

2006

Tasmanian Council of Social Service Inc.

annual report



Annual Report 2006

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From the President

This is my first annual report as President, having taken over from Sue Ham at the 2005 AGM. Sue's departure from the chair came after 6 years of active work with the staff and Board. This time marked an increase in advocacy work by TasCOSS, and an expanding membership base.

A new governance framework had been adopted by the Board, and the Tasmanian Social Policy Council had been established as a forum for participation and policy debate.

Perhaps more commendably, TasCOSS was becoming increasingly sophisticated in engaging with policy makers and in fostering relationships within the sector. TasCOSS was a ship on-course, and so it was a pleasure to take-over from Sue. Given her contribution to ACOSS in recent years I was grateful that Sue agreed to remain our representative on the ACOSS Board during the last 12 months.

My first function as President was to officiate at the 2005 Dorothy Pearce Address. The Address attracted leaders from each of the three political parties along with about 100 guests, other parliamentarians and dignitaries to hear Saul Eslake speak on trends in state economics and the implications for Tasmania's society.

This was the first year that the Premier Paul Lennon spoke at a Dorothy Pearce Address, which in my mind was symbolic of the

increasing significance and credibility of TasCOSS in public debate. Tasmanians should expect TasCOSS to take a leadership role in advocating on social justice issues, and I believe that we have worked hard to deliver on these expectations.

It is no secret that I am enormously proud to serve as President. It has of course not been without challenges. The range of issues and activities during the year has been diverse, and at the time of writing we are considering our response to the proposed Pulp Mill in terms of any impact on low income and disadvantaged Tasmanians.

During the year I have had the opportunity to meet with people around the state in members meetings, election forums and policy workshops. I have been impressed with the contribution and resilience of members, and with the energy of their contributions.

On the home front, the TasCOSS Board has been conscious of shaping-up to the challenges. The work has included a Board

Improvement Group to oversee suggestions to improve Board functioning.

I am very grateful for the efforts of my fellow Board members. Dave Willans and Mark Stemm have held key positions as Vice President and Treasurer respectively this year, with Mark's role made all the more challenging by being a resident in the North-West of the state. I am also grateful to the work of board members Michael Voumard and Marina Campbell who left us during the year. In their place, we welcomed two new members to the board – Kay Thompson and Lindy O'Neill. Kay and I are the resident Northerners in the group.

Sue Ham, Jo Flanagan and Michelle Swallow added considerable strength to the policy focus of the board, and Pattie Chugg's contribution was valuable to us all during a year in which affordable housing was the red-light issue for the state. The affordable housing crisis is not solved yet. While we look forward to the release of resources under the Affordable Housing



Organisation there is much to be done before those Tasmanians in very critical need have a roof over their heads.

My role has been made easier thanks to the contribution of the members of the Tasmanian Social Policy Council. The TSPC is the leading social policy forum which brings together members to identify, confirm and endorse policy direction. The group worked very hard this year, deliberating on election issues, on the development of the Budget Priorities Statement, and on new legislation affecting gambling and the sex industry, as well as affordable housing.

I was grateful to those candidates who took the time to attend our Election Forums around the state in March this year, to speak on behalf of their parties' policies, and to answer questions from the public. The debates were at times spirited and controversial, but valuable in helping to share information about service needs and gaps.

Around the election period, the Labor Government made significant financial commit-

ments to improved services to the community, many of which had been advocated by TasCOSS. The reform of mental health services continues, new initiatives for the reform of services to people with disabilities, the review of family and childrens services, funding to improve the health of community organisations, and commitment to improved oral health services.

It is notable that the Liberal and Green parties also supported many of the policy suggestions made by TasCOSS in the lead-up to the Election 2006. In general there seemed to be an increased awareness of the role of social services by candidates, and of the complexity of service delivery.

Indicative of the fact that we do not all share the same understanding of 'social justice' is the federal government's introduction of 'Welfare to Work' and 'Workchoices' legislation which directly harms low income earners. The staff members of TasCOSS have been active with the COSS network around Australia in assessing the impact of these

changes on low income people, and in particular for us in Tasmania.

It is of course immediately apparent that member organisations will face a significantly increased demand for services as a result of 'Welfare to Work' and 'Workchoices', but not at all clear on who will fund the emerging service gaps. Nor is it clear when the dismantling of our welfare system will be halted, and a system befitting Australia's vast economic wealth will be created in its place.

These are some of the challenges facing us, and I have much faith in the energy and commitment of the TasCOSS Board and staff to lead the necessary changes.

It remains then for me to express thanks on behalf of the board to Mat Rowell our CEO and his staff for their achievements over the year. Your collective efforts have us all rightly proud of the mission of TasCOSS to represent the needs of low income and disadvantaged Tasmanians.

Alex Huntir,
President

From the **CEO**

This is my third annual report, and I am confident in saying it has been our most eventful year since I started in this position.

In a number of key areas we have taken a new approach to the way we do our work. Remembering our mission and vision is always important in making decisions to get involved or not get involved in particular issues, initiatives and processes. To represent the interests of the non government community services industry and the interests of low income and disadvantaged Tasmanians is both a challenge and a privilege. It is with this mission and vision in mind that we embarked upon a major year of growth, challenge, opportunity and advocacy, mostly with a new approach.

Internally we took a new approach the way we run the organisation. This year has seen us secure significant new resources for the next four years to continue to grow. That growth will allow us to provide not only our industry development activities but also to dedicate more resources to a proactive social policy and social justice agenda. After scraping through for the past few years on a small core agreement from DHHS,

supplemented by a number of different projects, the Tasmanian Government made a commitment during the election to funding our industry development proposal. We also secured a significant contract from the Department of Economic Development as well as a major research grant to commission research into the use of Pre-Payment Meters in Tasmania.

We took our publications to a higher level, and provided the state government with a Budget Priorities Statement which we were told was one of the best ever seen by Government members and officials alike. A New Spirit for Tasmania was launched with great coverage with a lot of positive feedback for the new format and new strategic direction we had taken with what is our most important advocacy document. Our state election document and our research publications have also taken on a new look and feel.

