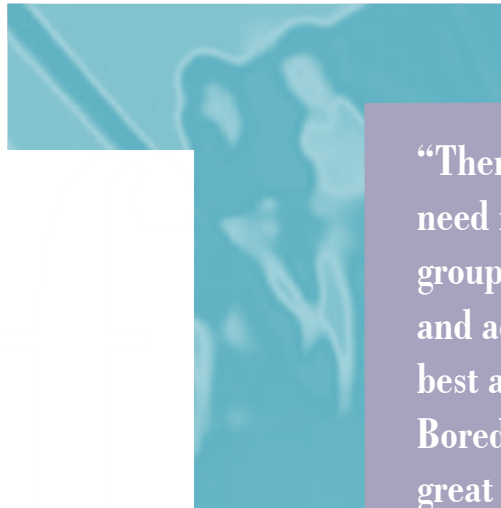
background

Consumers of these services are the frail-aged and the younger disabled and their carers who need assistance to live independently in their homes.

This target group faces many barriers when trying to attain a quality of life - least of which



“Ghastly – a nightmare of the worst kind. Great sadness. Social activity virtually finito. Increased expense trying to appease appetite – buckets of bananas one week, a ton of chocolate the next week. He has no idea of income. Has to be the worst sickness known.”
(carer)



“There is clearly a greater need for day care type groups, entertainment, and activities in the best aged care homes. Boredom is such a great problem with the decreasing ability to read, do puzzles, have conversations etc.”

are linked to financial and access issues.

A large majority of these consumers are pensioners who are consequently vulnerable to rises in health care costs. For example, the gradual introduction of upfront fees for medical services and increases in the pharmaceutical rebate cap create significant barriers for those consumers on low-income.

Access to services and the wider community is difficult for many HACC consumers due to limited community transport provision and the prohibitive costs of private transport.

The issue of access is further complicated by a fragmented and inequitable service system, and the minimal distribution of information about services available to consumers.

A broader aim of the project is to advocate for reform of the community care service systems with the goal of

creating a quality, consumer focused sector that responds to those who most need assistance effectively.

consultation

This project is unique as the consumer feedback contributes directly to growth funding being earmarked for identified priority areas.

By utilising a consultative framework that is egalitarian and non-tokenistic, this project provides an opportunity for consumers to have an affect on decisions that affect their lives. This can be a tool for empowerment when consumer input is directly linked to positive outcomes.

The consultation process and funding priorities are identified through consultations between the Home and Community Care Unit, consumer peak bodies and TasCOSS. This process encourages an on-going dialogue between these groups, consumers and service providers throughout each financial year.



outcomes – issues living with dementia

In November last year, the issue of dementia care in the community was the focus of consumer consultations in the North and South of the State. Consumers raised issues concerning the flexibility, amount and quality of service provision and provided insight on the impact of dementia on their lives.

recommendations

The Annual Report for this project contains recommendations aimed at dementia specific services that include:

- the provision of meaningful activities for consumers with dementia
- an increase of client centred funding packages with an emphasis on long term case management models
- better targeting of respite funding to service providers who can actually provide flexible respite options.

outcomes – issues in regional areas

A series of eight consultations in the form of public meetings and surveys were conducted in the municipalities of Glamorgan/Spring Bay, Kentish and the Derwent Valley. The main goal of these consultations was to gain a broad overview of consumer views on HACC services in these regions.

In total, 123 consumers participated in the consultations, and their feedback provides the basis for recommendations listed in the HACC Annual Report.

There were consistent themes across the municipalities concerning access to services - including community transport, home and garden maintenance and podiatry. Consumers generally felt they were lacking in information about what community services were available and how to access these services.

recommendations

As a result of the consumer feedback, recommendations made in the Annual Report call for:

- a review of funding models to isolated towns which includes travel time and costs, staff recruitment and dissemination of information to consumers,
- the issue of the lack of appropriate discharge protocol in hospitals for HACC consumers to be raised by the HACC unit with the State Government Department
- the introduction of the Foot-Care assistants program to the Glamorgan/Spring Bay Municipality, and its subsequent review to ascertain the program's effectiveness.

future

During the next financial year, the project will continue to consult with regional communities who have yet to participate in the project, younger persons with a disability and culturally and linguistically diverse groups. The project will also explore ways to further develop the depth and scope of the project.

