

tasmanian council of social service

annual report 2010



tasmanian council of social service

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assistance over the past 12 months.



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Profile

The Tasmanian Council of Social Service (TasCOSS) was established in 1961.
It is the peak body for the community services industry in Tasmania.

Our Mission

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

Our Vision

is of a fair, just and inclusive Tasmania.

Achieving Our Vision

We work to improve the lives of Tasmanians who are living on low incomes or who are in other ways disadvantaged.

We do this by supporting and developing better social policy, informed through consultation, research and analysis.

We support the community sector in our role as a peak council, by advocating on its behalf, coordinating collaborative activity, and providing services that contribute to good governance, management and practice.

This work is supported by the Community Services Industry Plan which outlines priorities for the sector.

We raise awareness and understanding of social injustice and inequality, and of the social and structural conditions that contribute to injustice, and we seek to engage the wider community in ongoing reform.

Profile

We Value

- The rights of all Tasmanians to opportunity, justice and equity
- Policy solutions that are socially and economically sustainable
- The experience and talents of people affected by poverty and inequality
- Working collaboratively and in partnership
- The commitment and passion of people working in the community services industry
- A diversity of responses to the range of needs within the community
- Our independence as a non party political organisation
- Robust civil society and the importance of a strong community sector in maintaining this
- A strong and representative role and mandate for our work

Key Areas of Focus

Our three key areas of focus have been

- Achieving a socially just society
- Strengthening the community services industry
- Building on the strengths of the organisation

Mission
Vision
Values
Focus

From the President

The last 12 months has been a time of great change for both TasCOSS and the wider community services sector. When we consider the significant impacts of the political environment both within Tasmania and federally, the ongoing reforms of our sector and the changes of leadership we have had at TasCOSS during 2009 – 2010, it has certainly been a challenging period.

In my first year as President I have been delighted with the strength of the Board and the leadership they have provided in ensuring that the strategic direction of TasCOSS has continued to be our main focus. Of course the Board's role is made easier with the sound support and leadership of a good Chief Executive Officer and committed staff.

Our CEO during most of 2009 – 2010, Tom Muller, continued to provide strong leadership to our sector through his passion and commitment to the vision and mission of our organisation. It was very sad to say farewell to Tom in May 2010 after 3 years as CEO, and prior to that as Manager of Social Policy and Research. Tom has moved to Melbourne with his family and I know all members of the Tasmanian community services sector wish Tom well for his future and thank him for the quality of his work with TasCOSS.

Martin Gibson acted in the role of Chief Executive Officer for a period following Tom's departure and I thank Martin for taking on this role.

One of the highlights of the past 12 months was the very effective *Our Island, Our Voices* state election campaign, in which TasCOSS worked in coalition with a number of other organisations. The campaign provided TasCOSS with many opportunities to raise issues that were affecting Tasmanians. A number of community based forums were held to inform candidates of key issues and the campaign highlight was the 'Leaders Debate' held at the Federation Concert Hall in Hobart. The successes of the campaign have included the alliances and partnerships that were formed with a broad range of organisations to lead discussion on community concerns. I would like to thank the many organisations that contributed financially to the success of *Our Island, Our Voices*.

Reforms of state government practices have resulted in significant change within our sector requiring providers to review their own operations to meet these changes. The introduction of the Quality and Safety framework, the outsourcing from government of service delivery and the desire for closer working relationships will continue to strengthen our sector and assist us all in seeing a fairer Tasmania. I am particularly excited about the opportunities that will flow from the formation of a Partnership Agreement and the actions that will enable all parties to work closer together to achieve our vision and mission.



Noel Mundy

I would like to acknowledge the ongoing support of the State Government and particularly the Department of Health and Human Services for their continued funding and support of TasCOSS. It is vitally important that TasCOSS continues to be the voice for low income and disadvantaged Tasmanians and we thank DHHS and other government departments for their support to enable this to occur.

As mentioned earlier, TasCOSS is governed by a very competent and committed Board. I thank all Board members for their continued support and their willingness to give of their time and energy to lead our vital work. I would particularly like to acknowledge Vice President Lindy O'Neill, and Treasurer Helen Hortle, for the many hours they devote to their respective roles in supporting the Board, CEO and TasCOSS staff. Thanks also to Board members who actively contribute through the Tasmanian Social Policy Council, Board Improvement Group and Audit and Risk Subcommittee.