Externally our advocacy, campaigning and social justice work also took a new

direction. We engaged much more in coalition-style campaigns, with varying degrees of success. This collaborative approach saw us involved in campaigns with other key community service providers in relation to Betfair, Liquor Licensing, the Sex Industry, Affordable Housing and to the Clean Start campaign for contract cleaners. What is most significant about this is the advocating of a unified, joined-up and strong position from our sector on these important issues.

At a Federal level, our work with the COSS Network – also driven in a new way by ACOSS – in relation to the Welfare to Work agenda was also significant. We engaged in a large scale national campaign that saw us doing media, delegations to federal members, the state government and a new style of campaigning in the first ever ACOSS Advocacy Day event at Parliament house. This joined-up national approach was extremely important in a federal environment signified by divide and conquer politics and by the



silencing-dissent agenda still being run.

At a state level, with greater success, was our 2006 State Election Campaign. A Fairer Tasmania was the by-line, and our A Fairer Tasmania Call to the Parties document was a major success in the number of recommendations picked by all three parties. We had significant feedback from all three political parties as well as the media suggesting that we were to be congratulated on the fair, professional and credible way in which we ran our forums, media comment, and call to the parties processes.

In relation to the development of the industry, we stepped up in this area also and ran a number of events. Aside from our ongoing consultation with the sector on our social policy work, we also ran forums and events in relation to advocacy, human rights, health consumers issues, WorkChoices, insurance, and the preparation of funding submissions. The new Industry Development Unit will continue this great work for the

benefit of all community service organisations in Tasmania.

We also continued our work in providing our expert advice and experience to the Department of Health and Human Services through our cooperative work on issues such as workforce development, good governance, review and evaluation of the sector, and by participating in reference groups and steering committees for reviews and programs being implemented such as the Family Support Services and Sexual Assault Services System Reviews, the Living Independently and Bridging the Gap initiatives to name but a few.

We continued our involvement and interest in new and emerging social policy areas. The fairer fines, or income based penalties issue came up, as did the Pulp Mill and our views about the social and health impacts of such a large development, forcing us to think quite differently about our position. We faced a new cabinet, and so far have had a cautious sense of optimism about the views

we have heard from Cabinet members such as the new Treasurer, Minister for Health and Human Services, Minister for Education and Attorney General. We farewelled David Llewellyn as Health and Human Services minister, and John Ramsay as Secretary of that department. In both cases, this was with sadness, as we had developed strong and respectful relationships with both leaders and we are grateful for the contributions that both have made to our industry.

Most importantly the staff at TasCOSS have stepped up to the mark in an extremely busy and often unkind year, where all staff have supported the work we have had to do in order to achieve the results we have had. I thank all the staff – past and present – for their ongoing commitment, which goes well beyond the call of duty and the 9 – 5 workday, and for their support of me. The organisation's spokesperson is only ever as good as the information, support and constructive challenges from staff and for that I am truly grateful. My thanks go to the Board and Tasmanian Social Policy Council members also for their ongoing volunteer commitment to the work of the organisation, and to Alex Huntir for his leadership and personal support of my role.

2006–07 heralds a new era at TasCOSS and I look forward to working with you all for a strong community services industry and for a fairer Tasmania.

Mat Rowell,
Chief Executive Officer

Profile

The Tasmanian Council of Social Service is the peak industry body for the community services industry in Tasmania.

Our Mission

To provide a voice for Tasmanians affected by poverty and inequality and to act as the peak council for the community sector organisations that serve, support and work for these Tasmanians.

Our Vision

A strong organisation providing leadership in the community for a fair, just and inclusive Tasmania.

Our Values

- The rights of all Tasmanians to opportunity, justice and equity
- Policy solutions that are socially and economically sustainable
- The experience and talents of people affected by poverty and inequality,
- The passion and commitment of people working in the community sector
- Working collaboratively and in partnership
- A diversity of responses to the range of needs within the community
- Our independence as a non party political organisation.

Our Main Activities

- Providing leadership and stimulating debate
- Promoting policy solutions to government and the community
- Advocating for change
- Supporting and developing the sector



How do we do this?

1. Social policy - dialogue in the public forum

The social implications of these influences are challenged and tested through collaborative and consultative relationships within the Tasmanian community – our industry, government, low income and disadvantaged Tasmanians and range of relevant stakeholders. Through this process, TasCOSS seeks to identify the best policy solutions for sustainable positive social change.

However, this change requires community awareness and commitment. TasCOSS furthers this agenda by placing current social issues and recommended solutions in the public forum by stimulating debate through the media and other forums.

2. Developing the community services industry

TasCOSS is committed to strengthening non-government community services that support people living in poverty and social disadvantage. The organisation is State Government mandated to work with the industry to build on resources and structures that deliver responsive and effective services to Tasmanians in need.

3. Consultation and Collaborative structures

Our capacity to successfully pursue our social policy and industry development goals is very much a function of the ways in which we work with, and listen to, our stakeholders. Those value statements listed above – about collaboration, partnership and the talents and commitment of our

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constituency – oblige us to work hard on building the right sorts of structures for cooperation and consultation.

This year, we report on two important consultations – with HACC consumers and with Aurora pre-payment meter consumers – that have substantially strengthened our policy framework. Our consultations with industry members – especially through our Social Policy Council and its sub-committees – have made

a major contribution to our successful budget and election advocacy documents this past year.

We have engaged with industry members in a range of advocacy coalitions, increasing the effectiveness of all participants. And we continue to collaborate with government agencies, sharing our knowledge with them and learning from them.

The national network of COSSes – more important than ever

TasCOSS's role in furthering the social justice agenda goes beyond a local commitment. As part of 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 learn from shared experiences in community and government relationships, policy development, organisational continuous improvement, and sector development.

