



Tasmanian Council of Social Service

Annual Report

2012/13



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Organisational members

2012/13

Advocacy Tasmania
Alcohol, Tobacco & Other Drugs Council (Tas) Inc.
Anglicare Tasmania
Arthritis Tasmania
Aspire A Pathway to Mental Health
Aurora Disability Services
Australian Association of Social Workers
Australian Red Cross
Australian Services Union
Baptcare
Bethlehem House Homeless Mens Assistance Centre
Brain Injury Association of Tasmania
Bravehearts Inc.
Break O'Day Health Resource Assoc. Inc.
Centacare Tasmania
Choir of High Hopes
Colony 47 Inc.
Community Connections Inc.
Community Transport Services Tasmania Inc.
Cosmos Inc.
Council on the Ageing
Cystic Fibrosis Tasmania Inc.
Drug Education Network
Early Support for Parents
Eat Well Tasmania
Epilepsy Association of Tasmania Inc.
Family Based Care Assoc. North
Family Based Care Assoc. North West Inc.
Family Planning Tasmania
Family Support Services Association
Financial Counselling Tasmania Inc.
Flourish Inc.
Foster Carers Association
Geeveston Community Centre
Glenhaven Family Care
Greek Welfare Centre
Health & Community Services Union
Hobart City Council
Hobart City Mission
Hobart Community Legal Centre
Hobart Women's Health Centre
Hobart Women's Shelter
Holyoake
HOPES Inc.
Independent Living Centre
Jireh House Association Inc.
Karinya Young Women's Service
Kennerly Childrens Home
Kidsafe
Langford Support Services Inc.
Launceston Benevolent Society
Launceston City Mission
Launceston Community Legal Centre Inc.
Launceston VFC Services Inc.
Launceston Women's Shelter Inc.
Launch Youth Inc
Laurel House
Life without Barriers
Lifeline Tasmania
Lifelink Samaritans Tasmania Inc.
Live Free Tassie (Teen Challenge)
Meals on Wheels
Mersey Community Care Association Inc.
Mental Health Carers Association
Mental Health Council of Tasmania
Migrant Resource Centre (Southern Tas.) Inc.
Mission Australia
Montagu Community Living
MS Society of Tasmania
Multicultural Council of Tasmania
Nexus Inc.
Nils Network of Tasmania
Oak Enterprise
Oaktree Foundation
Parakaleo Ministeries Inc.
Positive Solutions
Pregnancy Counselling & Support Tasmania Inc.
Quality Management Services
Quit Tasmania
Rainbow Communities Tasmania Inc.
Relationships Australia, Tasmania
Salvation Army
Scarlet Alliance
Sexual Assault Support Service
Shelter Tasmania Inc.
Speak Out Association of Tasmania Inc.
St John Ambulance Australia-Tasmania Inc.
St Michaels Association Inc.
St Vincent de Paul Society (Tasmania) Inc.
Tascare Society for Children
Tasmania Recovery from Eating Disorders (TRED)
Tasmanian Acquired Brain Injury
Tasmanian Association of Community Houses
Tasmanian Catholic Justice & Peace Commission
Tasmanian Centre for Global Learning
Tasmanian Council on Aids, Hepatitis & Related Diseases
Tasmanian Deaf Society
Tasmanian Public & Environmental Health Network
Tasmanian School Canteen Association
Tenants' Union of Tasmania
The Hobart Clinic
The Link Youth Services
Unitingcare Tasmania
Volunteering Tasmania
Warrabee Committee Inc.
Wise Employment
Women with Disabilities Australia
Women's Legal Service
Working it Out
Wyndarra Centre
Yemaya Women's Support Service
Youth Futures
Youth Network of Tasmania
Youth Suicide Action Group (Time Out House)

About TasCOSS

TasCOSS, established in 1961, is the peak body for the Tasmanian community services sector. Our membership includes not-for-profit organisations and individuals, as well as associate membership for government bodies.

OUR MISSION

To be an advocate for the interests of low-income and otherwise disadvantaged Tasmanians, and to serve as the peak council for the state's community services sector.

OUR VISION

A fair, just and inclusive Tasmania

ACHIEVING OUR VISION

We work to improve the lives of Tasmanians who are living in poverty or suffering from disadvantage or social exclusion. We do this by raising awareness and understanding of social injustice and inequality, and strongly advocating for and developing improved social and sector policy through consultation, research and analysis.

Through our sector development role, we work with community service organisations to enhance their efficiency and effectiveness, and their ability to work together cohesively and collaboratively.

We also support the community sector in our role as peak council, by advocating on its behalf, coordinating joint advocacy efforts, and providing services to the sector that contribute to good governance,

management and delivery of services. To provide the resources to achieve this vision we continue to improve and build TasCOSS as a well-managed and effective organisation providing value and leadership to its members.

KEY AREAS OF FOCUS

The TasCOSS Board and staff members will continue the Council's focus on the three key areas which have formed the basis of our strategic plans in recent years:

1 ACHIEVING A SOCIALLY JUST SOCIETY

2 STRENGTHENING THE COMMUNITY SERVICES SECTOR

3 IMPROVING AND BUILDING THE TasCOSS ORGANISATION



From the President

2012/13



Noel Mundy

President

The past 12 months have been another successful time for TasCOSS and our members as we have worked to provide a fairer and more inclusive Tasmania. But as always, success can be measured in many ways!

TasCOSS has continued to work with member organisations and government agencies to strengthen the service delivery work that assists low-income and vulnerable Tasmanians. TasCOSS has delivered a range of activities to enhance organisational governance, reporting and compliance and has advocated to government for indexation of funding and commitment to the Equal Remuneration Order to enable organisations to remain viable, skilled staff to be employed and quality services to be delivered.

'Success' for many low-income and disadvantaged Tasmanians is not something that has been achieved over the past 12 months. Unfortunately we still have a large number of Tasmanians struggling to meet the cost of living, secure affordable housing and access essential services such as medical, transport and education. The challenges of the economy have made it increasingly difficult for Tasmanians to obtain sustainable employment. If TasCOSS is to be 'successful', our commitment must be to continue to develop policies and advocate on behalf of all in the community. The introduction of TasCOSS regional forums will continue to ensure that TasCOSS is listening to the needs of all communities across the state.

It is encouraging to know that TasCOSS has developed a reputation as a passionate, well-informed organisation very well regarded by all levels of government and across the political spectrum. The TasCOSS team regularly engages in working groups, advisory committees and direct advocacy to highlight the issues that challenge low-income and disadvantaged Tasmanians.

On behalf of the Board and TasCOSS members I want to acknowledge the work of all staff and particularly thank them for their passion and commitment. The leadership of Tony Reidy as CEO has lifted the profile of TasCOSS and has ensured we have a professionally run organisation that provides the sector with sound advice and support, and a strong model for governance and organisational culture.

Over the past 12 months the Board has made a commitment to meet outside Hobart to ensure we maintain contact with regional members and engage with community leaders. Meetings held in Launceston

and Burnie have provided valuable opportunities to strengthen our relationship with members, gain a greater understanding of regional issues and increase the profile of TasCOSS.

TasCOSS does not achieve excellent results without the commitment and dedication of many individuals and organisations. I want to acknowledge and thank the State Government through the Department of Health and Human Services, which has continued to fund the core policy and advocacy work of TasCOSS. This funding agreement is a true partnership and, again, provides the community services sector with a model for funder and provider relationships.

This year the TasCOSS Board welcomed some new members who have brought great skill and energy to their roles. They are Debbie Evans, Ella Haddad, Tim Gourlay, Darren Carr and Dale Eastley. I thank them for their commitment to TasCOSS and the community services sector. I particularly want to acknowledge the excellent work of Dale Eastley as our Treasurer. TasCOSS is in a sound financial position and Dale has continued to maintain the rigour and accountability established by previous Treasurers.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time as President of TasCOSS and I can look back proudly on the achievements of the past four years. There have certainly been constant challenges and change over those years but I am confident that TasCOSS has maintained the focus of achieving a fairer and more inclusive Tasmania. At the time of writing this report I am unsure as to whether I will be continuing in this role but it has been a privilege and honour to provide leadership and support to the work of TasCOSS and the community services sector in Tasmania.

Our membership base continues to be strong and, again, I thank members for their contribution, their support and their encouragement of TasCOSS. It has been exciting to see new organisations and individuals join as TasCOSS members over the past 12 months.

The next 12 months will again bring challenges but we have a strong team, a strong organisation and an even stronger desire and commitment to seeing Tasmania become a fair, just and inclusive society.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Noel Mundy', written in a cursive style.

Noel Mundy
President

Board Attendance

	Meetings attended	Out of total number
Noel Mundy	7	7
Suzi Edwards	3	7
Dale Eastley (joined Oct 2012)	7	7
Darren Carr (joined Oct 2012)	7	7
Debbie Evans (joined Oct 2012)	7	7
Tim Gourlay (joined Jan 2013)	5	5
Ella Haddad (joined Jan 2013)	2	5



The TasCOSS Board at a Board meeting in Burnie, May 2013.

Staff 2012/13

Tony Reidy Chief Executive			Beng Poh Executive Assistant to the CEO
Jill Pope Finance Officer			Gabrielle Rish Communications Officer
Kath McLean Manager, Social Policy and Research			Meg Webb Social Policy and Research Officer
Wynne Russell Social Policy and Research Officer			Lindsay Moffatt Manager, Sector Development
Dale Rahmanovic Development Officer			Tim Tabart Development Officer
Elida Meadows Development Officer*			Klaus Baur HACC Project Officer/ Consumer Engagement
Gus Risberg Shared Services Project Manager			Lure Wishes Adult Literacy Support Officer*

*Has since left TasCOSS

From the CEO

2012/13



Tony Reidy

Chief Executive

TasCOSS has gone through significant changes and made many improvements to the way it works in the past, very productive 12 months.

Highlights of the work program included the implementation of the outcome of the Equal Pay Case, consultation on and submission of one of our most important “pre-election” Budget Priorities Statements to the State Government in recent years, the finalisation of the Workforce Development Plan for the community sector, planning of a complete revamp of our consultation processes, the revision of the TasCOSS strategic plan and management arrangements, and a number of key projects aimed at strengthening the capacity of TasCOSS to deliver improved information, communication and other sector services.

The past year has again been a time of particular difficulty for low-income and disadvantaged Tasmanians, and the community sector organisations that support them. Changes to federal social security allowances, more increases in the cost of essential services such as electricity, and the steady increase in the levels of both unemployment and under-employment in Tasmania have placed often intolerable burdens on those who are the most at risk in our state.

TasCOSS strategically campaigns for the position of low-income households to be carefully considered when pricing decisions are made. Within our limited resources we continue our research into the causes of poverty and recommendations for action to alleviate it, ensuring that our advocacy across the whole political spectrum is based on evidence and community support.