I would particularly like to recognise the contribution Kay Thompson has made to the TasCOSS Board over many years. Kay has recently retired from her employment and advised TasCOSS that she would not be seeking re-election to the Board. Kay has brought many governance skills and excellent sector knowledge to the Board and we thank her for her dedication and leadership and wish her well in the future.

The strength of any organisation lies within its staff and TasCOSS staff bring a passion, commitment and dedication to their roles to ensure our organisation is able to be that voice for a fairer Tasmania. Thank you to every staff member for what they bring to, and their desire to achieve our vision.

Of course TasCOSS would not exist without our strong membership base. Thank you to the many organisations and individuals who contribute to our work. Thanks also for the work you individually do for low income and disadvantaged Tasmanians through your respective workplaces and involvement with TasCOSS.

I have enjoyed immensely my year as TasCOSS President and I look forward to continued involvement with this great organisation. We have much to be proud of for the work already achieved and as we move into the next 12 months and celebrate 50 years of service next year we can be justly proud to be associated with TasCOSS.

Noel Mundy
President

From the President
Noel Mundy

Board Members

2009 – 2010

Office Bearers

President: Noel Mundy, Mission Australia – Tasmania

Vice President: Lindy O’Neill, Uniting Care Tasmania (*Individual Member*)

Treasurer: Helen Hortle, Tasmanian Centre for Global Learning (*Individual Member*)

Members

Suzi Edwards, Tasmanian Association of Community Houses (*Peak Body Member*)

Mary Johnson-Goeldner, (until March 2010) Launceston Community Legal Centre, (*Organisational Member*)

Chris Jones, Anglicare (*Organisational Member*)

Kate Moore, Headway North West (*Regional Member*)

Michelle Swallow, Mental Health Council of Tasmania (*Peak Body Member*)

Kay Thompson, Family Based Care North (*Regional Member*)

Board Attendance

Member	Meetings attended	Out of total number
Suzi Edwards	8	10
Helen Hortle	9	10
Chris Jones	9	10
Mary Johnson-Goeldner	1	3
Kate Moore	3	8
Noel Mundy	8	10
Lindy O’Neill	8	10
Michelle Swallow	7	10
Kay Thompson	7	10

Note: There were 10 meetings over the financial year. No meetings were held in January or April.

Staff Profile

CURRENT

Ann Hughes
 Martin Gibson
 Melissa Iocco
 Miranda Kellett
 Kath McLean
 Carol Patterson
 Klaus Baur
 Elida Meadows
 Dale Rahmanovic
 Tim Tabart
 Jill Pope
 Maureen Richardson

POSITION

Acting CEO (from August 2010)
 Manager, Social Policy & Research
 Social Policy Officer (maternity leave from Oct. 2009)
 Social Policy Officer
 Social Policy Officer
 HACC Project Officer
 HACC Project Officer, Consumer Engagement
 Development Officer
 Development Officer
 Development Officer
 Finance Officer
 Administration Assistant



Jill Pope



Maureen Richardson

PAST

Tom Muller
 Robyn Wilkinson
 Luke Martin
 Bryn Griffiths
 Cecilia Nagy
 Gail Lill

POSITION

CEO
 Consumers' Guide to Personal Care publication
 Our Island Our Voices campaign
 Our Island Our Voices campaign
 Our Island Our Voices campaign
 Administration Officer

Board Members
 Staff Profile

From the Acting CEO

Another substantial year for TasCOSS. 2009 – 2010 is a fine example of the strength of TasCOSS. As the peak body for the community services sector, we have, for almost 50 years, been working to bring to the attention of policy and decision makers the needs and concerns of Tasmanians living on low incomes, facing disadvantage and exclusion. A major focus during 2009 – 2010 was the development of the *Our Island, Our Voices* campaign.

The open nature of the political environment in the lead up to the March 2010 State election meant that there was potential for the community sector to influence the policy directions of the State in the interests of disadvantaged people and towards a vibrant inclusive community.

TasCOSS worked collaboratively with the Salvation Army, the Mental Health Council of Tasmania, Anglicare Tasmania, Colony 47, the Tasmanian Association of Community Houses and the Health and Community Services Union to develop shared policy positions and advocacy strategies in which the participating organisations could play complementary roles. The partner organisations committed financial and other resources in order to promote issues of social justice to the community sector and the wider community and to raise issues with the political parties and candidates. We held a variety of events including information forums and media presentations to generate public debate on our

priorities. The campaign sought commitments on specific investments and reforms from all parties on the critical social policy areas that we had agreed were of particular importance.