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2005-2006 Board Attendance

Attendance at Board Meetings

	<i>Meetings attended</i>	<i>Out of total number</i>
Alex Huntir	12	12
Sue Ham	9	12
Dave Willans	6	12
Mark Stemm	8	12
Pattie Chugg	7	12
Michelle Swallow	9	12
Jo Flanagan	7	12
Lindy O'Neill <i>(joined April)</i>	3	5
Kay Thompson <i>(joined April)</i>	3	5

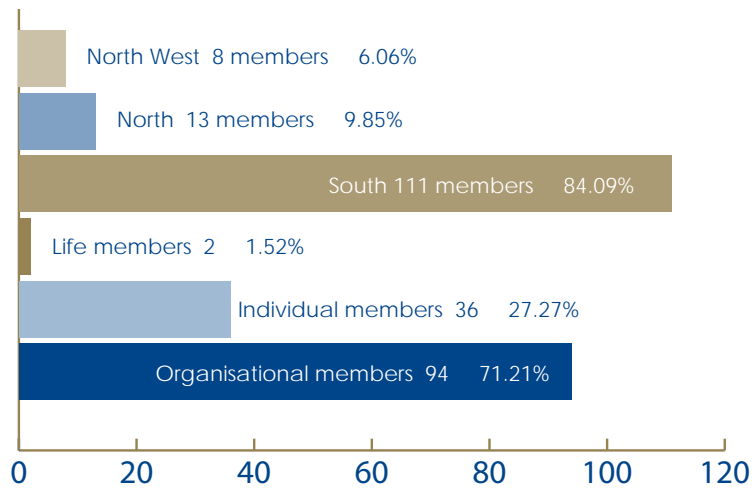
Previous Members from this financial year.

Michael Voumard	2	5
Marina Campbell	3	3

Note: for the full financial year, there were 12 attempts to hold meetings, 2 of which did not attract a quorum and did not proceed.



2005-2006 Membership Profile



Total members 132 an increase on 2004-2005 by 22 or 20%

2005-2006 Staff Profile

Current	Position
Mat Rowell	CEO
Luke Martin	Social Policy Officer
Pauline Marsh	HACC Project Officer
Kath McLean	Social Policy Officer
David Owen	Industry Policy Officer
Lynne Browning	Office Administrator
Luke Clarke	Research & Policy Assistant

Past	Position
Jessica Prins	Administration Trainee
Rebecca Taylor	Research & Policy Assistant



2005-2006 Tasmanian Social Policy Council Members

Name	Organisation
Sue Ham	Colony 47 / TasCOSS Board
Dave Willans	YNOT / TasCOSS Board
Ken Hardaker	Advocacy Tasmania
Marina Campbell	Individual Member of TasCOSS
Gwyn Jones	Individual Member of TasCOSS
Lianne Barden	The Link Youth Health Services
David Clements	ATDC
Glynis Flower	TACH
Jen Fitzgerald	Hobart Working Women's Centre
Sheila Given	COTA
David Treanor	Kalista
Annette Horsler	Tasmanian Deaf Society
Ross Duncan	MS Society
Jo Flanagan	Anglicare Tas / TasCOSS Board
Pattie Chugg	Shelter Tas / TasCOSS Board
Margaret Reynolds	Individual TasCOSS Member
Ann Hughes	Individual TasCOSS Member
Maxine Griffiths	Volunteering Tasmania
Ronda Macintyre	Salvation Army
Jenhi Sheyan	Hobart Women's Shelter
Georgina McLagan	Centacare
Alex Huntir	St Michaels / TasCOSS Board
Mark Redmond	Colony 47
Maree Fudge	Individual TasCOSS Member
Kevin Marriot	TASCAHRD
Rod MacGregor	Mental Health Council of Tasmania
Pip Barnard	Tas Catholic Justice & Peace Commission



Social Policy

In what was an incredibly eventful year in social policy at both a state and national level, TasCOSS and its members can be extremely proud of the significant progress we achieved in advancing our social justice agenda for a fairer Tasmania.

Through effective advocacy and representation on behalf of our members and their clients, and by working with other organisations to present a united community sector voice, we were able to achieve some significant positive changes for low-income and disadvantaged Tasmanians. However, many of our achievements at a state level, have again been offset by the impact of Australian Government policy stances that are having a dramatic impact on our industry's services and clients.

The Federal Arena

TasCOSS carried on its work from the previous year in raising community awareness of the potential impact on low-income and disadvantaged Tasmanians resulting from the Australian Government's changes to Australia's income support and industrial relations systems.

In July, the Tasmanian Social Policy Council passed a

motion expressing concern about the Australian Government's WorkChoices legislation, particularly in relation to the removal of existing safeguards for vulnerable and low-skilled workers and the establishment of a 'Fair Pay Commission' to set minimum wages. TasCOSS participated in several community events and presented our perspective on the impact of the changes on vulnerable low-

Federal Budget. Unfortunately, this advocacy campaign went from pursuing changes to make the proposals fairer and more reasonable, to preparing our sector for the implications of the welfare reforms on our services and clients.

TasCOSS participated in a national Advocacy Day at Parliament House Canberra organised by the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS) to raise awareness of the welfare to work changes.

TasCOSS carried on its work from the previous year in raising community awareness of the potential impact on low-income and disadvantaged Tasmanians ...

skilled and disadvantaged Tasmanian workers.

We also continued to respond to the Welfare to Work reforms that were originally announced as part of the 2005

TasCOSS representatives met with several Tasmanian Federal MPs in their Canberra offices and the Advocacy Day was credited with achieving some positive changes to the Government's original proposals.



The State Arena

At a State Level, our social policy year is highlighted by two significant issues that dominated much of our work throughout the year – Affordable Housing and the 2006 State Election.

Affordable Housing

The crisis with housing affordability in Tasmania was once again our number one area of social policy advocacy. TasCOSS joined with other community sector organisations in calling on the State Government to re-commit to a whole-of-system response to the shortage of affordable housing options for low-income Tasmanians.

In the lead-up to the Premier's 'State of the State' speech to Parliament in October 2005, TasCOSS joined with Shelter Tasmania and the major housing service providers to launch the 'Affordable Housing Crisis Coalition'.

The Coalition ran a high profile campaign to raise public awareness of the impact of housing affordability on individual families and the community. The campaign called on the State Government to further invest in social infrastructure, through the construction of 1,200 additional public housing properties by 2010.

The Premier eventually announced that the Government would establish a community housing trust in Tasmania and leverage private investment to deliver up to 700 properties over the next four-years. TasCOSS supports the housing trust (now known as the Affordable Housing Organisation), but continues to call for additional government investment in its own public housing system.

March 2006 State Election

For the first time ever, TasCOSS decided to run its own campaign to highlight the important issues for low-income and disadvantaged Tasmanians

in the State Election held on March 18.

This campaign included the launch of A Fairer Tasmania – A Call to the Parties document early in the election campaign. This document detailed the priority issues that we wanted addressed by the incoming State Government following the election.