TasCOSS continues its pursuit of its strategic plan goals with careful resource allocation, working closely with ACOSS, other COSSes and Tasmania's sector peak organisations in a collaborative effort.

Our special thanks go to those organisations and individuals who provide the funding for our vital work: the Tasmanian Government through the Department of Health and Human Services, the Federal Government through provision of research funding in home and community care, the Consumer Advocacy Panel, generous sponsors such as superannuation fund HESTA, and the organisations and individuals who are the membership base of TasCOSS.

A sad note for our annual report was the death in March 2013 of founding TasCOSS member and first Honorary Life Member Dorothy Pearce. Dorothy is missed by all of us, and we have included a special dedication elsewhere in this annual report.

While an examination of our work and achievements throughout the year in the three key areas of our strategic plan is set out in more detail later in this annual report, these are important highlights.

1 ACHIEVING A SOCIALLY JUST SOCIETY

This strategic plan goal is at the very heart of the purpose of TasCOSS, with much valuable research and advocacy carried out throughout the year in order to improve social justice in our state.

Among the key issues on which TasCOSS has campaigned during the past year are the complete inadequacy of the Newstart Allowance and the heartless reduction in the amount of allowance payments for single parents.

The TasCOSS annual Budget Priorities Statement, developed after consultation with the sector and our members, was a particularly important advocacy report during this year as the budget period will encompass a state election in March 2014.

Work continued in using every opportunity to promote recognition of the social determinants of health, and TasCOSS supported the establishment of a new advocacy network for this purpose.

The devastating social impact of problem gambling was highlighted through a joint TasCOSS/ Anglicare forum during Anti-Poverty Week in October 2012, with significant coverage of the event achieved.

TasCOSS has contributed to the discussion on the potential for improvement in community/public transport in Tasmania through its transport mapping project and has gained additional resourcing to pursue this project in 2013-14.

Research and advocacy on behalf of low-income Tasmanians on issues of the cost of living and utilities reform, pricing and concession policy have been consistent throughout the year, informing representations to regulators and reviewing bodies.

Numerous submissions have also been made to inquiries or parliamentary hearings on a broad range of social justice issues.

2 STRENGTHENING THE COMMUNITY SECTOR

In the past year TasCOSS has made some key resourcing decisions that have significantly improved our provision of capacity-building services to the community sector.

Our advocacy in the sector development area has also been very prominent, particularly in the finalisation of the Equal Pay Case and its flow-through to award payments, and our intensive lobbying of federal and state government to secure adequate funding of the pay increases achieved.

The improvements to salaries in the sector will allow service delivery organisations to attract and retain the key staff needed as service demand increases in volume and complexity in the years to come.

Following widespread consultation with the sector, the *Tasmanian Community Services Sector Workforce Development Plan 2012-15* was released in March 2013, with a Workforce Development Roundtable then convened to oversee actions identified in the Plan.

The TasCOSS HACC Consumer Engagement project continued to provide benefits to the sector, resulting in the publication of the *TasCOSS Consumer Engagement Handbook* and *TasCOSS HACC Consumer Engagement Literature Review: Good Practice Approaches and Pilot Projects*.

The TasCOSS-initiated Shared Services in the Community Sector project went from strength to strength, with a web page launched to promote shared services and accommodation opportunities, as well as providing resources and tools for facilitating shared services in the sector.

As a solid contribution to reducing compliance time and costs for sector organisations, and with the strong support of the DHHS, TasCOSS established the Standards and Performance Pathways project. Through this facility 100+ Tasmanian community service organisations took up a DHHS-subsidised subscription to the SPP online reporting system, facilitated by the TasCOSS SPP portal and introductory workshops.

3 IMPROVING AND BUILDING TASCROSS

The past 12 months have seen significant changes made to TasCOSS in governance, management, member services and communication.

The organisation's principal three-year funding contract with the DHHS came to an end and is the subject of a comprehensive, sector and statewide evaluation which will be completed before the end of 2013.

TasCOSS has signed a new funding contract and is developing a work plan under its revised strategic

plan so that agreement can be reached on key objectives, activities and prospective outcomes.

The revised TasCOSS Strategic Plan 2012-2015 was approved by the Board, with a range of key action plans now in motion aimed at improved research, advocacy, sector development and member support.

The TasCOSS management structure was revised, with senior officers appointed to manage the work of our key organisational units, Social Policy and Research and Sector Development. The TasCOSS staff team, a total of just under nine full-time equivalent positions, is a unique grouping of skills and experience with a shared vision for a better Tasmania, a vision they pursue every day.

The way TasCOSS consults was comprehensively reviewed, resulting in a new regional consultation and member council structure in the year to come. TasCOSS member services were also closely examined and new materials produced to allow the organisation to clarify and promote the benefits of membership as we carefully build member numbers and participation.

The ongoing review of TasCOSS communications achieved a rebranding of all our publications and livery, and the redevelopment of our website, to be launched in late 2013. Extra efforts in advocacy were also made possible through more effective media engagement.

The TasCOSS 2012 Conference was very well supported and received, and featured a very successful *Dorothy Pearce Address* as a keynote presentation.

The path of TasCOSS towards Quality Improvement Council accreditation was accelerated through strategic use of staff resources, with other benefits accruing through a revised operational management system.

At the time of this report the number of Tasmanians living in poverty or very close to it is unacceptable, and there is so much more to be done.

It is a privilege to be in a leadership role with the peak organisation in the community sector at such a time, and inspiring to be supported by skilled and dedicated staff and Board teams, and community organisations that remain determined to do everything they can to alleviate poverty and disadvantage in all parts of our state.



Tony Reidy
Chief Executive

1

ACHIEVING A SOCIALLY JUST SOCIETY

Highlights

Budget Priorities Statement

for the 2013-14 State Budget, with funding eventuating for three major TasCOSS recommendations.

Systemic advocacy workshops

for CSOs and advocacy training for community services students in the Polytechnic / TAFE sector.

Social Determinants of Health

Advocacy Network: TasCOSS supported the establishment of this new Tasmanian network.

Transport policy work, including a transport mapping project and transport stakeholder forum.

Public forum on problem

gambling, a joint TasCOSS-Anglicare Tasmania event for Anti-Poverty Week 2012.

Energy research and advocacy,

including newsletter articles and representation on the National Consumer Roundtable on Energy.

Community Sector Policy

Network, convened by TasCOSS to foster information-sharing and collaboration between policy officers.

Tasmanian Women's

Plan: Adoption of key recommendation made by TasCOSS.

Presentation of headline

Tasmanian census data at the TasCOSS 2012 Conference and in the March TasCOSS newsletter.

The TasCOSS Social Policy and Research team concentrates its work primarily on achieving a socially just society. In 2012-13, we continued to make progress towards that goal.

This year the team was led by Kath McLean as Manager, with Meg Webb and Wynne Russell continuing as Social Policy and Research Officers. Gus Risberg worked with us on our transport mapping project, Miriam Herzfeld worked to establish the Social Determinants of Health Advocacy Network and Jacob Fischer provided valuable – and much appreciated – assistance to us as a regular volunteer in the later part of the year.

POLICY ANALYSIS AND DEVELOPMENT

What we did

The major policy development work carried out by the SPR team this year was once again the annual TasCOSS Budget Priorities Statement (BPS) – a comprehensive identification and explication of policy and funding priorities for the community services sector in order to assist low-income, disadvantaged and vulnerable Tasmanians. The BPS for the 2013-14 State Budget focused on four critical areas:

- Key social determinants of health: education, housing and transport.
- Protecting vulnerable Tasmanians.
- Strengthening human service systems.
- Ensuring an effective community services sector.

The BPS was widely circulated and was the subject of vigorous advocacy in the months leading up to the Budget announcement.

After the Budget was handed down, we produced a Budget summary and analysis from a community services sector perspective. We made this available to TasCOSS members, government and sector stakeholders, through TasCOSS e-news and on our website. We also presented our analysis to sector forums in both Hobart and Launceston.

The SPR team continued to participate in various consultation processes with written submissions to government, parliamentary committees and regulatory bodies. Twenty policy submissions were made in 2012-13 (see full list on page 13).

The Tasmanian Social Policy Council remained a valuable avenue through which emerging policy issues were brought to our attention and discussed.

Particular policy analysis and development work was done this year on transport and climate change policy as TasCOSS established itself as a key stakeholder in both of these policy areas.

Energy policy remained a central focus with the continuation of the TasCOSS Energy Research & Advocacy Project into its seventh year. This project is funded by the Australian Energy Market Commission's Consumer Advocacy Panel. In 2012-13 the prime focus of the project was on Tasmanian electricity reforms that will see major changes in the way households buy their electricity with the introduction of full retail competition and market contracts. TasCOSS has played a key role in representing the interests of low-income and vulnerable Tasmanian households throughout this process.

What we achieved

While outcomes from policy work are often difficult to attribute, we were pleased to see some of the recommendations from our 2013-14 BPS funded in the Budget, including funding for the establishment of a Tasmanian checking system for people working with children and vulnerable people; continued funding for Family Support and Disability Gateway services; significant funding for education through both the Gonski reform process and to support the expansion of Years 11 and 12 in regional high schools. We were also pleased to see a Tasmanian Government commitment to meet its obligations under Fair Work Australia's Equal Remuneration Order for community sector wage increases.

TasCOSS was particularly pleased to see a key element in our submission to the Tasmanian Women's Plan adopted as the first whole-of-plan recommendation in the final version: this was the development and implementation of a gender mainstreaming policy for Tasmanian Government Agencies.

Policy submissions made during 2012-13 received positive feedback and several requests for further discussion and information.

What's next

TasCOSS will continue to provide input into public policy consultations and deliberations, and to the development of the State Budget, based on solid research and consultation.

This year's release by the Australian Bureau of Statistics of data from the 2011 Census was an important event for the SPR team and allowed us to update our Tasmanian data.

Meg Webb presented headline local data from the Census at the *TasCOSS Conference: Engagement, Innovation and Equity* held in November 2012, with her presentation replicated in print form for the March 2013 TasCOSS newsletter.

TasCOSS transport policy work was bolstered this year by a transport mapping project developed by Wynne Russell and carried out by Gus Risberg. The project mapped public and community transport (non-HACC funded), and involved action research as Gus made his way to both the North-East and North-West Coasts via publicly available transport. The mapping project is designed to underpin a broader transport coordination and innovation project, *Transport in the Community*, for which we hope to get funding from the State Government in 2013-14.

Fresh insights into research and evidence building were provided through attendance by SPR staff at the Australian Council of Social Service Conference held in Adelaide in March 2013; a Brotherhood of St Laurence conference on equitable growth in Melbourne; and a *Measuring Social Outcomes* workshop in Sydney. We also continued our regular liaison meetings with staff from the Hobart office of the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

What we achieved

2012-13 saw an improvement in our collection and collation of Tasmanian statistics for use in TasCOSS policy and advocacy work. Current statistics are now readily available to drop into media releases and statements, submissions and other advocacy documents.