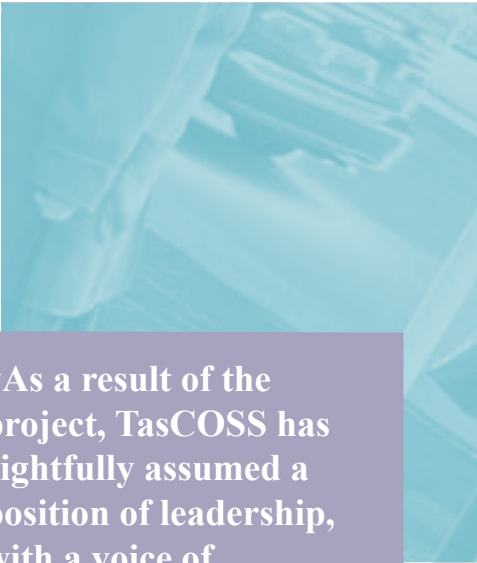
FOCUS Unemployed Workers Network Project

The issue of unemployment and sustainable work creation still remain critical and significant issues on the social justice agenda. Since 1999, TasCOSS has sought to uncover the short and long term implications of unemployment for Tasmanians. But, has also strived to support and further develop the most enterprising insights into work creation created by the people most affected by the issue of unemployment.

At the conclusion of the Unemployed Workers Network Project in July 2004, project worker Vince McCormack reflects on the impact of unemployment, and the strengths and invaluable resources of people and communities making inroads into sustainable and meaningful work creation.

in the beginning

In 1999, an innovative initiative called the Freedom Ride consulted with people being forced to live on low-incomes in seven communities around Tasmania. This project was part of the Just Tasmania Campaign driven by TasCOSS, the Poverty Coalition and Anglicare Tasmania's Social Action Research Centre (SARC). The Unemployed Workers Network grew out of this Freedom Ride, and was designed to politicise the issue of unemployment in Tasmania and highlight it as one of the State's greatest social injustices needing to be addressed in more urgent ways.



“As a result of the project, TasCOSS has rightfully assumed a position of leadership, with a voice of credibility, in the Tasmanian community seeking to bring about a greater community response to the issue of unemployment.” Vince McCormack

In the project's first year 2000 – 2001 (funded by the State Government), further consultations took place with unemployed job seekers from around Tasmania resulting in the publication of *DEAD MAN'S SHOES*. The Federal Government funded the project for a further two and a half years (Jan 2002–June 2004).

political response to unemployment

The project has been critical in putting the issue of unemployment, especially long-term unemployment, on the political agenda and keeping it there. The two State Employment Conferences (Just Jobs in October 2002 and Just Jobs 2 in June 2004) have been hailed for their achievements: a Minister for Employment has been appointed, round-tables and other consultations have been held with several State Government Ministers, the Department of Economic Development and the Partnerships for Jobs Program which was

funded over two consecutive budgets. Political support has also been received for local job creation initiatives that TasCOSS and other community groups have been supporting.

whole of community response to unemployment

I stated in last year's Annual Report that unemployment is too often seen as an individual problem rather than a community concern requiring a community response. Politicians and the wider society view unemployment rarely as an outcome of systemic failure, but rather as an individual problem.

The focus is constantly on the failure of the individual - on his or her lack of motivation or lack of skills. This rational also fits with a dominant belief system that suggests that as individuals we all act autonomously and express our autonomy and preferences in the market place. If the

individual ends up unemployed and/or in poverty, he or she has made poor choices. This rational then underpins a broad strategic solution – change the behaviour of the unemployed person. (1)

As a result of the Unemployed Workers Network Project, TasCOSS has rightfully assumed a position of leadership, with a voice of credibility, in the Tasmanian community seeking to bring about a greater community response to the issue of unemployment. The project's close work with a range of stakeholders and consultative processes have contributed to this response: the Project's Steering Committee, productive working relationships with DEWR and many of the Job Network Agencies, partnerships with community-based and stakeholder groups, many of whom were active in the two Just Jobs Conferences, and the work of the Project in several communities.