The priority issues of the campaign included a focus on services rather than tax cuts, and on housing, transport, the cost of living and essential services, investment in the community sector, health, education, employment and gambling.

The campaign worked in a very collaborative way with different members taking a lead on preparing policy positions, and these being launched in a staggered way throughout the campaign, linked to relevant events. The combined funding assisted in a number of special projects, including the survey of 1000 Tasmanians. A social equity scorecard was developed – which was used to assess the extent to which a policy was likely to enhance social equity, the transparency of the policy development process, the extent to which evidence was evinced to support the policy. The policy was also assessed against such criteria as whether it supported healthy outcomes, diversity, and support to jobs and the local economy.

A number of other organisations joined forces for particular events and activities. The 'Leaders Debate' was a highlight of *Our Island, Our Voices* with the Federation Concert Hall virtually booked out within days of the announcement that the leaders of the three major parties – Liberal, Labor and Greens – would respond to a range of questions of concern to the community. Sponsor organisations were TasCOSS, the Property Council



Ann Hughes

of Australia, Local Government Association of Tasmania, Tourism Industry Council of Tasmania, Unions Tasmania, Environment Tasmania and the Australian Medical Association Tasmania. This unusually broad coalition demonstrates one of the distinctive qualities of the campaign.

Luke Martin, a former policy officer with TasCOSS, was the project manager for *Our Island, Our Voices* and brought considerable energy and vision to this role.

Another highlight of the year was the Dorothy Pearce Address. This annual event is named in honour of one of the Life Members of TasCOSS.

In 1961 Dorothy Pearce was the sole social worker at the Royal Hobart Hospital and saw through her daily work that there was a need for a council of community organisations that would work together to improve the delivery of social services and reduce poverty. Dorothy was part of the organising group for the very first meeting of TasCOSS held in the Hobart Town Hall, representing the Australian Association of Social Workers, and she was for many years the Honorary Secretary.

This year's speaker was Marilyn Waring, Professor of Public Policy at AUT University Auckland, who at 22 and a member of the conservative National Party had been the youngest person elected to the New Zealand Parliament. She argues for 'female human rights', a feminist analysis of economics and is critical of the concept of GDP in which oil spills and war count towards growth whereas

care of children is deemed valueless. Professor Waring has also been a goat farmer – and draws on all these experiences in her academic and campaigning work. Her Dorothy Pearce Address – Rediscovering the value of equity for economic prosperity – provided a social justice perspective on the global financial crisis and looked at the opportunities for a small state and economy such as Tasmania to respond in ways that reinforce equity and contribute to prosperity.

TasCOSS is an active member of the national network of Councils of Social Service and sits on the Board of ACOSS.

Our participation at this level enables us to learn from the experience of community sector organisations across Australia and to gain strength in our advocacy through working cooperatively.

TasCOSS is a partner organisation with TasmaniaTogether, working collaboratively towards achieving a Tasmanian community that is healthier, better educated, environmentally sustainable and more equitable.

One apparently small but significant development during the year was the introduction of video-conferencing for the Tasmanian Social Policy Council, creating better opportunities for members throughout Tasmania to contribute to policy development and critique. We appreciate the way in which the Department of Health and Human Services has made these facilities available for community sector use.

From the Acting CEO
Ann Hughes



From the Acting CEO

During the year the Community Services Industry Plan – the result of much hard work by TasCOSS and many other community organisations was passed on to the Peaks Network to oversee its implementation – with of course considerable involvement from TasCOSS.

At state government level we have very much welcomed the opportunity to meet with the Premier, Deputy Premier and Treasurer.

It has also been important to us to have good communication with the Ministers for Health and Human Services and with senior public servants in that Department and in other areas of State Government including the Departments of Premier and Cabinet and Economic Development.

We acknowledge the financial support from both State and Federal governments that is vital to TasCOSS being able to do its work.

TasCOSS undertakes its many roles in policy, advocacy and the support and development of the community services sector through the work of its staff team, its Board and other volunteers who support TasCOSS through such activities as the Tasmanian Social Policy Council. The work of all these people is very much appreciated.