Mapping of policy arenas is an increasingly important aspect of our work and is recognised as providing a solid basis for policy development, analysis and advocacy.

What's next

Tasmanian statistical information is being prepared to sit with policy outlines in the policy section of the redesigned TasCOSS website to be launched in late 2013. Current Tasmanian statistics relating to demographics, income, housing, educational attainment, employment and health outcomes will be available on the TasCOSS website and will be regularly updated.

EVIDENCE-BUILDING

What we did

TasCOSS policy work continued to be informed by thorough research and evidence building. We maintained our links with local and national research organisations and networks, and drew on international research where appropriate.

CONSULTATION

What we did

Consultation was a key contributor to TasCOSS policy and advocacy work this year. The Tasmanian Social Policy Council continued to provide an avenue for direct and regular consultation with TasCOSS members, while all

stakeholders were invited, through our fortnightly e-news, to contribute to the development of TasCOSS policy positions articulated in our submissions. We also frequently called on sector peak bodies for input into relevant policy issues.

TasCOSS SPR staff held specific consultation events in the North-West, North and South of the state to seek input from the sector for our 2013-14 Budget Priorities Statement. These were well-attended and identified many issues affecting the sector and the low-income and disadvantaged Tasmanians the sector supports.

Our transport policy work was particularly well-informed by consultation with a wide range of stakeholders in individual meetings and at a Transport Stakeholder Forum organised by TasCOSS in conjunction with Regional Development Australia in December 2012. Attendees included stakeholders from all levels of government, the community services sector, the University of Tasmania and the transport industry, including bus operators. All made solid contributions to help us identify issues and possible policy solutions for transport-disadvantaged Tasmanians.

What we achieved

Through an extensive consultation process this year, TasCOSS has established itself as a key stakeholder in the transport policy arena and, as a consequence, the interests of transport-disadvantaged Tasmanians have received a broader hearing. We hope that this will lead to improved access to transport, as well as to increased support for funding of our broader transport coordination and innovation project.

SPR has kept its doors open to TasCOSS members and the sector at large regarding the policy and advocacy work that we do. It is increasingly understood that we welcome input into our policy development, analysis and comment, and that we actively seek the views of our members in particular.

What's next

TasCOSS is introducing a new statewide consultation framework in 2013-14 that involves the establishment of Regional Councils comprising TasCOSS members in each of the three regions, and regular Regional Forums that will be open to all with an interest in the community services sector and in issues affecting low-income and disadvantaged Tasmanians. This new consultation framework will replace the Tasmanian Social Policy Council and will allow for broader participation in helping us prioritise the work that we do.

low-income, disadvantaged and vulnerable Tasmanians. Many of our written submissions were followed up by personal conversations with decision-makers. In particular, in advocating for the recommendations contained in our BPS, we met with all relevant ministers, including the Premier/ Treasurer, ministerial staff and relevant departmental decision-makers.

In addition, throughout the year we continued to seek – and be granted – meetings with ministers and ministerial staff on policy issues of concern to TasCOSS, its members and to disadvantaged Tasmanians. These included meetings on electricity reform issues, housing, transport, education, costs of living and energy-efficiency programs.

TasCOSS maintained its prominence in the media statewide on issues affecting low-income and disadvantaged Tasmanians. We are clearly seen as the 'go-to' organisation for comment on social policy issues and we have used our excellent access to the media to raise issues proactively and advocate for change.

Advocacy was also carried out in a range of advisory / consultative groups that SPR staff regularly attend to represent the interests of low-income and disadvantaged Tasmanians. See the full list on pages 26-27.

In Anti-Poverty Week 2012, TasCOSS partnered with Anglicare Tasmania to hold a Gambling Policy Forum to discuss the ongoing harm caused by the gambling industry – harm that disproportionately affects low-income and disadvantaged individuals and communities. Policy options to address problem gambling were also discussed, as was the failure of the Federal Government to take effective action to limit the harm caused by electronic gaming machines. TasCOSS continued to support the introduction of a \$1 bet limit on gaming machines.

To further develop the capacity of the community sector to engage in systemic advocacy, the SPR team organised and promoted systemic advocacy training sessions for the sector in both Hobart and Launceston, presented by the Sydney-based Public Interest Advocacy Centre. We also presented our own advocacy training for community services students in the Polytechnic / TAFE sector. This latter training has become a regular activity for TasCOSS SPR staff.

What we achieved

TasCOSS continued to be recognised as a key advocate for the Tasmanian community services sector and for the interests of low-income, disadvantaged and vulnerable Tasmanians. The media continued to call on TasCOSS to comment on issues affecting low-income Tasmanians and we also provided opinion pieces proactively to the print media.

TasCOSS has excellent access to decision-makers and regularly meets with ministers, advisors and

ADVOCACY

What we did

TasCOSS has continued to be an active advocate both for sector needs and for the interests of

departmental staff. We are often consulted by government and by ministerial advisors ahead of major policy decisions and are seen as a respected and legitimate voice of the community services sector.

What's next

We are intensifying our advocacy activities in both the federal and state election campaigns in late 2013 and early 2014 to continue to work towards achieving a socially just society.

We will hold further policy forums in 2013-14, including a forum on issues facing people seeking asylum and humanitarian entrants living in the Tasmanian community.

COLLABORATION

What we did

In 2011-12, TasCOSS collaborated with the Australian Health Promotion Association and staff from DHHS Population Health to produce a series of ten Social Determinants of Health Action sheets. These were not only very well-received by the community services and health sectors, but also by the education, general government, university and other sectors – as well as by many individuals. This action sheet project contributed directly to the formation of the Social Determinants of Health Advocacy Network, the launch of which was held in August 2012. Miriam Herzfeld was employed by TasCOSS as a part-time consultant in the first six months of 2012-13 to facilitate the establishment and activities of the Network. The Network gained strength throughout the year and by year's end had well over 100 members. TasCOSS remains an active participant in the Network.

Kath McLean, working on the Energy Research and Advocacy project at TasCOSS, continued to be the sole Tasmanian representative on the National Consumer Roundtable on Energy. This Roundtable meets three times per year and collaborates on consumer-based advocacy planning and action on national energy issues affecting small electricity and gas consumers.

Kath has also collaborated with energy policy analysts from the state and territory COSS network and other community sector energy advocates in the ACOSS Energy Policy Advisory Group. The focus of the group is on developing and analysing energy policy that recognises household energy as essential and that maintains access to an adequate supply for low-income households.

We have also continued to work collaboratively with other COSSes in a number of policy areas, including cost of living, transport, water and health.

The TasCOSS SPR team has continued to coordinate and convene a Community Sector Policy Network in Tasmania to foster information sharing and collaboration between policy officers in peak and

other community sector organisations. In recent years increasing numbers of organisations in the sector have employed policy officers in an effort to bring about lasting change through policy and advocacy work. TasCOSS, as the sector's central peak body, has taken the lead in establishing this network, which has become highly valued by its members.

TasCOSS continued to collaborate in both ongoing and ad hoc advocacy campaigns and was involved this year as a member of both the Public Education Alliance and the Food Security Network, and contributed to the development of COTA's transport policy paper.

What we achieved

The establishment and immediate expansion of membership of the Social Determinants of Health Advocacy Network demonstrated that these issues resonated with many Tasmanians. TasCOSS was proud to be central in its creation and heartened by the widespread recognition of the importance of our longstanding 'core business'.

Our ongoing coordination of the Community Sector Policy Network has received much positive feedback among Network members. The Network is now well established and a core activity for policy workers throughout the sector.

What's next

TasCOSS believes that collaboration with like-minded individuals and groups is the most effective way to make progress toward our goals, and we will continue to collaborate on policy and advocacy where possible. We plan to continue to lead and actively participate in advocacy campaigns towards achieving a socially just society.



TasCOSS CEO Tony Reidy addresses a rally calling for reinstatement of the Parenting allowance.

Tasmanian Social Policy Council

2012/13

The Tasmanian Social Policy Council was established in 2005 as a mechanism by which TasCOSS members could contribute to considering, developing and promoting policies on the range of social, economic and political issues in accordance with the key objectives, mission and vision of TasCOSS.

Over the years, the TSPC has played a valuable role in bringing urgent social policy issues to the attention of TasCOSS, in providing a sounding board for TasCOSS policy positions and in supporting TasCOSS's research and advocacy on behalf of low-income and disadvantaged Tasmanians and the Tasmanian community services sector.

The 2011-2013 term was the final term for the TSPC. TasCOSS has reviewed the way it consults with members, the sector and the broader community and will be implementing a new Consultation Framework during 2013-14. This Framework will include Regional Open Forums and Regional Councils made up of TasCOSS members. Participation in these Forums and Regional Councils is encouraged for all TasCOSS members. For more information please see www.tascoss.org.au.

TasCOSS extends a warm thank you to all those who participated in the TSPC during its operation – your contribution has been greatly valued.

TSPC members during 2012-13

Anita Pryor	Anglicare
Clare Thompson	Individual member
Claudia Butler	Colony 47
Dave Willans	TasCAHRD
David Closs	TasDeaf
Debbie Hindle	Individual member
Denese Ferguson	Wyndarra
Elida Meadows	Mental Health Council of Tasmania
Flora Dean	Relationships Australia, Tasmania
Georgina McLagan	Centacare
Glynis Flower	Hobart Women's Health Centre
Jade Barker	Scarlet Alliance
James Graham	Multicultural Council of Tasmania
John Hooper	Tasmanian Association of Community Houses
John Stuart	Launceston Benevolent Society
Kate Allingham	Shelter
Katrina Wickham	Aspire
Kay Thompson	Individual member
Lucy Henry	Individual member
Mary D'Elia	Baptcare
Melinda McCleary	Volunteering Tasmania
Miriam Herzfeld	Individual member
Noel Mundy	TasCOSS President/ Mission Australia
Shaun Staunton	TasCAHRD
Stuart Davies	Community Transport Services Tasmania
Sue Leitch	COTA Tasmania
Suzi Edwards	TasCOSS Vice President/ TACH



TasCOSS Policy Submissions

2012/13

Department of Premier and Cabinet, July 2012
Primary Prevention Framework Discussion Paper

Department of Treasury and Finance, November 2012
Budget Priorities Statement for State Budget 2013-14

Department of Education, December 2012
Future provision of Years 11 and 12 education in regional Tasmania discussion paper

The Treasury, Australian Government, Not for Profit Tax Concessions Working Group, December 2012
Not for Profit Tax Concessions Working Group Discussion Paper: ACOSS submission

The Treasury, Australian Government, January 2013
Response to the Treasury Australian Charities and NFP Commission exposure draft and Governance Arrangements Consultation Paper: Joint COSS submission