We asked – and received – a response to this document from each of the three major political parties prior to the election, with each party agreeing to implement several of our recommendations if they won the election.

TasCOSS also hosted three regional forums during the election campaign featuring a representative of the ALP, Liberal Party and the Tasmanian Greens. These forums provided an opportunity for workers and clients in the community sector to hear directly from each political party on the issues that were important and relevant to them.

2006 State Budget

With the State Government having made several commitments in relation to issues we had been campaigning for during the state election, it was with high expectations that TasCOSS attended the 'lock-up' for new State Treasurer Michael Aird's first state budget on June 15, 2006.

The Budget delivered on 18 of the 31 recommendations contained in our budget submission. These included several important funding commitments for low-income and disadvantaged Tasmanians, including:

- Additional funding for Children's and Family Services, with a particular emphasis on early intervention strategies to assist vulnerable families;
- The establishment of a new Disability Bureau in the Department of Premier and Cabinet;
- Abolishing the \$25 co-payment for emergency treatments in the public dental service;
- Extending the winter electricity rebate over the full-year, reducing the electricity costs of low-income households by a \$98 a year;
- Funding for two new childcare centres to be established and co-located with Government schools;
- A further \$250,000 expansion of the Partnerships to Jobs program with a particular emphasis on Tasmanians with multiple barriers to finding work,

The Budget delivered on 18 of the 31 recommendations contained in our budget submission.

and;

- Funding to establish a new Industry Development Unit to improve service capacity and delivery in the non-government community services industry.

The Treasurer also used his state budget to announce the formation of a new Ministerial Advisory Council on Demographic Change. TasCOSS is one of only three Tasmanian interest groups to have been invited to join this new high-level policy development and advisory council. It will provide another opportunity for TasCOSS to advance the important issues for low-income and disadvantaged Tasmanians, within a context of Tasmania's changing and ageing population.

Disappointingly, the State Budget did not provide any additional funding for our public housing system, or to address unmet need in the disability sector. TasCOSS and our members consider it unacceptable that Tasmania continues to be unable to provide sufficient housing for those Tasmanians that need it, nor sufficient disability support services to address unmet need. We will continue to work

with our members to pursue the State Government in relation to both these fundamental areas in preparation for the next state budget.

Gambling Social and Economic Impact Study

Another important achievement for TasCOSS this year was the State Government's announcement that it would legislate for a study to be conducted every three years into the social and economic impact of gambling in the Tasmanian community.

This was a direct result of TasCOSS and the community sector expressing concern about the Government's decision to licence another gaming provider, British betting exchange, Betfair, to operate in Tasmania, without any assessment being conducted on the impact of existing gambling opportunities currently available in the Tasmanian community.

A gambling Social and Economic Impact Study is something the community sector has been calling for since the introduction of gaming machines in Tasmanian

pubs and clubs in the mid 1990s. The study will provide important information to guide future changes to Tasmania's gambling regulations and practices, as well as improve the delivery of support services for Tasmanians affected by problem gambling.

Tasmanian Social Policy Council

Our member-elected policy development body, the Tasmanian Social Policy Council (TSPC) has been instrumental in setting our social justice agenda this year, while providing our mandate to represent the interests of our members and the sector.

The TSPC guided our major policy documents for the year including our submission to the state budget and our 'wish list' for the state election. The TSPC also endorsed our policy position and advocacy work in relation to some controversial issues such as the WorkChoices legislation, a Tasmanian Charter of Human Rights and a proposal to introduce income-based monetary fines.

The TSPC is extremely important to TasCOSS' social policy work, particularly through its role in setting our priority issues and recommendations to Government. We wish to acknowledge and thank all members of the TSPC for their commitment and support of the council and the work of TasCOSS.

A Fairer Tasmania

TasCOSS, its members and supporters, can be immensely proud of our achievements over the past year in advancing our vision for a fair, just and compassionate Tasmania. We have heavily influenced, and often led, the social justice agenda in Tasmania. Our profile within Government and the broader community has

the Tasmanian community look to us as a progressive voice within an increasingly conservative and pragmatic political discourse at both a state and national level.

Luke Martin
Policy Officer

An important outcome of TasCOSS' current growth will be the increased capacity in our social policy unit.

significantly increased and our mandate and expertise in representing the interests of our members is acknowledged by Government and all Tasmanian political parties. Importantly we have achieved this through consulting with the sector, and working with our members to present a united voice for the community sector and its clients.

An important outcome of TasCOSS' current growth will be the increased capacity in our social policy unit. This will provide us with valuable additional expertise to ensure we can further expand our advocacy and policy development work across a wide range of social issues.

Our social policy work has become increasingly important as Government and



2005-2006 Policy Submissions

All Ages, All Tasmanians Together: a discussion paper to develop the Tasmanian Plan for Positive Ageing 2006-2010, Department of Premier and Cabinet, August 2005

Monetary Penalties Enforcement Bill 2005, Hon Judy Jackson, Attorney General, November 2005

Proposed National Framework Schedule for the Transfer of Distribution and Retail Functions, Joint submission with all COSSes, Ministerial Council on Energy, November 2005

Metro Tasmania Pty Ltd (Metro), Investigation of Pricing Policies 2005-06, Government Prices Oversight Commission, December 2005

A National Framework for Energy Distribution and Retail Regulation consultation paper, Ministerial Council on Energy, January 2006

Form of Regulation for the 2007 Determination consultation paper in the current Electricity Distribution Pricing Review process, Tasmanian Energy Regulator, January 2006

Consumer Affairs (Amendment) Bill, Office of Consumer Affairs & Fair Trading, January 2006

National Electricity Rules - Proposed Rule Change re Advocacy Panel, Australian Energy Market Commission, February 2006

Caravan Parks – Issues Paper, Office of Consumer Affairs and Fair Trading, February 2006

Draft Vendor Disclosure Statement for property sales under the Property Agents and Land Transactions Act, Office of Consumer affairs and Fair Trading, February 2006

Pre-Payment Meter Retail Code: Issues Paper, Code Change Panel, Office of the Tasmanian Energy Regulator, February 2006

National Retail Performance Indicators discussion paper, National Utility Regulators Forum, April 2006