The CEO of TasCOSS for most of 2009 – 2010 was Tom Muller, who made a substantial contribution to social policy in the state through his hard work and his strong ethical commitment to the needs of disadvantaged Tasmanians and to the community organisations that support them. Thank you, Tom.

Ann Hughes
Acting Chief Executive Officer



Martin Gibson



Miranda Kellett



Kath McLean

Social Policy and Research

Report 2009 - 2010

The Team

This year we welcomed Miranda Kellett, Robin Wilkinson, Bryn Griffiths and Cecilia Nagy to the team with Kath McLean taking leave for six months to undertake a project with the University of Western Sydney and Melissa Iocco taking maternity leave. Welcome to the world baby Ada!

Election Year

the culmination of 3 years' work

State election years are clearly significant opportunities for TasCOSS to leverage key policy shifts that can deliver better outcomes for Tasmanians who are experiencing poverty and disadvantage.

With an election clearly signalled for March 2010, we had had 3 years to build the platform for our 2010 advocacy campaign. Preparation included conducting the research with Tasmanians living on low incomes that culminated in the *'Just Scraping By?'* report that played a significant role, along with state-wide member consultations, in informing our election platform.

We joined with community sector and union representatives to run the highly successful *Our Island, Our Voices* campaign. The *Our Island, Our Voices* platform focused on Better Health, Better Education and Better Services, with cost of living, transport, education, health promotion and elder abuse all key issues.

The Social Policy and Research team supported the campaign through policy forums, the development of a series of policy briefing papers on key policy areas and the preparation of Electorate Snapshots identifying key issues affecting Tasmanians experiencing poverty and disadvantage in each of Tasmania's five electorates. The briefing papers and regional snapshots were very well received by candidates and their parties.

Cecilia Nagy joined our team as a social work student and implemented an innovative video log project interviewing Tasmanians on the issues that they wanted addressed by an incoming Tasmanian Government. We produced short videos on the topics of education, transport and the needs of young people. Thank you to the Tasmanian Association of Community Houses for their assistance with this project.

A feature of the *Our Island, Our Voices* campaign was the development of strategic partnerships to push for political commitments on key issues. It is clear that where we were able to initiate strong partnerships we were much more effective in achieving our goals than if we had lobbied independently.

Our 2010 – 11 Budget Priority Statement, submitted late in 2009 reflected the policy priorities identified in the *Our Island, Our Voices* campaign. The State Government honoured the following election commitments in the State Budget.

The Team Election Year



Carol Patterson



Klaus Baur

Social Policy and Research Report

Key outcomes from the campaign included:

- Commitment to and funding for a comprehensive elder abuse strategy
- Funding to address bullying in schools
- Increased funding for the Community Equipment Scheme providing assistive equipment for people with disabilities
- A commitment to develop a whole of government framework for health promotion
- New funding for public transport
- Additional funding for disadvantaged schools
- Indexation of concessions for electricity and water and sewerage so that they rise with any price increases

Some areas of note in our policy work for this year are:

Cost of Living

The indexation of concessions for electricity and water and sewerage was a big policy win following years of lobbying on this issue. We partnered with Sustainability Tasmania and Unions Tasmania to deliver a successful forum on Climate Change and Cost of Living. The announcement that the State Government would be developing a Cost of Living Strategy is welcome.

Elder Abuse

The continued lobbying by the Tasmanian Elder Abuse Partnership (TEAP) comprising TasCOSS, Advocacy Tasmania Inc, Aged and Community Services Tasmania and the Council on the Ageing (COTA Tas) finally reaped its reward this year with the announcement of funding for a comprehensive elder abuse strategy for Tasmania.

Health Promotion

As part of the election campaign we initiated a collaboration with the Tasmanian Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance, the Australian Health Promotion Association (Tasmanian Branch) and the Public Health Association of Australia (Tasmanian Branch). The Health in all Policies (HIAP) collaboration organised a Healthy Breakfast for election candidates and key stakeholders with Professor Rob Moody, the Chair of the National Preventative Health Taskforce. The State Government commitment to a whole of government framework for health promotion is welcome and the HIAP collaboration's work will continue with a view to ensuring the implementation of this commitment and the other key elements of our health promotion agenda.