Department of Premier and Cabinet, February 2013
Draft Tasmanian Carer Policy

Tasmanian Economic Regulator, February 2013
Water & Sewerage Customer Service Code Review

Department of Energy, Infrastructure and Resources, February 2013
Review of Taxi Licence Release Arrangements

Commissioner for Children, February 2013
Commissioner for Children Inquiry into Alternatives to Secure Detention

Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Children & Youth Services, February 2013
Legislative Amendment Review Committee on Children, Young Persons & Their Families Act

The Senate, February 2013
Extreme weather, climate change and the community sector: ACOSS submission to Inquiry into recent trends in and preparedness for extreme weather events

Hobart City Council, February 2013
Hobart City Council Draft Housing Strategy and Action Plan

Legislative Council Committee B Integrated Transport, March 2013
Legislative Council Committee B Integrated Transport Options

Select Joint Parliamentary Committee, March 2013
Preventive Health Care Inquiry

Department of Premier and Cabinet, March 2013
Voluntary Assisted Dying: A proposal for Tasmania

Department of Treasury and Finance, Electricity Reform Project team, March 2013
Tas Energy Market Reform: Market & Regulatory Position Paper

Department of Health and Human Services, Population Health, April 2013
Draft Reproductive Health (Termination of Pregnancy) Bill

Department of Energy, Infrastructure and Resources, Office of Energy, April 2013
Tasmanian Gas Codes Review

Department of Premier and Cabinet, Community Development Division, April 2013
Comments on the draft Tasmanian Women's Plan 2013-2018

Department of Premier and Cabinet, April 2013
Role of Local Government discussion papers

Department of Premier and Cabinet, Community Development Division, April 2013
Draft Primary Prevention Strategy to Reduce Violence Against Women and Children 2012-2022

Department of Health and Human Services, Community Sector Relations Unit, May 2013
The Quality and Safety Standards Framework for Tasmania's DHHS Funded Community Sector – Consultation Draft

The Treasury, Australian Government, May 2013
ACOSS Submission to the Exposure Draft Charities Bill 2013

Launceston City Council, May 2013
Social Policy position paper for the Greater Launceston Plan

Department of Treasury and Finance, Electricity Reform Project, June 2013
Feed-in Tariffs: Transition to FRC Issues Paper

You can bet families will suffer

The flashing lights of poker machines form a neon sign for poverty and misery in Tasmania, writes Tony Reidy

had many of them, which suddenly rang inside drawers and cupboards. Many of my school friends had families torn apart by gambling, and working part-time after school at the local corner shop put me in a position to hear the conversations the shopkeeper had with mothers desperate to obtain food on credit, all the time barking on "next week's wages".

More than 2500 Tasmanians have gambling problems, and studies show that for every one of them, another five to 10 people - their nearest and dearest - are affected too. This means about 27,500 Tasmanians are harmed by gambling, including 2000 children.

In my childhood days betting on horses and greyhounds was what brightened the housebooks of chronic gamblers. Then came the pokies, which took over the RSL and Leagues clubs of New South Wales after their introduction to my home state in 1961.

You can lose \$200 a hour on a poker machine in Tasmania if you're determined. Even our

wealthiest citizens would have trouble sustaining that rate of financial loss.

But the bitter irony is that most poker machines in Tasmania are concentrated in lower-income communities, and player losses per person are higher in those areas. Anti-poker machine groups estimate that the Tasmanian Government takes about \$160,000 a day from taxes on poker machines but pays about \$270,000 a day to repair the damage. That's a net loss to the taxpayer of \$110,000 a day, or \$62 million a year.

That's the dollar price on the cost of poker machine gambling. Now let's have a look at the price tag in terms of human misery.

Gambling problems hit the most vulnerable the hardest. People on low incomes have few resources to buffer themselves against gambling losses, and these losses can rapidly turn into spiralling debts, leaving the gamblers and their families even worse off.

Life of single parent is getting tougher

By CHRIS PAPPAS

MANY Tasmanians who have had their legitimate single-parent allowance cut by up to \$22 a fortnight will be flummoxed over their "fiscal cliff" by an "appalling piece of social policy", the state's peak welfare body says.

Tasmanian Council of Social Service chief executive Tony Reidy said the federal government policy shifting single parents on to Newstart when their youngest child turned eight - which took effect last week - would cause serious hardship for many Tasmanians, estimated "into the thousands".

"This is in effect their fiscal cliff they have fallen over," Mr Reidy said.

"The vast majority of single-parent families are people in that circumstance through no fault of their own and they have more likely than not been vigorously pursuing work opportunities for the last several years."

The government policy shift would save \$28 million over four years.

An introduction was followed by controversial cuts to the work from Families Minister Jenny Macklin, who said she could live

on the payment of \$10 a day.

Mr Reidy described the comment as "substantive" and "very unhelpful".

"It's an appalling piece of social policy," he said.

"They have now been reduced to a poverty income. This is in effect their fiscal cliff they have fallen over."

He said TasCOSS member organisations were experiencing massive demands, including many Tasmanians who had never previously sought help.

"We've seen significant increases, 10, 20, 30 per cent increases in the number of individuals and families coming to their organisations for emergency relief for the very first time in their lives," Mr Reidy said.

He said many Tasmanians were drowning under the "spiralising cost of living".

Mr Reidy said there was "no evidence" to suggest cutting the single-parent allowance would create an incentive for welfare recipients to find work.

In fact, many would not only struggle with the necessities, but

also lack the disposable income to "pursue the not insignificant cost of pursuing work," Mr Reidy said.

Leading Tasmanian chief executive Larry O'Neil said the welfare cut was "one of the most inhumane decisions made by a national government in the last 20 years".

"This will do nothing but drive more of Tasmania's poorest families deeper into poverty," Mr O'Neil said.

"The vast majority of single-parent families are people in that circumstance through no fault of their own and they have more likely than not been vigorously pursuing work opportunities for the last several years."

By Michelle

Welfare groups hit by demand

By PHILIP HEYWARD

WELFARE groups are feeling the stress as more Tasmanians households seek help on top of demand for benefits relief.

Tasmanian Council of Social Service chief executive Tony Reidy said the number of people applying for welfare was increasing rapidly.

"The very resources available to these people are stretched, especially when they are also trying to provide help to people affected by the bushfires," Mr Reidy said.

He said the federal Government's education cutbacks were welcome but did not provide adequate cover for the spiralling cost of living.

"Compensation for people in the bush has not still been the highest unemployment level in the country," he said.

Rick Tynan, co-ordinator of the New South Wales Scheme for Tasmanian, warned households not to rely on fringe lenders offering cash loans with high interest repayments.

He said TasCOSS did not provide cash loans but provided advice on how to access other services for people seeking loans for specific needs such as essential household items that had to be replaced.

Welfare groups offer a free financial counselling service by phoning 1800 07 07 07.

Call to boost Newstart pay



MICHELLE PAPPAS

TASMANIAN welfare groups and politicians have stepped up their campaign for a \$10 a week increase for the dole. The move comes amid growing concern about increasing welfare dependence on Newstart to charities for help. Tasmanian Council of Social Service chief executive Tony Reidy said the rate needed to be increased.

"I've never seen a systemic recognition of the inadequacy of Newstart. This is it," Mr Reidy said.

"The \$10-a-day people receive on Newstart and similar Centrelink allowances is simply

not enough to live on." He said one in five people received Newstart for more than two years, so it could not be claimed to be a temporary "bridge job" payment.

More than 2500 Tasmanians are on Newstart or Youth Allowance, and including the extra single parents who join the scheme later this year, the total is more than 3000.

Liz Thorp and Larra's Disabled Candidates John Austin urged the Federal Government to reconsider.

Ms Thorp said raising Newstart would not discourage people from looking for work. "Given on the minimum wage a Newstart recipient would double their income," Ms Thorp said.

"That's still a pretty powerful incentive and one which is much more achievable if peo-

ple have money to dedicate towards the search for work."

Ms Austin said many people have fallen into debt to cover basic living costs.

She said some parents on Newstart would be \$20 a fortnight worse off.

But she said she was proud the Federal Government had brought in the School Kids Bonus, lifted the childcare rebate from 10 to 50 per cent and increased the tax-free threshold to \$15,200.

Lobbying action has increased since some single parents were moved on to the Newstart payment, which is less than the single parent payment, although both give extra payments for each child.

ADULT MOTIVATIONS FOR LEARNING CORE SKILLS

\$500,000 poverty plan
Call for schools to go to year 12

The statement also calls for measures to address the skills gap between the business and education sectors in Tasmania. Nearly 14 per cent of the

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STRENGTHENING THE COMMUNITY SERVICES SECTOR

Highlights

Equal Remuneration Order:

The State Government committed to fully funding its obligations under the Equal Remuneration Order. The State Budget allocated \$37.04 million over the first four years. The Federal Government committed \$7.5 million for Tasmanian organisations over the same period.

Tasmanian Community Services Sector Workforce Development Plan 2012-15

released in March 2013, with a Workforce Development Roundtable convened to oversee actions in the Plan.

HACC Consumer Engagement project:

Publication of the *TasCOSS Consumer Engagement Handbook and TasCOSS HACC Consumer Engagement Literature Review: Good Practice Approaches and Pilot Projects*. Fifteen HACC providers commenced consumer engagement initiatives.

Shared services: The TasCOSS Shared Services web page was launched to promote shared services and accommodation opportunities, and provide resources and tools for facilitating shared services in the Tasmanian community sector.

Standards and Performance Pathways:

Nearly 100 Tasmanian community service organisations took up a DHHS-

subsidised subscription to the SPP online reporting system, facilitated by the TasCOSS SPP portal and introductory workshops.

EQUAL REMUNERATION ORDER

With the handing down of the Equal Remuneration Order (ERO) by Fair Work Australia in June 2012, community services workers were recognised for the value of the work they do in making a difference in our communities with a substantial increase in pay over eight years. This marked the righting of a historical wrong based on gender where women, who represent 85 per cent of the sector workforce, were not paid according to the value of the work they performed. The ERO provided for increases ranging from 19-41 per cent, plus a 4 per cent loading, phased in over eight years in nine instalments, commencing on 1 December 2012.

What we did

TasCOSS supported the Department of Health and Human Services to conduct a salary census in August 2012 in order to better understand the financial implications of the ERO and facilitate additional funding to state government-funded community service organisations that would allow them to meet their higher wages costs. TasCOSS assisted this process as a member of the Equal Remuneration Implementation Working Group and continued to advocate for sufficient funding to organisations to meet their wages costs. TasCOSS also took an active role in communicating the outcomes of the census to the sector and supported the DHHS-led information forums that preceded the first of the ERO wage increases on 1 December 2012.

TasCOSS collaborated with the national Council of Social Service (COSS) network to lobby the Federal Government to meet its obligations to increase funding in line with the ERO.