“Politicians and the wider society view unemployment rarely as an outcome of systemic failure, but rather as an individual problem.”
 Vince McCormack

local community responses to unemployment

The Marketplace of Ideas and Opportunities - a feature of the Just Jobs 2 Conference – show cased some of the many local community responses and social enterprises to unemployment. The Unemployment Workers Network Project has worked closely in a leadership role with several of these communities – including:

- with the African Community in Hobart and the formation of Africa Enterprises Inc which was foundational to the establishment of AfriTAS
- in the Northern Suburbs of Launceston with JAG North Inc
- at Fingal and St Mary's in Break O' Day
- in the Huon and Derwent Valleys
- at Risdon Vale and Clarendon Vale.

JAG North Inc – a project snap shot

The project's work in Launceston helped establish JAG North Inc (Jobs Action Group for the Northern Suburbs of Launceston). At the centre of JAG North has been

a group of local unemployed people committed to their community, and meeting regularly with the following as a way of getting unemployment addressed in their own community: Housing Tasmania, the local Council, local politicians, the local Community Neighbourhood Centre, Project Hahn, Centrelink, the Job Network and the local High School.

giving unemployed job seekers a voice and hope

The UWN project has achieved much at the above three levels. However, much has also been achieved at the personal and individual level. Anecdotally, there are many stories of unemployed job seekers who have been variously involved in the project and, as a result of that involvement, have moved on in their lives. There are many stories of those who have re-engaged with their communities as a result of this project – remembering that social exclusion and isolation are among the greatest negative effects of long-term unemployment. Others have re-engaged with long-

abandoned tertiary studies while others again have found employment. They have accepted the various forums and platforms that the Unemployed Workers Network Project has offered them.

future

At the same time, however, we need to remember that the job is not yet done. There are still some thousands of unemployed people in Tasmania. The advocacy and leadership of TasCOSS is still required, and the work of projects similar to that of the Unemployed Workers Network is still required. As we learnt at the Just Jobs 2 Conference, the Department of Labour in New Zealand employ over 70 field workers to engage in work similar to that of the Unemployed Workers Network Project.

(1) UWN Annual Report 2003

Report of Committee – 2003/2004

We acknowledge our responsibility for the preparation of the financial statements including adequate disclosure.

We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, the following representations:

- There have been no irregularities involving management or employees who have a significant role in the accounting and internal control systems or that could have a material effect on the financial statements.
- We have made available to you all books of account and supporting documentation and all minutes of meetings of TasCOSS. Where minutes have not been prepared for recent meetings, a summary of decisions taken at those meetings has been made available to you.
- We confirm the completeness of the information provided regarding the identification of related parties, and balances and transactions with related parties.
- The financial statements are free of material misstatements, including omissions.
- TasCOSS has complied with all aspects of contractual agreements that could have a material effect on the financial statements in the event of non-compliance. There has been no non-compliance with requirements of regulatory authorities that could have a material effect on the financial statements in the event of non-compliance.
- The following have been properly recorded and, when appropriate, adequately disclosed in the financial statements:
 - The identity of, and balances and transactions with, related parties;
 - Losses arising from sale and purchase commitments;
 - Agreements and options to buy back assets previously sold;
 - Assets pledged as collateral.
- We have no plans or intentions that may materially alter the carrying value or classification of assets and liabilities reflected in the financial statements.
- TasCOSS has satisfactory title to all assets and there are no liens or encumbrances on those assets.
- We have recorded or disclosed, as appropriate, all liabilities, both actual and contingent. There are no guarantees that we have given to third parties which require disclosure in the financial statements.
- There have been no events subsequent to period end which require adjustment of or disclosure in the financial statements or Notes thereto.
- No other claims in connection with litigation have been or are expected to be received.
- There are no formal or informal set-off arrangements with any of our cash accounts.