Gambling

We have formed a new alliance with Anglicare, the Inter-church Taskforce on Gambling, Mission Australia, the Salvation Army and the Catholic Archdiocese, concerning the impact of gaming machines in Tasmania with a view to seeing a \$1 bet limit on gaming machines.

Public Transport

We held transport forums in Kingston and Glenorchy during the election campaign and have been meeting with Community Transport, TasBus, Metro and representatives of the Hobart City Council in order to build alliances to advocate for further investment in public transport.

Utilities

With the introduction of charges for water and sewerage provision, significant increases in energy prices and projections of further increases, our utilities work, both at a local and national level, has been a focus of our work during this year.

As mentioned, the indexation of concessions was a very welcome policy change. We made submissions on energy and water and sewerage pricing, Aurora Pay As You Go services and the customer service code for water and sewerage provision. Nationally, apart from our ongoing work funded by the National Energy Consumer Advocacy Panel, we made submissions on climate change adaptation, smart meters, the development of national hardship indicators and the proposed National Energy Customer Framework.

The Home and Community Care (HACC) Program Independence Report

TasCOSS launched *Independence: support for the elderly in their communities* this year, a research report exploring the notion of independence as understood by HACC clients and policy makers and examining how independence is supported through the HACC program. The report discusses the impact of communities on supporting independence for older people, the role of formal and informal support and makes recommendations for appropriate service delivery responses.

The Consumer Engagement Project – HACC Services

This project works closely with HACC providers and consumers around the state and has drawn on the expertise of the Health Issues Centre in Victoria in developing a consumer engagement model for HACC providers. There has been strong ownership of the project by the sector and a draft model has been developed for trial by service providers.



Melissa Iocco



Robin Wilkinson

Social Policy and Research Report

The Consumers' Guide to Personal Care

TasCOSS was very proud to launch Robin Wilkinson's excellent resource for consumers of personal care services and their carers. The guide explores the difficult issues associated with the care relationship and proposes practical approaches for dealing with them. Response to *Consumers' Guide to Personal Care* has been very positive, with strong local and inter-state interest in the publication.

Australian Research Council project Community Engagement for Productive Ageing

This partnership between TasCOSS, the University Department of Rural Health and the Department of Health and Human Services made substantial progress this year. An initial report has been published following interviews with older people living in rural Tasmania and work will continue in relation to the policy implications of this research for DHHS funded services.

Cost of Living
Elder Abuse
Health Promotion
Gambling
Public Transport
Utilities
Projects

Policy Submissions

Australian Energy Market Commission, September 2009

*Review of Energy Market Frameworks
in Light of Climate Change Policies.*

Ministerial Council on Energy, September 2009

*Smart Meter Customer Protection & Safety Review:
Draft Policy Paper One (joint submission).*

Office of the Tasmanian Economic Regulator, October 2009

Aurora Pay As You Go Review: Draft Report.

Department of Health & Human Services, October 2009

*Your Care, Your Say: Consumer & Community
Engagement Position Paper.*

Department of Environment, Parks, Heritage and the Arts, Nov. 2009

*National Water Initiative
Draft Pricing Principles.*

Residential Tenancies Authority of Queensland, November 2009

*National Residential Tenancy
Databases Model Provisions.*

Department of Treasury & Finance, January 2010

*Water & Sewerage Interim Pricing Order
Review & Metering Options.*

National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility, Jan. 2010

*National Climate Change Adaptation
Research Plan. (joint submission with NCOSS & WACOSS).*

Office of Consumer Affairs & Fair Trading, January 2010

*Review of the Residential Tenancy Act 1997.
Current Issues in the Residential Tenancy
Market 2009.*

Ministerial Council on Energy, January 2010

*Second Exposure Draft of the National
Energy Customer Framework
(TasCOSS & joint submission).*

Housing Tasmania, February 2010

Tasmanian Homelessness Plan.

Department of Justice, March 2010

*Breaking the Cycle: Tasmanian Corrections Plan
2010 -2020 Discussion Paper.*

Department of Health & Human Services, March 2010

*A Working with Children & Other Vulnerable
People Checking System for Tasmania:
Discussion Paper.*

Office of the Tasmanian Economic Regulator, March 2010

Tasmanian Electricity Code Change Proposals.