What we achieved

The State Government committed to fully funding its obligations under the ERO. The State Budget confirmed this commitment by allocating a total of \$37.04 million over the first four years. The first instalment was paid to state-funded community service organisations in November

2012. The Federal Government also committed \$7.5 million for Tasmanian organisations over the same period.

What's next

TasCOSS will continue to consult with its members and the wider sector on wage costs and the impacts of implementing the ERO supplement, and will continue to advocate for appropriate funding from both state and federal governments.

INDEXATION OF FUNDING

What we did

TasCOSS commissioned 3P Consulting to explore what impact the reduced indexation of DHHS funding was having on Tasmanian community service organisations during 2011-12 and into 2012-13, and what might happen if this funding trend continued.

The report found reduced indexation was combining with rising costs for essential services and increased client demands to gradually undermine the viability of organisations, resulting in marginal decreases in services to consumers, reduced professional development of staff and Boards, and cutting back on operational costs and strategic planning processes.

The research provided solid evidence to support our advocacy with state government, including our Budget Priorities Statement submission, continuing to call for a restoration of the agreed full formula for indexed funding for DHHS-funded organisations and to establish this formula for community service organisations funded by other state government departments. We encouraged all community service organisations and peak bodies to draw on our evidence and their own experiences to support their advocacy with government.

What we achieved

Despite advocacy from the sector, the State Budget announced indexation for organisations funded by DHHS would be provided at 2.25% for the third successive year. In a period of rising operational costs and increasing demand, this level of indexation will again fail to meet the needs of community service organisations and will compound the shortfall experienced by organisations over the past two years.

What's next

TasCOSS continues to see and hear evidence of the challenges organisations are facing to cope with the rising costs of service delivery and we will continue to gather evidence and advocate to government to ensure that the full costs of service delivery are met. We are also exploring ways for the sector to reduce costs through shared services and bulk purchasing arrangements.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Workforce development and planning activities featured prominently during 2012-13 – activities identified as crucial to the development of a vibrant sector able to adapt to an ever-changing environment and equipped with the resources to meet the increased level and diversity of need in our community. TasCOSS has worked at two levels:

- Planning and advocacy that identifies needs for the sector's workforce and projects to address these needs in our capacity as the community sector peak, in partnership with the Peaks Network and other stakeholders.
- The delivery of information and skills development opportunities, tools, practice-based networks and information-sharing pathways that meet the sector's workforce development needs.

What we did

TasCOSS led the development and release of the Tasmanian Community Services Sector Workforce Development Plan 2012-2015 in March 2013. Entitled *A Workforce for the Future*, the Plan was funded by Skills Tasmania and the consultations and initial drafting were facilitated by Maree Fudge from RDS Partners Ltd. The extensive consultation with the sector and its stakeholders identified three priority areas:

1. Increasing and retaining our current and future workforce.
2. Building workforce development and planning capacity across the sector.
3. Raising and updating our skills right across the sector.

The priority areas and their related actions underpin TasCOSS workforce development activities.

TasCOSS would like to acknowledge the substantial contribution made by Tasmanian community service organisations, members of the Peaks Network, stakeholders and Advisory Group with a special note of thanks to the members of the Working Group in drafting and completing the Plan.

What we achieved

The Plan was launched by the Minister for Education and Skills, Nick McKim, as part of the UTAS Careers Fair in March 2013, to an audience of sector stakeholders and students considering entering the community sector.

What's next

TasCOSS has convened the Workforce Development Roundtable (Action 2.1 of the Workforce Development Plan), commencing in June 2013. With representation from sector peaks and other stakeholders, the roundtable will:

1. Act as a cross-sector governance forum to oversee actions identified in the Workforce Development Plan.
2. Identify areas for cross-community-sector capacity-building and develop partnerships that foster quality and choice for workers in areas such as governance, management and leadership, and core workplace skills.
3. Provide a central community services capacity-building reference for external stakeholders such as training providers and funders.
4. Provide a forum for partnership across the sector to continually review and refresh the community sector workforce needs and ensure they are being addressed.

The Roundtable has identified a sector profile as a priority project for development, along with mapping areas for partnership in cross-community-sector capacity-building. TasCOSS is leading the planning for the profile, in partnership with the community sector peaks.

TasCOSS's new capacity-building framework will focus on ensuring the community services sector has the governance, management and leadership skills needed to address the significant changes and challenges our sector faces and the complex needs of Tasmanian communities.

Community sector profile

A Tasmanian community sector profile would provide sound information on the make-up of the community services sector, the organisations that comprise it and their current workforce, paid and volunteers. Such information is essential to the creation of sound workforce development and planning initiatives. Having access to robust and regular data on this was identified within the Workforce Development Plan as a key need for Tasmania.

TasCOSS was fortunate to have Liz Brown volunteer with us to conduct a mapping exercise of existing data sources on the Tasmanian community service sector. We would like to acknowledge her contribution. This data source mapping will be used as the basis for developing a plan to regularly collect and analyse data about our sector and its workforce.

PORTABLE LONG-SERVICE LEAVE SCHEME

Community services workers have a tendency to move between jobs and employers comparatively frequently, while still staying within the sector. In an effort to increase and retain the sector's current and future workforce, work commenced during 2012-13 to develop a Portable Long-Service Leave Scheme proposal for sector workers. Modelled on successful schemes operating in the ACT and for the Tasmanian construction industry, the scheme would ensure

sector workers benefit from the years of service they provide to the community.

What we did

TasCOSS provided input to two consultation rounds facilitated by the Department of Justice, Workplace Standards and was selected with other sector stakeholders to sit on the Portable Long Service Leave Scheme for the Community Services Sector Working Group.

What's next

The proposal for a Tasmanian community sector portable long-service scheme is scheduled to be handed to the Minister for Workplace Relations late in 2013. TasCOSS will continue to provide input to the working group and communicate the progress of the scheme. TasCOSS has taken the issue to the Community Sector Workforce Development Round Table for consideration and feedback across the sector.

TRAINING AND INFORMATION FORUMS

TasCOSS responded to needs identified by sector organisations and other stakeholders including Skills Tasmania, the Department of Health and Human Services, community sector peaks, trade unions and employer groups by hosting targeted training and skills development opportunities, as well as information-sharing sessions on topical issues affecting the sector.

What we did

A total of 20 sector development workshops and information forums were held in 2012-13, covering seven topics. These included skills development workshops such as governance, addressing workplace bullying and advocacy skills. There were also forums that provided information and the opportunity for sector feedback on: accessing funding opportunities; industrial relations matters; changes affecting charities and not-for-profits as a result of the establishment of the Australian Charities and Not for Profit Commission; and organisational efficiency in the area of reporting against quality standards. Events were held in all three Tasmanian regions, with four events held in Burnie, eight in Launceston and eight in Hobart. Three webinars were also hosted, making information accessible to organisations from the comfort of their own offices.

What we achieved

We continued to host low-cost and accessible skills development and training across the state in response to sector and stakeholder needs. This is reflected in the participant feedback which reports a consistently high level of satisfaction.

What's next

TasCOSS will continue to provide information-sharing and skills development opportunities to its

members and the broader sector during 2013-14, with forums that will provide targeted training as well as exploring topical issues affecting the sector. In response to the skills and information needs raised by the sector through the Community Services Workforce Development Plan, TasCOSS will be focusing particularly on offering skills and information that enhances organisations' leadership and governance and management.

FINANCE OFFICERS COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

A community of practice is typically a group of peers who meet regularly to share knowledge, information and resources on a topic of interest. A community of practice of workforce development workers was trialled by TasCOSS in 2011-2012. TasCOSS continued with this peer learning approach to skills development after identifying a need by sector finance officers for more training and skills development opportunities.

What we did

In March 2012, TasCOSS hosted an information forum on fringe benefits, salary sacrifice and their tax implications for community service organisations. Hosted by Joss Fenton from 4business, the forum highlighted a need of sector finance officers for additional information on this subject and others.

The Community of Practice for Finance Officers was established and held the first of six meetings in July 2012, facilitated by Joss Fenton. With a membership of 16, the group explored topics that included budgeting, investing funds, grant acquittals and payroll.

What we achieved

We were able to facilitate a low-cost skills development opportunity for sector finance officers providing accurate topical information tailored for the community sector. Participants engaged in this information exchange as a network of peers able to share resources, support, information and encouragement.

Participant feedback:

“Being relatively new to Tasmania it was a great opportunity to find out how things work down here!”

“Please offer this course again, as I am sure there are many more finance workers in our sector that have not had many mentor/professional development opportunities that are specific to our industry.”

What's next

TasCOSS is committed to establishing new communities of practice and other peer learning opportunities that enhance leadership, governance and management. In early 2014, we plan to

facilitate a community of practice for human resource management in southern Tasmania and a finance officers' community of practice in Launceston.

HACC CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT PROJECT

The TasCOSS Home and Community Care (HACC) Consumer Engagement Project delivered a number of innovative and practical projects across Tasmania. Participating providers received support through assessment of their current consumer engagement activities and needs, mentoring and the delivery of formal and informal training, including the nationally accredited Vocational Graduate Certificate in Consumer Engagement. A key part of an evaluation of the TasCOSS project was the use of narrative inquiry to highlight program experiences for consumers, staff and managers.

What we did

A report examining national and international good practice and findings from earlier HACC pilot initiatives was released in July 2012. It was well received.

“One of the most useful resources that was generously made available was the TasCOSS HACC Consumer Engagement Literature Review Good Practice Approaches and Pilot Projects. This is without doubt a major contribution to the consumer engagement literature in Australia.” - Michele Kosky, WA consultant hired

by the Department of Health and Ageing to explore consumer engagement in health in Tasmania.

The publication of a *Consumer Engagement Handbook* offering a choice of practical and often interactive activities followed in September 2012.

“The TasCOSS HACC Consumer Engagement Handbook is a great resource for health services and community organisations aiming at implementing community, consumer and carer engagement initiatives. I have it on my desktop and often search for specific concepts, activities or tools when I need a quick reference for myself or for others who ask advice from us here at Health Issues Centre.” - Dr Teresa Dawson, Health Issues Centre, Melbourne

Fifteen providers committed to a consumer engagement initiative during a time characterised by the most significant changes for the HACC program experienced over the past 25 years. TasCOSS, in partnership with Victoria's Health Issues Centre, assisted providers in planning, implementing and reviewing a wide range of consumer engagement initiatives or projects.

What we achieved

The 15 providers started 16 initiatives. Thirteen were completed and two are still in progress.

One staff member shared:

“Initially we considered that we engaged with consumers as a normal part of our program, but we realised we were simply providing what we thought our consumers wanted.”

Provider teams were also supported through informal training for senior managers and Board members and, for the first time in Tasmania, through the delivery of formal and nationally accredited consumer engagement training. The training proved immensely helpful in terms of project team support, longer term sector support and in terms of overall quality and impact of the projects.