Sue Ham, President



Chris Jones, Treasurer

18 August 2004

Date

18 August 2004

Date

Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2004

2002/2003		Notes	2003/2004
ACCUMULATED FUNDS			
141,230	Retained Earnings		160,025
0	Reserve for Future Expenditure		1,920
141,230	ACCUMULATED FUNDS		161,944
represented by:			
ASSETS			
Current Assets			
255,186	Cash at Bank		224,517
482	Accounts/Grants Receivable		10,636
150	Cash on Hand		150
0	HACC Cash on hand		200
200	UWN Cash on Hand		400
0	Prepaid Expenses		1,920
217,986	TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		237,823
FIXED ASSETS			
59,999	Furniture & Equipment		77,569
-47,675	<u>Less</u> Accumulated Depreciation		-56,653
12,324	Total Furniture & Equipment		20,916
21,420	Motor Vehicles		21,421
-2,265	<u>Less</u> Accumulated Depreciation		-6,549
19,155			14,871
31,479	Total Fixed Assets		35,788
252,791	TOTAL ASSETS		273,611
LIABILITIES			
12,681	Annual Leave Provision		11,268
9,954	LSL Provision		0
3,233	Cover for Leave Provision		12,021
4,875	Accounts Payable		14,092
96,187	Unspent Funds Carried Forward	2	75,441
5,041	Workers Comp Insurance Liability		0
5,246	Superannuation Liability		0
3,514	PAYG Tax Payable		1
5,536	Net GST Tax Liability		-1,157
146,267	TOTAL LIABILITIES		111,665
115,554	Net Assets		161,945

Statement of Income & Expenditure for the year ended 30th June 2004

2002/2003		Notes	2003/2004
	INCOME		
-24,155	Net Movement in Unexpended Grant	3	20,745
327,229	Grants Received		325,983
21,112	Conference Registrations		22,238
22,067	Management Fees		20,508
9,867	Membership Subscriptions		20,622
14,800	Sponsorships		14,217
13,884	Miscellaneous Income		22,395
<u>384,804</u>	TOTAL INCOME		<u>446,709</u>
	EXPENSES		
49,491	Overheads		53,341
1,730	Affiliations		1,889
16,022	Consultation Expenses		27,713
16,265	Depreciation		13,261
14,953	Advertising & Publication Expenses		10,629
13,011	Seminar Expenses		6,221
182,909	Salaries		244,291
0	Cover for leave Expense		837
4,106	Staff Development		2,662
1,936	GA Expenses		472
3,153	Sitting Fees		3,325
6,100	Rent		6,100
1,302	Subscriptions		3,795
0	Project Evaluation		4,000
0	Sponsorships & Donations		6,170
2,047	M. Vehicle Costs		1,712
21,444	Venue Hire		1,772
18,357	Salary on costs		27,084
2,694	Equipment Rental		5,166
1,268	Board/AGM Expenses		3,751
186	Catering		1,803
43	Loss on Disposal of Assets		0
<u>357,017</u>	TOTAL EXPENSES		<u>425,994</u>
<u>27,787</u>	OPERATING SURPLUS/DEFICIT		<u>20,715</u>
113,443	OPENING RETAINED EARNINGS		141,230
<u>141,230</u>	CLOSING RETAINED EARNINGS		<u>161,945</u>

Notes to and Forming Part of the Financial Statements

Note 1 Statement of Accounting Policies

These financial statements are a special purpose financial report prepared for use by directors and the members of the Association. The directors have determined that the Association is not a reporting entity.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the following Australian Accounting Standards and other mandatory professional reporting requirements:

AAS 5 - Materiality

AAS 6 - Accounting Policies

AAS 8 - Events Occurring after Reporting Date

No other applicable Accounting Standards or mandatory professional reporting requirements have been applied.

The financial statements have been prepared on an accruals basis. They are based on historic costs and do not take into account changing money values or current valuations of non-current assets.

Certain of the prior year figures have been restated to conform with the current year presentation.