PM's Task Group on Energy Efficiency, April 2010

*Prime Minister's Task Group on Energy
Efficiency Issues Paper.*

Office of the Tasmanian Economic Regulator, May 2010

*Retail Price Investigation: Response
to Aurora's Submission.*

Department of Health & Human Services, May 2010

*Review of the Tasmanian Disability
Services Act 1992: Directions Paper.*

Office of the Tasmanian Economic Regulator, May 2010

Draft Water & Sewerage Customer Service Code.

Australian Energy Regulator, June 2010

*Developing National Hardship
Indicators: Issues Paper.*

The Tasmanian Social Policy Council

The Tasmanian Social Policy Council (TSPC) has been instrumental in informing TasCOSS policy development and advocacy positions. The TSPC ensures that the work of TasCOSS is grounded in the experience and knowledge of the community services sector and its clients. We thank all the members for their commitment to their role and for assisting TasCOSS in its advocacy on behalf of low income and disadvantaged Tasmanians.

Members 2009 – 2010

TasCOSS Board Members

Noel Mundy	Mission Australia (TasCOSS President)
Lindy O'Neill	Uniting Care (TasCOSS Vice President)
Kate Moore	Headway North West
Michelle Swallow	Mental Health Council of Tasmania

Peak Body Members

Pattie Chugg	Shelter Tasmania
Tracey Currie	Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drugs Council
Maxine Griffiths	Council on the Ageing Tasmania
John Hooper	Tasmanian Association of Community Houses
Joanna Siejka	Youth Network of Tasmania

TasCOSS staff and members were saddened by the death, during the year, of TSPC member

Gwyn Jones

Gwyn had been an active member of the TSPC for a number of years and had forcefully reminded us of the perspective of the mental health consumer. She had been a strong supporter of TasCOSS and her contribution will be missed.

TasCOSS Members

Ken Abery	Foster Carers Association Tasmania
Ria Brink	Karyina Young Women's Service
Tracey Bullen	Aspire
Sue Burke	Grandpower
Luke Campton	Hobart City Mission
Pattie Chugg	Shelter
David Closs	TasDeaf
Stuart Davies	Community Transport Services Tasmania
Denese Ferguson	Wyndarra Centre
Kathleen Flanagan	Anglicare
Glynis Flower	Hobart Women's Health Centre
Miriam Herzfeld	Individual member
Debra Hindle	Individual member
Carolyn Jeanneret	Individual member
Gwyn Jones	Individual member
Mary Johnson-Goeldner	Launceston Community Legal Centre
Jack Lane	Hobart Benevolent Society
Louise Leslie	CLS / Parakaleo
Georgina McLagen	Centacare
Jacqui Maginnis	Individual member
Jill Maxwell	Volunteering Tasmania
John Stuart	Launceston Benevolent Society
Therese Taylor	Colony 47
Clare Thompson	Individual member
Sue Williams	Family Planning Tasmania



Elida Meadows



Dale Rahmanovic



Tim Tabart

Industry Development Unit



The TasCOSS Industry Development Unit (IDU) supports community sector organisations, provides industry policy feedback and advice at both state and federal levels and facilitates priority areas identified by the Community Services Industry Plan.

Clearinghouse

The IDU has continued its work of providing an information clearinghouse through the TasCOSS e-news and the industry development pages on the TasCOSS website. The TasCOSS e-news goes out fortnightly to over 300 organisations. From July 31st 2009 e-news was sent out in a new streamlined format, with older versions available on the TasCOSS website. Subscription to the e-news grew considerably over 2009 – particularly from people who attended TasCOSS forums and workshops – and it now goes directly to about 700 people. There were also an increasing number of requests for insertions into the e-news which indicates that it is being increasingly viewed as a useful information sharing tool across the sector. This year a free job advertisement service for member organisations was included.

The TasCOSS website includes an Industry Development section featuring industry relevant information, resources and links, where to source advice and support, and a growing Consultants and Trainers Register. We have added a Workforce Development page as this is an area of interest

identified by the industry and is thus an important work area for the IDU. Over the year there were a steady number of requests to be placed on the Consultants and Trainers page which is growing considerably. Streamlining of website information continued with a new version of the website management software and an online registration system to be available soon.

The Helpdesk service run by the IDU Team is available to funded community service organisations and TasCOSS members.

It provides advice and support on management, governance and operational issues. This year we have received inquiries on topics ranging from industrial relations and award changes, setting up partnership agreements, and policies and procedures for staff/client contact.