Investigation into the Pricing Policies of the Motor Accident Insurance Board Issues Paper, Government Prices Oversight Commission, April 2006

Draft Report on the Pricing Policies of the MAIB, Government Prices Oversight Commission, June 2006



2005-2006 Funding Submissions

Tasmanian Community Fund, Round 11 – for funds to commission the research, writing and publication of the history of TasCOSS, August 2005 [unsuccessful]

National Electricity Consumers Advocacy Panel – for funds to commission research on pre-payment meter use in Tasmania, September 2005 [successful]

Department of Infrastructure, Energy & Resources – for funds to employ an energy policy officer at TasCOSS, September 2005 [unsuccessful]

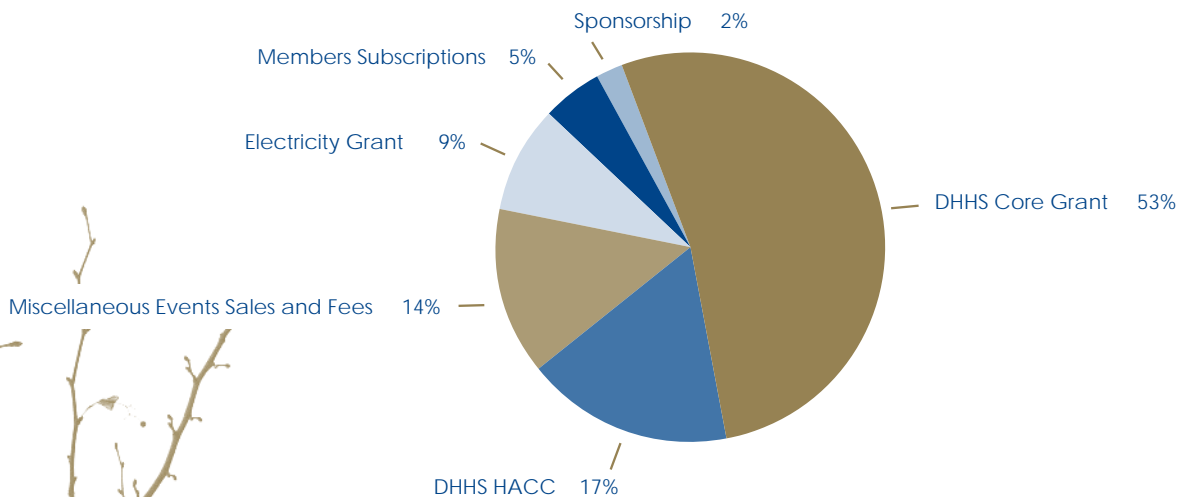
National Electricity Consumers Advocacy Panel – for continued policy, advocacy and research work, 2 days per week. 2005-06 [successful]

National Library of Australia Community Heritage Grant [yet to be determined]

Department of Health and Human Services – Strengthening the Sector, funding for establishment of Industry Development Unit, Feb 2006 [successful]

Department of Economic Development – Capacity building project (Partnerships to Jobs), Dec 2005 [successful]

Tasmanian Community Fund, Round 12 – for funds to subsidise access by community services organisations to Management Support Online service, March 2006 [unsuccessful]



Strengthening the Industry

Certainties and uncertainties in industry development

The past year has seen a continuation of past TasCOSS roles in strengthening the capacity of our industry as well as the beginning of a major new direction.

It has been a year that reinforced some of the concerns held by TasCOSS but which also offered real hope that we will at last be able to directly address those concerns. It was also a year that revealed a whole new set of challenges to be faced by our member organisations.

The certainties

Last year we predicted that the two 'hot' issues for 2005-06 would be governance and workforce development. We weren't exactly going out on a limb with this prediction, given that these two issues are major challenges for non-government community services industries across the globe. Indeed, we can be fairly secure in suggesting that these issues will never really lose their prominence – they are simply too central to everything we are about as an industry.

What we can be certain about is that TasCOSS's role in assisting community service organisations

(CSOs) on these and other issues will be significantly increased over the next four years. Funding from the Tasmanian Government will permit the employment of four new staff in our Industry Development Unit (IDU). Led by Maree Fudge, our new Manager, Industry Development, this Unit will focus on industry planning and various forms of support to funded CSOs.

The Unit will continue to work closely with government funding bodies, especially the Department of Health and Human Services, and will further strengthen our growing links with the Department of Economic Development. We reported last year on the maturation of our relationship with DHHS, and we can again report that important collaborative work has been achieved. TasCOSS has been centrally involved in plans to expand the role of non-government organisations in the crucially important areas of child protection, disability services and housing man-

agement. The outsourcing of roles that had been played by DHHS will generate opportunities and challenges for our industry.

We have also contributed to important work aimed at consolidating earlier expansions of our industry. An exciting example of this has been a collaborative project that has mapped the workforce in non-government mental health services. This project is now developing workforce development strategies that are likely to be of value across other industry sectors, not just in mental health.

This work on the 'new territories' of our industry relates to one of the other certainties facing us: a recognition by the Tasmanian Government that CSOs have uniquely valuable capacities to deliver high-quality services that have substantial impacts on Tasmanian households. One of the challenges facing our industry will be assisting governments to develop coherent policy frameworks that will guide decisions about this out-sourcing process. We



will also need to take our own decisions about the appropriate boundaries between government and non-government service provision. Again, the new TasCOSS Industry Development Unit will be a lead player in this deliberative process.

The uncertainties

The world changed for us on March 27 this year. On that day, the Australian Government's WorkChoices legislation came into effect. The impact has been profound, but also profoundly confusing. Industry members are struggling to come to terms with the implications of the new legislation, but are sure of one thing: it will no longer be possible to ignore the issue of industrial relations, if indeed it ever was possible. Community services organisations are quickly waking up to the reality that we have moved from a stable award-based environment into a dynamic agreement-based one. Some will find that shift an extremely uncomfortable one, while others will recog-

nise important opportunities for organisational restructuring.

Three specific challenges face our industry members. First, we need to clarify our organisations' status under the new legislative framework. Some CSOs will be covered by the new legislation, while others will not.