“I wasn’t looking forward to the training as I was ‘made to go’ but I’m very glad I went and it has opened my eyes to the vast lack of consumer engagement in community services.”

Some of the findings from projects and training were:

- 79% of participating service providers said their understanding of consumer engagement had improved significantly.
- 93% of providers said they were planning more projects outside the TasCOSS project.

When asked what they would say to colleagues who were not part of this year’s project, one project participant replied:

“We would say do it, it is enlightening.”

What’s next

The project will continue to support practical, consumer-focused initiatives for HACC providers and will have an enhanced focus on informal and formal training. Stories and experiences from project teams will be shared for a broader community services audience on the TasCOSS website. The year will also see the first groups of managers and staff in Tasmania complete the full graduate certificate course.

SHARED SERVICES

The TasCOSS Shared Services project facilitates and promotes the sharing of accommodation and back-office services by community service organisations in Tasmania. Shared services is also about sharing information and utilising the purchasing power of the sector to lower costs of products and services to the community sector.

What we did

The Shared Services web page was launched early in the financial year to promote shared services opportunities and provide resources and tools for facilitating shared services in the community sector.

An insurance information hub was added to the Shared Services page to provide tools for the community services sector when buying or renewing insurance and when creating risk management plans.

Community service hubs were promoted around the state, including plans for a co-located youth centre in Burnie and a community service hub in the \$50 million Macquarie Point Development Corporation development.

Initial discussions occurred in relation to bulk purchasing opportunities for cost-effective insurance products, telecommunication packages and IT services for the community sector.

What we achieved

The Shared Services project is now well recognised in the sector and has significant momentum going into 2013-14. Shared services user feedback has been overwhelmingly positive with keen interest in future opportunities.

What’s next

TasCOSS will continue to consult with the community services sector about future shared services needs, in terms of accommodation, back-office services and bulk-purchasing.

TasCOSS is in the final stages of being able to refer community sector organisations to an insurance broker who would provide insurance products tailored for the sector at cost-effective prices. Further shared purchasing opportunities are planned for 2013-14 whereby TasCOSS leverages the purchasing power of the sector to create cost-effective products tailored for the sector.

STANDARDS AND PERFORMANCE PATHWAYS

In recent years, time-consuming and onerous reporting on compliance with quality and safety standards has been a significant issue for community sector organisations.

What we did

In June 2012, DHHS committed \$99,000 for TasCOSS to develop an online portal and subsidise subscriptions to the Standards and Performance Pathways (SPP) online reporting tool, which reduces the time spent managing and reporting on the quality of services by up to 80% and provides resources to build organisational capabilities and capacity.

Working with DHHS and the SPP’s developers, BNG NGO Services Online, the TasCOSS SPP Portal went live on 1 December 2012. Information on the benefits of the SPP and the subsidy on offer was

publicised via the TasCOSS e-news, a dedicated web page and a series of hands-on workshops in November 2012 and June 2013, and a live webinar series in February 2013.

What we achieved

Staff from 108 organisations attended presentations, and 73 (68%) of those had subscribed to the SPP by August 2013. Another 26 organisations who had not been to a presentation also subscribed, bringing the total to 99. Workshop attendees and subscribers have complimented the usefulness of the templates and tools included as well as the simplicity and speed of the assessment process. Baptistcare and Mission Australia are encouraging partners in their Gateway services to use the SPP.

“We moved from spending 75-95 hours every six months to approximately five hours every six months in terms of our reporting. It’s saved us an enormous amount of time and energy, which means we have all those hours to work on the [quality] improvement and all the other business we’re funded to provide.” - SPP user

What’s next

Further promotional work will be done so more organisations are aware of the opportunity to trial the SPP. The benefits will be evaluated and options for providing the portal in 2014 and onwards will be negotiated.

MEASURING SOCIAL OUTCOMES

What we did

Two priorities identified in the 2012-15 Partnership Agreement between DHHS, the Department of Premier and Cabinet and the Tasmanian community services sector were that planning should be based on the collection and analysis of data, and that reports and information should be used to improve outcomes for Tasmanians. TasCOSS and DHHS recognise that the measurement of outcomes for social services is complex and difficult, and that the current level of knowledge and skill in using information on outcomes for planning and service improvement is limited amongst many CSOs as well as within DHHS.

TasCOSS and DHHS staff attended the national *Measuring Social Outcomes Conference* in March, and have since begun developing a shared strategy for building the capacity of CSOs and DHHS to use social outcomes measurement.

What’s next

Over the next three years the TasCOSS Sector Development Unit will work with the community sector and DHHS to embed social outcomes measurement within program development, implementation, reporting and reviewing for Tasmanian CSOs and DHHS Funding Agreement

Managers. A combination of resources, training and networking will be provided to develop individual organisations' ability to measure and use social outcomes for their own programs. TasCOSS will develop a social outcomes hub through our website as a central resource for those interested in developing skills, accessing good practice and engaging with others already measuring outcomes successfully.

A separate stream of work will aim to initiate a cross-sectoral collaboration to improve specific population outcomes that cannot be achieved through individual services.

CORE SKILLS PROJECT

What we did

TasCOSS was one of the first organisations to be granted funding by Skills Tasmania under the Employer Pledge program to support workplaces to understand how to address workplace literacy needs and to enhance the skills of employees in the workplace. As such, the Core Skills project was a 'green fields' project, to help Skills Tasmania and our sector understand some of the challenges for workplaces in supporting employees. Over the 18 months of the project, TasCOSS worked for short periods with 115 employees from 15 community services organisations across the state to enhance their workplace-based literacy.

What we achieved

The project had a number of impacts on participants, including improved confidence to overcome previous trauma with literacy issues and engaging in addressing their literacy skills, improved awareness of what core skills are, improved capacity to seek support with core skills, improved application of core skills within numeracy, writing and oral communication, and enhanced performance in their job roles, as reported by themselves and their managers.

Six months after the project ended, managers in the organisations we worked with also reported that the project had increased awareness of what core skills were and the benefits of addressing core skills with employees on their organisations' productivity, an enhanced supportive culture to address core skills with their employees, including being able to more confidently identify and address needs, and a change in workplace practices and productivity, including being able to incorporate core skills into performance reviews and a desire to look at incorporating core skills into inductions and workforce planning.

Employee feedback:

“The work that you did somehow demystified it and you did it in a way that allowed me to understand it and made me realise that it wasn’t something that I was too stupid to learn”.

- Participant, south-based CSO

“I feel more confident when I looked at the monthly reports (and) what that reflects.” - Participant, Board member of south-based CSO

Feedback from organisations:

“Probably I am more aware when I have a performance appraisal that these core skills are things I can name... For me to name that up and also for me to have discussions with the workers when I do their performance appraisals. Just awareness, brain development, running groups. Core skills is the core of what we do.” - Manager, south-based CSO

“Feeling of more professionalism with the whole process and especially seeing [x] and [x] both using it. It is really good to know that our reporting is a little more professional and accountable.” - Manager, north-based CSO

COMMUNITY SECTOR PEAKS NETWORK

The Community Sector Peaks Network, which was chaired by TasCOSS for the whole of 2012-13, comprises all of Tasmania's community sector peak bodies. It convenes quarterly to exchange information and plan strategic approaches to issues and developments affecting sector organisations and their clients.

What we did

TasCOSS provides the administrative support to the Peaks Network through our Sector Development Unit, arranging and facilitating the meetings of the Network, and following through on actions decided by the group.

What we achieved

The Peaks Network met regularly throughout the year, using meetings for valuable information-sharing and preparation for the peaks' involvement in the Community Sector Peaks and Government Strategic Forum, through which joint projects are being carried out in key areas such as the Partnership Agreement, workforce development, sector compliance and strengthening governance of organisations.

The Peaks Network and its representatives played a key role in the analysis and implementation of the Fair Work Australia decision on the Equal Pay Case. This included advocacy at a federal level relating to the Commonwealth's contribution of their portion of the wage increases in Tasmania.

The Peaks Network also works on joint advocacy approaches in key campaigns such as the Federal and State elections.

What's next

The Peaks Network will continue its sector-wide advocacy on issues in the year ahead, including the State Election campaign, improvement of grant

indexation arrangements and lifting the profile of the state's community sector and its hundreds of service delivery organisations.

COMMUNITY SECTOR PEAKS AND GOVERNMENT STRATEGIC FORUM

This working committee is co-chaired by the Secretary of the DHHS and the Chair of the Community Sector Peaks Network. Its membership includes representatives from all the sector peaks, and senior officers of the DHHS and the Department of Premier and Cabinet. The group's emphasis is on strategic approaches; with the Partnership Agreement being a particular achievement during the past 12 months.

The Partnership Agreement between the community sector peaks and the Departments of Health and Human Services and Premier and Cabinet was finalised and signed by the Peaks Network Chair and the Premier.

The Agreement is a pledge to work together in relationships built on mutual understanding, respect and cooperation. The common goal is the delivery of quality services and improved outcomes for the Tasmanian community. The Agreement is now being widely promoted in the government and community sectors.

What's next

A Partnership Score Card was launched in August 2013 to gauge where sector organisations believe their current state partnerships are working well and where they would like some support to work with their partner/s under the Partnership Agreement principles. These observations will be used by the community sector peak bodies and government to target partnership support to help over the coming years.



Participants at a TasCOSS Introduction to SPP workshop in Hobart.

3

IMPROVING AND BUILDING THE TasCOSS ORGANISATION

Highlights

Revision of the TasCOSS

Strategic Plan: TasCOSS staff and Board members revised the Council's strategic plan so as to take into account some recent changes, and better align the plan to our funding triennium.

Improved TasCOSS

communications: TasCOSS media coverage averaging the equivalent of \$67,000 in advertising a month. Completion of the TasCOSS rebranding project. Expansion of TasCOSS communications channels to include social media. Improvements to the existing TasCOSS website and development of a new TasCOSS website.

Staging of the 2012 TasCOSS

Conference, attended by 171 delegates, presenters and exhibitors.

Progress towards recognised

quality accreditation for TasCOSS: Significant progress has been made on our path to QIC accreditation through the better allocation of resources to undertake the reviews required.

Building TasCOSS membership

base: TasCOSS membership services have been better defined and published; overall membership numbers have been maintained and improved during a continuing difficult financial period for all sector organisations.

SERVING TasCOSS MEMBERS

What we did

TasCOSS continued its work throughout the year to serve our membership base through the provision of a wide range of member benefits, including information sessions, issues-based training, and leadership and advice on emerging sector issues.

A comprehensive review of our consultation processes was also undertaken, resulting in the development of state-wide consultative forums and a new TasCOSS member regional council structure.