Peer learning circles

Building networks, skills and collaboration

In 2009, the IDU established four peer learning circles in a six-month trial in which managers from a diverse mix of community service organisations met monthly to share experiences, resources and contacts while providing mutual support. The response from participants was that the circles provided a unique opportunity to confidentially discuss issues, plans and dilemmas that presented a challenge to them in their work.

Evaluation surveys at the end of the pilot period consistently rated the learning circles very highly on a range of satisfaction measures.

Participants voiced strong support for TasCOSS to continue to support the learning circles. Participant comments included:

- *... the level of trust was high between participants, enabling frank and open discussion. This has been a useful time to consider fresh ways to approach work situations and share wisdom and resources amongst the members.*
- *The learning circle has given me the opportunity to share issues, I felt supported and it was reassuring that other organisations had similar issues that we could brainstorm solutions together.*
- *I have found the learning circle to be of great benefit. I have found some useful contacts and support measures which help me in my day to day routine. Would recommend it to anybody, even if it just provides a source to run an opinion past other people or to seek other people's experience to help my workplace be a better working environment.*

The learning circle process is also being trialed as a follow-up to training activities such as Results Based Accountability and to enhance implementation of new practices including the HACC Model for Client Engagement.

Information forums

The IDU has continued to provide relevant and accessible training and professional development opportunities to the sector. The information forums which include the Toolkit for Managers Series are designed to focus on management skills that will assist organisations to position themselves for the future and to manage the challenges that lay ahead.

Industry Development Unit

During the 2009 – 2010 financial year the IDU has provided a number of successful forums and workshops at low or no cost to the sector.

We are grateful for the support of external trainers, registered training organisations, facilitators and other organisations with whom we have developed strong relationships. Topics included accessing philanthropic grants, workplace supervision, changes to the industrial relations system between State and Federal powers and introduction to Results Based Accountability for populations and program performance.

All workshops and forums were evaluated by surveying participants after the event and comments were overwhelmingly positive. Typical of the feedback received is the comment:

- *It's good to have a useful, practical framework to take away and work with.*

Projects and industry policy advice

The TasCOSS IDU undertakes consultations and research with members on sector viability and sustainability, the DHHS reform agenda and state and national reform processes. Reports and projects the IDU team have completed include the following.

Clearinghouse
Peer Learning Circles
Forums
Reports and Projects

What's culture got to do with it? Organisational culture project

This project investigated how the organisational culture of community services organisations facilitates or hinders the increasingly difficult tasks of recruiting and retaining staff. Attracting and keeping staff is part of a larger workforce development equation which includes the need to identify skill gaps, provide relevant training, develop an understanding of the current workforce, as well as projections of future workforce needs and create an organisational culture that is fair, inclusive and respectful of all staff and volunteers.

The project report provides an overview of workforce development issues in the Tasmanian Community Services Sector, outlines key findings of the research and includes recommendations for aligning organisational culture with the recruitment and retention needs within the sector based on interviewing and surveying within nine case study organisations across the state.

The project has also produced a Tasmanian Community Sector Workforce Development Toolkit – a ready-reference guide to the broad range of workforce development issues including recruitment and retention.

Tasmanian Skills Institute training partnership

Planning began and is currently underway with the Tasmanian Skills Institute to create a training partnership with TasCOSS.

There continues to be a strong demand from the sector for good quality training. Requests for Risk Management training initiated discussions with the Skills Institute and the provision of Certificate IV training to the sector. In 2009 the IDU team began to plan for the provision of three streams of training. These are:

1. Training workshops provided under the 'Training for the Futures' program. This is a Community Sector Learning and Development Program (CSLDP) funded training program that will finish at the end of December 2010.
2. Certificate IV training in Risk Management. This will be used as a pilot for the provision of other qualifications such as Governance and Financial Management.
3. Short courses on subjects relevant to the sector. Each course would be an accredited unit and would accrue towards a certified qualification such as a Certificate III or IV in Community Services. It is expected that participants will be encouraged by this process to complete the necessary number of units to receive a qualification.

Outcomes accountability

Making a Difference – Towards an outcomes, performance and accountability framework for Tasmanian community services was released in February 2010. This report responded to DHHS's stated intention to encourage an outcomes focus in service agreements with community service organisations. Based on consultation with local and interstate organisations and government, and a review of international practice, the report analysed how an outcomes approach might help organisations to measure and improve their performance, and government to get useful data on the outcomes generated by the funding. It concluded that an outcomes approach has real benefits but is difficult to implement and must be given time and adequate resources to become established practice. Characteristics of a practical framework were outlined.