The second challenge will arise irrespective of where particular CSOs find themselves on the issue of WorkChoices coverage. With industrial awards less likely to offer a consistent base for industry pay and conditions, how will CSOs utilise

Industry members are struggling to come to terms with the implications of the new legislation, but are sure of one thing: it will no longer be possible to ignore the issue of industrial relations, if indeed it ever was possible.

The problem is that we currently do not know where the boundary lies. Until we have some clear-cut court rulings on which CSOs are, or are not, 'trading corporations' under the new legislation, we will be flying blind. TasCOSS will continue to remind CSOs of the risks associated with this new environment, and to source the best available advice for our industry.

agreement-making processes to optimise the quality and quantity of their work? If they are eligible to use individual Australian Workplace Agreements, should they do so, or will their strategic goals be better served by the use of collective agreements? One thing is clear: some CSOs will use this new agreement-making environment to substantially restructure their service

models and associated workforce. This will oblige other CSOs to closely examine their own operations, especially in an increasingly contestable industry.

A crucially important third challenge will be about values. Will our CSOs be able to retain a defensible values-orientation to their workplace relations or will our focus shift inexorably to crude 'bottom-line' issues? What do we think about the importance of collective bargaining, now that we have a choice between the individual and collective modes? And what does all this mean for our relationships with those other non-profit service providers – the trades unions? Do they loom as new and important partners in our work, or as strangers, no longer relevant to our work?

Of these three challenges, only the first will be solved for us, when the courts eventually offer some jurisdictional clarity. The other two, however, can only be confronted by us, and this will be especially difficult if we work in isolation. The work of TasCOSS as an industry body assisting CSOs to come together to cooperatively

address this new environment will be crucial over the coming years.

David Owen
Policy Officer





HACC Consumer Consultation Project

The Home and Community Care (HACC) consumer consultation project continued this year with a new focus.

The project explored intake, assessment and referral experiences and specifically sought to discover how people found out about HACC services, how they made contact, their experiences of being assessed, reassessed and also referred within and beyond the HACC Program. Consultation methods for the research included a written questionnaire (conducted by Janine Coombes of Community Focus), group workshops in HACC day centres and semi-structured, in-depth interviews with HACC consumers with complex needs.

Key Findings

Finding out about services was generally difficult and confusing, and the lack of easily available information was raised by many participants. Information was accessed more easily by consumers who had active family members, a social network, or a close relationship with their GP. Incidences of finding out about services as a result of a crisis or hospital admission were prevalent. Those who were prepared to be assertive also reported less difficulty

accessing HACC services than those who were reluctant to seek or ask for assistance, or who were socially isolated. The research identified psychological barriers to accessing services amongst consumers, such as a reluctance, or inability, to plan ahead for future needs and a perception that the receipt of services equated with a loss of independence. A literature review (prepared by Luke Clarke and myself) complements these findings by providing a broader context of access difficulties for users of community care services (available from our website, along with the main report).

Perceptions of the effectiveness of assessment varied amongst consumers. The most effective assessments were: consumer-centred and holistic; considered the diverse needs and abilities of the consumer; allowed for consumer input and control in the process; facilitated independence; and matched care assistants carefully to consumers. Inadequate assessment processes resulted in a range of outcomes, for example, wasted resources, increased vulnerability amongst consumers and an increase in

demanding and complaining behaviours.

Reassessment practices also varied greatly. Those that were demonstrated to be effective were reassessments that were performed regularly by appropriately trained staff, specifically those not involved in the daily delivery of care, and that followed the principles of holistic assessment. Such reassessments also resulted in appropriate adjustments to service provision.

In most instances, waiting times for HACC services were reported to be minimal, and were predominantly for podiatry, equipment and in-home respite. However, consumers in particular locations waited for services that were unavailable. Most significantly, consumers reported they waited for services provided by Housing Tasmania and Disability Services for long periods, and this impacted on their ability to live safely and comfortably at home. Thus the interdependency of HACC and other services was made evident.



The capacity and ability to refer varies greatly across HACC service provider employees. Characteristically, referrals were initiated when the referrer had the capacity to recognise changing needs, knew about available resources and had either the authority to act themselves, or were able to seek the assistance of another authorised person.

The interconnectedness of HACC with other services is evident by this research. Consumers use HACC services in a variety of combinations with a range of private, informal, Government and non-Government organisations. The need for increased recognition of this and for coordination of services is demonstrated by the research.

The key recommendations

TasCOSS recommended the establishment of an information strategy by the HACC program that coordinates and implements the distribution of information about HACC services, and other inter-related services. It was also

recommended that HACC assessments be undertaken by independent, trained assessors and that improvements be made to reassessment and referral processes. A general shift by the HACC Program toward health promotion and prevention strategies was also recommended.

The report was distributed to HACC providers and the findings presented at service provider forums to make the information available for use by the on-the-ground organisations also. During 2005-06, in my capacity as a consultant with HACC consumers I was able to participate in the Southern Division of GPs consumer network, the Community Options South consumer group, the Eat Well Tasmania Taskforce and in consultation groups for The Way Forward community care strategy. Consequently, the consultation findings were taken out into a wider context and contributed to broader discussions around wellbeing, health and ageing. Encouragingly, I am continuing to liaise with the HACC unit about the implementation of the recommendations.

Where to next?

One of the areas recommended for future research from the report has been taken up as the focus for the 2006-07 consumer consultation project – exploring the sources and impact of vulnerabilities for HACC consumers. The project, *As Safe as Houses*, will explore what makes the HACC target group feel safe and unsafe at home and the linkages between increased vulnerability and increased potential for mistreatment.

Pauline Marsh
HACC Project Officer



Consumer Issues Project

Ensuring access to information and adequate consumer protections for low income and disadvantaged Tasmanians remains the focus of consumer policy work at TasCOSS.

We have been active this year in general consumer issues, as well as in electricity and health consumer issues.

We continue to work with the Office of Consumer Affairs and Fair Trading toward obtaining a voice for Tasmanian consumers in government consumer affairs policy. A Bill has been introduced in the Tasmanian Parliament to amend the Consumer Affairs Act 1968 in order to establish a Consumer Advisory Committee that would advise both the Office of Consumer Affairs and Fair Trading and the Minister on issues of concern to Tasmanian consumers. Since the demise of the former Consumer Affairs Council in 1998, there have been few opportunities for consumer input into policy in this area, and we look forward to the establishment, in the coming financial year, of an active, representative and well-resourced consumer advisory structure.