The following specific accounting policies, which are consistent with the previous period unless otherwise stated, have been adopted in the preparation of these financial statements:

Income Tax

The Association has been assessed by the Australian Taxation Office (March 2000) as an Income Tax Exempt Charity (ITEC) under Section 50-5 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997.

Property, Plant & Equipment

Property, plant and equipment are included at cost. All assets, are depreciated on a prime cost method over their useful lives.

Note 2 Unspent Funds Carried Forward

This refers to funds given as grants or contracts for projects unspent at year end. TasCOSS is the auspicing body and has contracts in accordance with agreed guidelines.

2002/2003			2003/2004
0	Electricity Training Project	a	11,064.00
14,016	HACC Consumer Consultation Project	b	43.00
10	Just Jobs Conference	c	29,741.00
61,553	Unemployed Workers Network	d	34,593.00
75,579			75,441.00
a	Funds brought forward	0	
	Income	15,000	
	Expenditure	3,936	
	Unspent funds carried forward	<u>11,064</u>	
b	Funds brought forward	14,015	
	Income	37,231	
	Expenditure	51,204	
	Unspent funds carried forward	<u>43</u>	
c	Funds brought forward	10	
	Income	44,803	
	Expenditure	15,072	
	Unspent funds carried forward	<u>29,741</u>	
d	Funds brought forward	61,553	
	Income	51,774	
	Expenditure	78,734	
	Unspent funds carried forward	<u>34,593</u>	

Note 3 Net Movement in Unexpended Grants

Includes completed projects surplus/deficit transferred to core operations.

2002/2003		2003/2004
1,128	Beyond Imprisonment	1,128
11,948	Community Health Trust	10,292
0	Electricity Consultations	-1,492
331	Gamblers Anonymous	-96
576	HACC Research Project	576
1,952	Partnerships Project	0
4,673	TasCOSS Human Services Contract	3,310
<u>20,608</u>		<u>13,718</u>



STEELE BURNETT & NELSON
 CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS
 A.B.N. 36 009 552 694



Chartered Accountants
 Business Advisers
 Tax Agents
 Registered Auditors

Established 1975
 Steele Burnett & Nelson Services Pty Ltd
 Member of CA Associates Australasia
 & CPA Associates International

Partners & Directors:
 D. W. STEELE F.C.A.
 M. J. BURNETT B.Com., F.C.A.
 Associates:
 K. A. NELSON B.Com., C.A.
 D. R. RICHARDS B.Com., C.A.

**INDEPENDENT AUDIT REPORT TO THE MEMBERS
 OF TASMANIAN COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE INC.**

Scope

We have audited the attached special purpose financial report comprising the Statement of Financial Position and Statement of Income & Expenditure Statement, of the Tasmanian Council of Social Service Inc. for the year ended 30 June 2004. The Associations Committee of Management is responsible for the financial report and has determined that the accounting policies used are consistent with the financial reporting requirements of the Associations constitution and are appropriate to meet the needs of the members. We have conducted an independent audit of the financial report in order to express an opinion on it to the members of the Tasmanian Council of Social Service Inc. No opinion is expressed as to whether the accounting policies used are appropriate to the needs of the members.

The financial report has been prepared for distribution to members for the purpose of fulfilling the Committee of Management's financial reporting requirements under the Associations constitution. We disclaim any assumption of responsibility for any reliance on this report or on the financial report to which it relates to any person other than the members, or for any purpose other than that for which it was prepared.

Our audited has been conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our procedures included examination, on a test basis, of evidence supporting the amounts and other disclosures in the financial report and the evaluation of significant accounting estimates. These procedures have been undertaken to form an opinion whether, in all material respects, the financial report is presented fairly in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements. (These policies do not require the application of all Accounting Standards and UIG Consensus Views).

Audit Opinion

In our opinion, the financial report presents fairly in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements the financial position the Tasmanian Council of Social Service Inc. as at 30 June 2004 and the results of its operation the year then ended.

Derek Steele
 Partner
 Chartered Accountant
 Rosny Park 31 August 2004.

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