What we achieved

Member consultation has taken place on key issues and there has been strong member support for the training and policy input opportunities provided by TasCOSS, all of which continue to be offered to TasCOSS members at significantly reduced rates.

TasCOSS has reviewed member services and better defined the value of membership, feeding into the development of a new membership brochure.

What's next

TasCOSS will continue to implement its strategic plan goal to expand the membership base, enabling the organisation to expand its key support and services to a broader range of sector organisations, and diversifying our income base through increased private subscriptions.

TasCOSS will move to its new regional consultative forum and council structure so that opportunities for member input and feedback are increased.

Member services will remain under review, with every opportunity taken to provide useful, relevant support to our members.



TasCOSS CEO Tony Reidy talks to the local media in Burnie.

THE TasCOSS BOARD TEAM

The strategic governance of TasCOSS is managed by a group of dedicated volunteers drawn from the community sector, who contribute their time and skills to ensure that we work to a strategic and relevant plan. The Board is led by President Noel Mundy who provides support and mentoring to his Board colleagues and beyond.

The 2012 TasCOSS Board elections and subsequent by-election in early 2013 saw five new Board members join the team, with induction and familiarisation for Board members given priority.

The TasCOSS Board held meetings in Burnie and Launceston during the year, allowing valuable interaction with regional business and community representatives, as well as networking with local TasCOSS members.

What's next

The Board elections in October 2013 will see six Board positions up for election, as well as a member-wide election process for the position of TasCOSS President.

Through filling the regional Board member positions in the 2013 election process, the Board will have appropriate representatives to chair the new TasCOSS Regional Councils.

THE TasCOSS STAFF TEAM

The report period has seen significant change in the staff and project management systems at TasCOSS. Following the departure of Elida Meadows from the Sector Development team, TasCOSS recruited Lindsey Moffatt as senior officer in this area. This subsequently led to a complete restructure of the work teams.

The TasCOSS Core Skills Project was completed during the year resulting in the departure of project officer Lure Wishes in January. TasCOSS also welcomed Gus Risberg during the report period, initially as a consultant and then as a part-time staff member who is working on a range of projects in administration, social policy and sector development.

The work program was organised into three units, with Dr Kath McLean appointed as Manager of the Social Policy and Research Unit, Lindsey Moffatt the Manager of the Sector Development Unit, while the CEO manages the Communications and Administration Unit.

There is now a more closely structured orientation to work plans under our strategic plan goals, and our accountability and achievements have been made more transparent.

TasCOSS is fortunate to be able to recruit and retain excellent research and community specialists,

bringing measurable benefits to the work of the Council and the support of its members.

What's next

The revision and extension of our TasCOSS strategic plan to June 2015, and the renewal of our contract arrangements with our principal funder, the Department of Health and Human Services, is being complemented by our development of improved work plans incorporating agreed goals and outcomes measurement.

TasCOSS COMMUNICATIONS

Key elements of the TasCOSS communications plan were completed in 2012-13, including improving the content and appearance of the TasCOSS e-news, printed newsletter and website, new branding for all TasCOSS communications and the development of a new TasCOSS website, which will go live in early 2014.

What we did

The TasCOSS rebranding project was completed with the implementation of a new style guide, document templates and look for the TasCOSS newsletter and other publications. The 2012 TasCOSS Conference was staged, with 171 delegates, presenters and exhibitors. (See page 25 for more details.) Proactive media work was undertaken in the form of 18 media releases, four letters to the editor and three opinion pieces (two of which were tied to Anti-Poverty Week 2012). We also ensured that TasCOSS was the go-to organisation for media comment on social issues through the ready availability of the CEO and clarity of our media communications. TasCOSS communications channels were expanded to include Facebook and Twitter. Improvements were made to the utility of the existing TasCOSS website with the inclusion of features such as quick links. A new TasCOSS website was developed, to become operational in early 2014. Photos were taken at most TasCOSS events in order to better publicise the work TasCOSS does.

What we achieved

The media coverage TasCOSS received averaged the equivalent of \$67,000 in advertising per month. Our use of social media engaged with different audiences, including community services workers, students, the media and politicians, with more than 100 "likes" for our Facebook page and 170 followers on Twitter in the seven months between their soft launch for the November 2012 TasCOSS Conference and 30 June 2013. The rebranding gave TasCOSS a cohesive and professional presentation for all its communications. Staff time was also saved by using the new document templates. Photos are now available for a range of TasCOSS publications and social media work.

Dorothy Pearce

1923-2013

Esteemed Tasmanian social worker and TasCOSS Honorary Life Member Dorothy Pearce died on 8 March 2013 at the age of 89.

Dorothy was one of the founders of TasCOSS and her support for the welfare of disadvantaged Tasmanians was life-long.

Dorothy studied social work in Melbourne, qualifying as an almoner, or medical social worker. For 28 years Dorothy worked as an almoner at the Royal Hobart Hospital.

In 1961, as state president of the Australian Association of Social Workers, Dorothy worked with other organisations to form a Tasmanian Council of Social Service, with the aims of combating poverty, avoiding overlap or duplication of services and identifying gaps in services.

Her involvement with TasCOSS was ongoing, as a foundation member, Honorary Secretary for many



years, president from 1979-81 and in various other voluntary capacities.

She was made a member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) in 1977 for services to the community, became the first life member of TasCOSS and, since 2003, TasCOSS has honoured her work with an annual Dorothy Pearce Address, which promotes current social justice issues.

In 2012 the Reverend Tim Costello, CEO of World Vision Australia, delivered the address. Previous speakers have included economist Saul Eslake, law academic Larissa Behrendt, political economist Marilyn Waring and social enterprise innovator Ernesto Sirolli.

What's next

The new TasCOSS website will go live in early 2014. Our social media presence will grow and continue to diversify the reach of our communications. We will develop our YouTube account to provide video delivery of messages and campaigns, and in order to offer the mainstream media video content for their online platforms. The 2014 TasCOSS Conference will be planned in the coming year.

PROGRESS TOWARDS QUALITY ACCREDITATION

The achievement of our strategic plan goals and contractual obligations at TasCOSS, as well as meeting the expectations of our growing membership base, requires modern, well-developed and accountable governance processes at all levels of the organisation.

What we did

TasCOSS is undertaking a structured program to achieve quality accreditation under Quality Improvement Council standards. The achievement of this standard of accreditation will strengthen our organisation, enhance all our accountability processes and position us as a high-quality,

complying community sector organisation as we continue to seek the resources to advocate for disadvantaged Tasmanians and the sector that serves them.

What we achieved

Work on the TasCOSS Accreditation Project was accelerated throughout the year to identify all the areas needing revision and development, and significant progress was achieved.

A dedicated staff member continues to work with our adviser Lynn Slade, as we work our way through the accreditation program and the numerous policy revisions required. The TasCOSS operational management system has been reshaped for clarity and ease of access, preparing the organisation for the adoption of a new management and records program.

What's next

During the year the accreditation project will move to the stage of test audits of the revised systems, with a view to achieving all of the necessary standards and systems within approximately twelve months. In early 2014 TasCOSS will move to a new intranet program which will also control our management records, as well as linking to our new TasCOSS website.

TasCOSS 2012 Conference

The TasCOSS 2012 Conference was held on 15-16 November at the Hotel Grand Chancellor, Hobart.

It was attended by 171 delegates, presenters, sponsors and exhibitors, bringing together service providers, consumers, academics, government and political figures.

The theme of the conference was "engagement, innovation and equity", the first two categories reflecting the community sector's need to deliver more effective and efficient services, the third addressing the ongoing quest for social justice in Tasmania.

The conference offered 30 presentations, including six plenary sessions and 24 concurrent sessions, grouped under the three categories of engagement, innovation and equity.

TasCOSS was pleased to include several presentations featuring consumers in the program, including mental health carers and consumers, a one-time street kid acting as an advisor on a youth homelessness survey and an intellectually disabled self-advocate.

The conference began with the delivery of the 2012 Dorothy Pearce Address by World Vision Australia CEO Tim Costello.

His speech, entitled "Social Inclusion: an Australian Paradox", urged the community sector to make its voice heard above those of the mining magnates

and poker machine operators, to help set the agenda for the national conversation.

"A million people are employed in community services in Australia but our sector hasn't used its muscle to push back," the Reverend Costello told delegates.

Premier Lara Giddings delivered the keynote address on the second day of the conference and participated in a Q&A with TasCOSS CEO Tony Reidy and questions from the floor.

Parliamentary Secretary for the Cost of Living Bec White and Opposition spokeswoman for human services, children and the cost of living Jacque Petrusma also participated in a joint Q&A.

Another plenary session was devoted to the social determinants of health.

The conference received good TV, newspaper and radio coverage. This, combined with the positive experience the conference provided for delegates, boosted the TasCOSS brand and energised our efforts to build a fair, just and inclusive Tasmania.

The ideas and networking opportunities the conference provided were of ongoing benefit to the Tasmanian community sector.

"Most of the presenters were great, with a lot to share, and contributed to the sector."

- Comment from conference evaluation survey.



Tim Costello delivers the opening keynote address of the 2012 TasCOSS Conference.

Representation

2012/13

TasCOSS participated in 2012-13 in many consultative and advisory groups in which we were able to advocate for the needs and concerns of low-income and disadvantaged Tasmanians and represent the experience of community service organisations. Some of these bodies were:

Alcohol, Tobacco & Other Drugs Council (ATDC) Expert Reference Group

Reference group to provide advice or input to relevant workforce development projects from individual members' areas of expertise and/or sector representation. This group provides input into the development of project plans through analysis of, and advice on, key issues affecting projects and is a forum for brainstorming, problem-solving and general discussion. It also promotes projects through networks and dissemination of key learnings.

Anti-Poverty Week Facilitating Group

The Facilitating Group responsible for coordinating and promoting the Tasmanian events associated with Anti-Poverty Week 2012.

Aurora Energy Vulnerable Customer Stakeholder Group

This group meets quarterly to discuss issues relating to Aurora Energy customers who are vulnerable to hardship, serious debt and disconnection. It provides a venue for dialogue between frontline community sector workers, sector policy workers and Aurora Energy staff about these issues, as well as a venue to seek improvements to systems and arrangements for vulnerable customers.

Australian Energy Regulator Customer Consultative Group

This is a national group on which TasCOSS represents the interests of low-income and disadvantaged Tasmanians to the national energy regulation authority, the AER. The AER regulates energy transmission and distribution revenue and activities, and retail activities (non-price), including consumer protections. The group meets three times per year.

Community Sector Peaks Network

A forum currently chaired by TasCOSS, comprising all of the Tasmanian community sector peak bodies, convening quarterly to exchange information and plan strategic approaches to issues and developments affecting sector organisations and their clients.

COTA Tasmania Policy Council

The COTA Policy Council provides advice and policy direction on issues of concern for older Tasmanians.