TasCOSS made submissions and provided advice to Government this year on a range of consumer-related issues including the regulation of caravan park tenancies,

pricing policies of the Motor Accidents Insurance Board and of Metro Tasmania and the introduction of a Rental Deposit Authority.

The Tasmanian Social Policy Council Consumer Issues Sub-Committee has met less frequently this year but continues to function as an information sharing network of consumer advocates. The Sub-Committee is committed to re-activating itself around issues of concern to low income and disadvantaged consumers as these arise.

TasCOSS continues to participate in consumer issues at a national level with its seat on the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission's Consumer Consultative Committee. We have actively promoted the ACCC's Disadvantaged and Vulnerable Consumers Campaign and Scam Awareness Month in February-March 2006, coordinated by the Australasian Consumer Fraud Taskforce.

Electricity

Funding for TasCOSS from the National Consumers Electricity

Advocacy Panel for consumer advocacy and research work was extended to the end of June this year. This has allowed us to remain active in electricity policy and advocacy issues, both locally and nationally.

The Council of Australian Governments and the Ministerial Council on Energy (MCE) have been pursuing an accelerated program of national energy market reform that involves, among other activities, the centralising of energy distribution and retail regulation at a national level. TasCOSS has participated in this process by making submissions to the MCE calling for best practice consumer protections to be put in place at a national level and for effective mechanisms for consumer representation to be introduced and resourced. We are also involved in a national network of domestic consumer advocates that follows the market reform process carefully and intervenes in the interests of small consumers.



With Tasmania's entrance to the National Electricity Market through the Basslink undersea cable, and the possibility that retail competition will be introduced in Tasmania in the future, we believe it is important that the interests of domestic consumers, and particularly of low income and disadvantaged consumers, are represented in current and future decision-making processes. Funding from the Advocacy Panel has allowed TasCOSS to continue to play this vital role.

TasCOSS also received funding from the Advocacy Panel to commission research into the use of pre-payment meters in Tasmania. Tasmania is the only Australian jurisdiction in which pre-payment meters are in general use for the metering of household electricity supply with 38,000 Tasmanian households now using Aurora Energy's Aurora Pay As You Go (APAYG) system. There is considerable debate in Australia on the merits and otherwise of pre-payment meters, especially for those households living on low incomes. In the absence of any independent Australian-based research, it has been experiences in

overseas countries that have informed the debate so far. It is in this context that TasCOSS decided to seek funds to commission research on the experiences of Tasmanian households with pre-payment meters.

use. In addition, a number of one-to-one interviews were carried out with pre-payment meter users. The research findings were written up by Urbis Keys Young and published along with discussion and recommendations by TasCOSS. We hope that the research will make a positive contribution

... we look forward to the establishment, in the coming financial year, of an active, representative and well-resourced consumer advisory structure.

With additional funding from the State Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources and in-kind support from Aurora Energy, TasCOSS commissioned the Sydney-based research firm, Urbis Keys Young, to undertake the research. In April this year, 4,000 Tasmanian households with pre-payment meters received a postal survey seeking their views and experiences of pre-payment meter

to national and local debates on pre-payment meters, and will result in improvements in consumer protection for present and future pre-payment meter users.

TasCOSS remains a member of the Tasmanian Energy Regulator's Customer Consultative Committee and values the access it has to the Tasmanian Regulator. This access allows us to continue to



be well-informed and to readily seek and receive clarification on the sometimes complex issues involved in national and state energy policy.

Health

In March 2006, TasCOSS collaborated with the Consumers Health Forum of Australia (CHF) to present information sessions in Launceston and Hobart on electronic health records. The introduction of various forms of electronic health records has potentially significant implications, both positive and negative, for consumers of health services. The ability to ensure easy access to vital personal health care information wherever one might be located is certainly a positive, particularly for those with complex health conditions. On the other hand, the need to ensure privacy and the ability to give informed consent for the use of personal health information are issues of concern to consumers. Both TasCOSS and the CHF believe it is vital that consumers are involved from the very beginnings in the design and implementation of electronic health record systems and to this end, are involved in ensuring that

consumers are well-informed and active participants in the introduction and monitoring of such systems in Australia.

Government-sponsored HealthConnect projects have commenced in most states and territories, including Tasmania. TasCOSS was involved this year, along with the CHF, in the selection process for consumer representatives to sit on HealthConnect Tasmania's Implementation Advisory Group.

TasCOSS maintains a watching brief on developments in the electronic health records field, as well as in activities around the proposed introduction by the Australian government of a 'health and welfare access card'.

Protecting Human Rights in Australia

In March 2006, in partnership with the Sydney-based Public Interest Advocacy Centre (PIAC) and the Hobart Community Legal Service, TasCOSS presented train-the-trainer sessions in Protecting Human Rights in Australia in both Launceston and Hobart. About thirty participants

attended the training sessions that were led by Robin Banks from PIAC and were based on a train-the-trainer course designed by PIAC as part of a larger project that promotes the protection of human rights in Australia.

In its 2006-07 State Budget submission, A New Spirit for Tasmania, TasCOSS called for the commencement of a process to develop a Tasmanian Charter of Human Rights and welcomed the State Government's interest in exploring the options for protecting human rights in Tasmania. We congratulate the former Attorney-General, Judy Jackson for her referral, in early 2006, of that task to the Tasmanian Law Reform Institute and the current Attorney-General, Steve Kons for his support for the project. TasCOSS looks forward to participating in public consultations on the issue in the coming year.

Kath McLean
Policy Officer, Consumer Issues

Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2006

2004/2005	Notes	2005/2006
ACCUMULATED FUNDS		
100,756	Retained Earnings	71,856
<u>100,756</u>	ACCUMULATED FUNDS	<u>71,856</u>
represented by:		
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
124,025	Cash at Bank	92,413
26,299	Accounts/Grants Receivable	11,260
0	Tax Credit	6,622
772	Cash on Hand	1,174
<u>151,096</u>	TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	<u>111,469</u>
Non-current Assets		
91,915	Furniture & Equipment	82,835
<u>-68,887</u>	<u>Less Accumulated Depreciation</u>	<u>-59,926</u>
23,028	Total Furniture & Equipment	22,910
26,093	Motor Vehicles	26,093
<u>-272</u>	<u>Less Accumulated Depreciation</u>	<u>-3,533</u>
25,821		22,560
<u>48,849</u>	Total Fixed Assets	<u>45,470</u>
<u>199,945</u>	TOTAL ASSETS	<u>156,939</u>
LIABILITIES		
19,062	Annual Leave Provision	23,284
4,760	LSL Provision	5,892
8,652	Cover for Leave Provision	6,960
4,706	Accounts Payable	28,385
396	Provision for future expenses	3,438
49,125	Unspent Funds Carried Forward	17,198
6,986	PAYG Tax Payable	0
0	Staff Expenses	43
5,502	Net GST Tax Liability	-117
<u>99,189</u>	TOTAL LIABILITIES	<u>85,082</u>
<u>100,756</u>	Net Assets	<u>71,856</u>

Statement of Income & Expenditure for the year ended 30th June 2006

2004/2005	Notes	2005/2006
INCOME		
26,317	Net Movement in Unexpended Grant	31,927
331,860	Grants Received	325,105
0	Conference Registrations	0
36,988	Management Fees	22,724
18,039	Membership Subscriptions	23,291
5,091	Sponsorships	8,575
21,548	Miscellaneous Income	34,159
0	Tax Credit	5,796
3,147	Gain on disposal of assets	-223
<u>442,989</u>	TOTAL INCOME	<u>451,354</u>
EXPENSES		
2,583	Advertising & Publication Expenses	968
3,988	Affiliations	2,976
3,696	Board Development	2,360
4,685	Board/AGM Expenses	4,726
9,999	Catering & Meals	10,179
0	Conferences/Seminars/Functions	4,108
3,185	Cover for leave Expense	-1,692
16,433	Depreciation	12,726
0	Equipment Rental	0
0	GA Expenses	0
3,949	M. Vehicle Costs	1,430
104,195	Overheads	80,517
0	Project Evaluation	0
272,640	Salaries	290,210
40,223	Salary on costs	38,423
2,826	Seminar Expenses	0
	Speaker/Consultants Fees	20,412
5,688	Sponsorships & Donations	700
8,314	Staff Development	5,816
2,396	Subscriptions	4,400
19,379	Venue Hire	1,995
<u>504,178</u>	TOTAL EXPENSES	<u>480,253</u>
<u>-61,189</u>	OPERATING SURPLUS/DEFICIT	<u>-28,899</u>
<u>161,944</u>	OPENING RETAINED EARNINGS	<u>100,755</u>
<u>100,755</u>	CLOSING RETAINED EARNINGS	<u>71,856</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 Tax Credit

This refers to a credit advised by the Australian Taxation Office during this financial year which relates to payments received in the years 2000 and 2001. This amount has been noted in these accounts whilst investigation by TasCOSS management of this credit is undertaken

Note 3 Provision for future expenses

Relates to rent for period January to December 2006 not invoiced until July 2006.

Note 4 Unspent Funds Carried Forward

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

2004/2005			2005/2006	
35,056	HACC Consumer Consultation Project	a	3,495	
0	Independent Women's Org. of Tasmania	b	457	
0	Community Services Employers Org. of Tasmania	c	2,713	
0	Pre-payment Meter Research	d	10,531	
<u>14,068</u>	Electricity Consumer Project		<u>0</u>	
49,125			17,196	
a	Funds brought forward		35,056	
	Income		71,493	
	Expenditure		<u>103,053</u>	
	Unspent funds carried forward		3,496	
b	Funds brought forward		0	
	Income		500	
	Expenditure		<u>43</u>	
	Unspent funds carried forward		457	
c	Funds brought forward		0	
	Income		2,713	
	Expenditure		<u>0</u>	
	Unspent funds carried forward		2,713	
d	Funds brought forward		0	
	Income		22,091	
	Expenditure		<u>11,559</u>	
	Unspent funds carried forward		10,531	

INDEPENDENT AUDIT REPORT

To the members of Tasmanian Council of Social Service Inc.

Scope

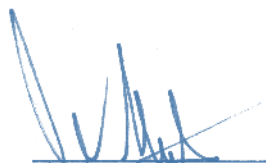
We have audited the financial report, being a special purpose financial report of the Tasmanian Council of Social Service Inc. for the year ended 30 June 2006. The Associations Committee of Management is responsible for the financial report and has determined that the accounting policies used and described in Note 1 to the financial statements which form part of the financial report are appropriate to meet the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act Tasmania 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 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 clubs 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 audit 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 other mandatory professional reporting requirements in Australia.

Audit Opinion

In our opinion, the financial report presents fairly the financial position of the Tasmanian Council of Social Service Inc. and the results of its operations for the year ended 30 June 2006.



Derek W Steele
Registered Company Auditor
Steele Burnett & Nelson
Chartered Accountants

Dated 6 September 2006
Level 3, 6 Bayfield Street
Rosny Park 7018

TASMANIAN COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE INC.

COMMITTEE'S STATEMENT

The committee has determined that the association is not a reporting entity and that this special purpose financial report should be prepared in accordance with the accounting policies outlined in Note 1 to the financial statements.

In the opinion of the committee, the attached financial report:

1. Presents a true and fair view of the financial position of the Tasmanian Council of Social Service Inc. as at 30 June 2006 and its performance for the period 1 July 2005 to 30 June 2006;
2. At the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Tasmanian Council of Social Service Inc will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

This statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the Committee and is signed for and on behalf of the Committee by:

A. HUNTER

M. STEMM

Dated at Hobart this 20th day of September 2006



PRESIDENT




TREASURER

List of Directors of Board of Management of the Tasmanian Council of Social Service Inc.

As at the 30th June, 2006

Mr Alex Huntir	President
Mr David Willans	Vice President
Mr Mark Stemm	Treasurer
Ms Sue Ham	Board Member
Ms Pattie Chugg	Board Member
Ms Jo Flanagan	Board Member
Ms Lindy O'Neill	Board Member
Ms Kay Thompson	Board Member
Ms Michelle Swallow	Board Member


Required Company Auditor
7/9/06

TasCOSS wishes to thank the generous support and assistance from our Corporate Sponsors and Partners over the past 12 months.



Murdoch Clarke
Barristers & Solicitors





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