COTA You're Worth It Project Reference Group

The Project Reference Group contributes to the development of COTA Tas's You're Worth It Project, a peer education program on preventing financial elder abuse of older Tasmanians.

Electronic Directory Services Working Group

This project is a collaboration between statewide agencies to enable families to easily find the help they need online.

Health and Wellbeing Advisory Council

The TasCOSS CEO sits on the Health Minister's advisory body, which is comprised of medical, community and government leaders. The HWAC analyses information and provides policy advice to the Minister on healthcare and preventive health issues.

Homelessness Reference Group

Advising Housing Tasmania on the development and implementation of the Tasmanian Homelessness Plan.

Human Rights Week Organising Committee

This committee organises and coordinates activities that occur in Human Rights Week in Tasmania, including annual Human Rights Weeks Awards which are presented at the Week's launch.

Magistrates Court Users Groups

The Court Users Groups are convened in Hobart, Launceston, Burnie and Devonport. A relevant TasCOSS member acts as the TasCOSS representative at each CUG.

National Consumers Roundtable on Energy

A national coalition of advocates who focus their attention on energy policy and the interests of small consumers, particularly low-income and disadvantaged households. The Roundtable meets about three times a year for briefings on regulatory issues and government policy, and to plan and coordinate research and advocacy activities to promote consumer protections for and affordability of household energy supply.

Office of the Tasmanian Economic Regulator - Customer Consultative Committee

This committee meets quarterly and covers electricity, gas, water and sewerage regulation as well as some other regulatory issues relating to Metro, MAIB and other government business enterprises or state-owned companies that the Government Prices Oversight Commission used to regulate before it was subsumed by OTTER.

Community Sector Peaks and Government Strategic Forum

A working committee co-chaired by the Secretary of the DHHS and the Chair of the Community Sector Peaks Network, with membership also from all the sector peaks, senior officers of the DHHS and the Department of Premier and Cabinet. The group's emphasis is on strategic approaches, and current working groups include:

- **Partnership Agreement**

A project between the community sector peaks and the Departments of Health & Human Services and Premier & Cabinet to formulate and promulgate a partnership arrangement between government and the sector through which the partners' roles, rights and responsibilities will be understood and respected.

- **Governance**

This Working Group is examining how the governance arrangements of community service organisations can be supported so they are most effective.

- **Red Tape Reduction**

This Working Group seeks to identify and remove or reduce unnecessary burdens or impediments to the efficient and effective operation of community organisations, including unnecessary or ineffective regulatory requirements and governance arrangements, and/or funding, contractual and reporting arrangements with government, while having regard to the need to maintain transparency and accountability.

- **A Competent Workforce**

Using a workforce development and planning approach, this working group seeks to identify and formulate strategies for current and emerging issues facing the sector workforce while building on the many strengths that exist in the community services sector.

Power Saving for Tenants Program Steering Committee

The focus for this committee is the Power Savings for Tenants Program, an energy- efficiency retro-fitting and advice program for tenants in private rental. The program is run by Sustainable Living Tasmania and funded by the Tasmanian Climate Change Office.

Public Education Alliance

A collaboration of employee, parent, professional and community sector groups campaigning for the better resourcing of public education, and improvement



A Finance Officers Community of Practice meeting.

of opportunity for children from low-income and otherwise disadvantaged Tasmanian households.

Residential Tenancy Act Review Reference Group

As part of the Residential Tenancy Act Review, the Office of Consumer Affairs and Fair Trading is consulting with key stakeholder groups to promote common understanding of the review process, the issues to be addressed and options to be considered. The role of the Reference Group is to provide expert advice and feedback on the Options Paper developed by CAFT and other aspects of the Review.

Skills Tasmania Equity Committee

The Committee advises and makes recommendations to the Skills Tasmania Board on equity in the provision of access to skills training for disadvantaged Tasmanians.

Statewide Elder Abuse Prevention Advisory Committee

Comprised of key community and government stakeholders, the Advisory Group assists the Government in implementing the strategy to combat elder abuse in Tasmania, *Protecting older Tasmanians from abuse: awareness, empowerment, action, support*. TasCOSS also participates as a member of the Community Education Working Group of this committee, providing input and direction on the development of a community education campaign on elder abuse, a key action from the strategy.

Tasmanian Social Enterprise Network Core Management Group

This group serves to coordinate activities and policy developments aimed at expanding the social enterprise sector in Tasmania to achieve social and environmental outcomes, and as a means for some community organisations to generate their own revenue and increase their impact and sustainability.

Tasmanian Council of Social Service Inc.

Financial Report

For the Year Ended 30 June 2013

Contents

Statement of Financial Position
Statement of Income and Expenditure
Notes Forming Part of the Accounts
Officers' Assertion Statement
Board 2012/2013
Audit Report to Members

Accru⁺

Chartered Accountants + Business Advisors

Financial Report

2012/13

Tasmanian Council of Social Service Inc Statement of Income & Expenditure for the year ended 30th June 2013

2011/12		Notes	2012/13
\$			\$
	INCOME		
84,999	Balance brought forward		182,329
777,966	Grants Received		882,822
149,470	Management fees		154,151
30,239	Membership subscriptions		41,865
2,439	Sponsorships and donations		23,299
5,268	Events & Workshops		62,040
35,525	Miscellaneous income		47,338
<u>1,085,907</u>	TOTAL INCOME		<u>1,393,844</u>
	EXPENSES		
7,494	Affiliations and subscriptions		6,108
6,466	Board and AGM		11,459
10,590	Conferences, seminars and functions		42,304
33,321	Depreciation		41,114
2,209	Motor vehicle expenses		2,749
110,003	Office and occupancy		115,990
720,563	Staffing		842,034
101,534	Speaker and consultancy fees		261,778
10,995	Sponsorships and donations		9,599
25,483	Travel and accommodation		37,260
<u>1,028,659</u>	TOTAL EXPENSES		<u>1,370,397</u>
<u>57,248</u>	OPERATING SURPLUS		<u>23,448</u>

TASMANIAN COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE INC. NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

NOTE 1 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTING POLICIES

This financial report is a special purpose financial report prepared in order to satisfy the reporting requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act 1964 Tasmania. The committee has determined that the association is not a reporting entity.

The financial report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act Tasmania and the following Australian Accounting Standards:

AASB 1031 - Materiality
AASB 108 - Accounting Policies
AASB 110 - Events Occurring after the Balance Sheet Date

No other applicable Accounting Standards, Urgent Issues Group Consensus Views or other authoritative pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standard Board have been applied.

The financial report has been prepared on an accrual basis and is based on historic costs and does not take into account changing money values, or except where specifically stated, current valuation of non-current assets.

The financial report has been prepared in accordance with a special purpose framework in order to meet the needs of the associations members. As such, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose.

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.

Financial Report

2012/13

(102,012)	Expenditure	50,703
	Transferred to retained earnings	(4,013)
<u>14,060</u>	Unspent funds carried forward	<u>-</u>
	Community Sector Skills Plan	
-	Funds brought forward	3,400
20,000	Income	10,000
(16,600)	Expenditure	13,400
<u>3,400</u>	Unspent funds carried forward	<u>-</u>
	Standards & Performance Pathway	
-	Funds brought forward	-
-	Income	125,492
-	Expenditure	120,810
<u>-</u>	Unspent funds carried forward	<u>4,682</u>
	Sirolli Enterprise Facilitation	
-	Funds brought forward	25,649
70,829	Income	2,397
(45,180)	Expenditure	28,045
<u>25,649</u>	Unspent funds carried forward	<u>-</u>
	Social Determinants of Health	
-	Funds brought forward	-
-	Income	16,545
-	Expenditure	-
<u>-</u>	Unspent funds carried forward	<u>16,545</u>
	Conference/Dorothy Pearce Address	
-	Funds brought forward	1,731
2,081	Income	55,482
(350)	Expenditure	57,213
<u>1,731</u>	Unspent funds carried forward	<u>-</u>
	Core Operating	
32,174	Funds brought forward	-
213,071	Income	234,934
(187,997)	Expenditure	207,474
3,590	Profit on Sale of Asset	-
(60,838)	Transferred to retained earnings	27,460
<u>-</u>	Unspent funds carried forward	<u>-</u>

TASMANIAN COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE INC.

OFFICER'S ASSERTION 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 June 2013 and its performance for the period 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013;
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:

Dated at Hobart this ²⁶..... day of September 2013.


.....
PRESIDENT


.....
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the members of Tasmanian Council of Social Service Inc.

We have audited the accompanying financial report, being a special purpose report, of Tasmanian Council of Social Service Inc., which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2013, the statement of financial performance for the year then ended, notes comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information, and the officers assertion statement.

Officers Responsibility for the Financial Report

The officers of Tasmanian Council of Social Service Inc. are responsible for the preparation of the financial report, and have determined that the basis of preparation described in Note 1, is appropriate to meet the requirements of the *Associations Incorporated Act 1964* and is appropriate to meet the needs of the members. The officers' responsibility also includes such internal control as the officers determine is necessary to enable the preparation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on our audit. We have conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Those standards require that we comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial report is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial report. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments the auditor considers internal control relevant to the association's preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view, in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the association's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the officers, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial report.

We believe the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Qualification

As is common for organisations of this type, it is not practicable for Tasmanian Council of Social Service Inc. to maintain an effective system of internal control over



Donations, Fundraising and other income until their initial entry into the accounting records. Accordingly, our audit in relation to donations, fundraising and other income was limited to amounts recorded.

Qualified Opinion

In our opinion, except for the effects of such adjustments, if any, as might have been determined to be necessary had the limitation discussed in the qualification paragraph not existed, the financial report presents fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Tasmanian Council of Social Service Inc. as at 30 June 2013 and of its financial performance and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with the *Associations Incorporated Act (1964)*

Basis of Accounting and Restriction on Distribution

Without modifying our opinion, we draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared for the purpose of fulfilling the officers financial reporting requirements under the *Associations Incorporation Act 1964* and as such may be unsuitable for another purpose.

The officers have determined that the financial report shall be prepared in accordance with a special purpose framework. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose as only the accounting standards specifically stated in note 1 to the accounts have been applied in the preparation of this special purpose financial report.

As such, this report should not be distributed or used by parties other than Tasmanian Council of Social Service Inc and its members.


.....
Michael J Burnett B.Com. FCA
Registered Company Auditor
Partner, Accru+ Hobart
Lvl 1, 18 Ross Avenue
ROSNY PARK TAS 7018

Date: 26 Sept. 13

Financial Report

2012/13



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.....
Michael J Burnett B.Com. FCA
Registered Company Auditor
Partner, Accru+ Hobart
Lvl 1, 18 Ross Avenue
ROSNY PARK TAS 7018

Date: 26 Sept. 13

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Sydney + Melbourne + Brisbane
Perth + Adelaide + Hobart + Auckland