Every organisation wants to make a difference to the lives of the people they work for. However, the type of work done in community services means that it is often difficult to measure and demonstrate impact to funders, other stakeholders, and to organisations themselves. Old habits and funding requirements sometimes find people measuring and reporting how busy they are, rather than whether they are making a difference in people's lives. There is a risk that this can lead to organisations with an inability to convince funders of their worth, funders (such as government) unable to convince their stakeholders (taxpayers, Treasury and politicians) of the value from their funding, and there being a lack of meaningful data to guide improvements to service delivery.

One approach to outcomes accountability that meets the characteristics set out in the report is Results (or Outcomes) Based Accountability (RBA). The IDU engaged NSW Family Services Association to deliver RBA training workshops in Launceston and Hobart in May 2010. We were pleased to have 94 people register, demonstrating strong interest in this area. Participant feedback was predominantly positive. However, many recognised the challenge to put RBA into practice and the IDU is planning short follow-up workshops as well as learning circles to share experience and encourage implementation.

Quality and Safety

In response to questions raised by our members about the new Quality and Safety Framework being instituted by the Department of Health and Human Services, TasCOSS conducted a survey of all DHHS funded community service organisations and a report was released in June 2010. The survey assessed the level of satisfaction with the Framework and gained evidence of both the benefits and impacts of the reporting requirements. There was broad agreement on the need to constantly improve the quality and safety of services and be accountable for this. However, while a number of organisations supported the

Industry Development Unit

Framework, the majority felt significant changes are required for the Framework to become the useful tool for facilitating the improvements in service delivery that both government and community service organisations would like to see.

Partnerships

The Formalising Partnerships Kit was released in November 2009. The kit is a Tasmanian version of one produced for the NSW Council of Social Service and includes Tasmanian references and local case studies. It is aimed at small to medium sized community sector organisations that are thinking about partnering with others as a way of improving their service delivery. The kit was distributed to community service organisations in hardcopy and is available on the TasCOSS website.

Other initiatives during the year included:

- Input to the Joint National COSS submission to Productivity Commission Inquiry on the Not for Profit sector;
- Consultations on ways for community service organisations to gain access to affordable and good quality industrial relations advice and advocacy.

Reports and Projects
Partnerships
Outcomes Accountability
Quality and Safety

Representations

During 2009 – 2010 TasCOSS participated 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:

Australian Research Council Linkage Grant Community Engagement for Productive Ageing Reference Group and Research Group

Reference Group for an Australian Research Council funded project conducted as a partnership between TasCOSS, the University Department of Rural Health and the Department of Health and Community Services.

Branching Out: New connections – new directions (Tasmanian Regional Arts). State Advisory Committee

This committee provides advice, support and connections for a two-year Tasmanian Regional Arts project to equip community arts organisations with skills and expertise to generate their own resources through developing community enterprises, thus placing less emphasis on grants and more on economic sustainability. The committee has a diverse membership with representatives involved in the finance industry, small business support, government, the University and community services.

Child and Family Centres, Service Delivery and Implementation Committee

Advisory Committee to provide advice on service integration and delivery in the new Child and Family centres.

Community Transport Reference Group

Convened by DIER to advise on safety improvements in the transport industry.

The Community Sector Learning & Development Program (CSLDP) Training Needs Analysis Sub-Committee

The Industry Development Unit of TasCOSS provided support to the Community Sector Learning & Development Program (CSLDP) with representation on the 'Training for the future: Community Sector Learning & Development Program (CSLDP) Steering Committee' and the 'CSLDP Training Needs Analysis Sub-Committee' during the 2009 – 2010 financial year. The purpose of the CSLDP Training Needs Analysis Sub-Committee was to:

- Determine training needs for each sub sector eligible to participate in the CSLDP program, and
- Prioritise training delivery within the budget parameters of the program.

Community Services Reference Group for the Tasmanian Polytechnic

This group has a broad representation of organisations and bodies from the Tasmanian community services industry. The primary function of this group will be to identify and discuss both current strengths and areas for development in relation to workers entering the sector post completion of Cert IV and Diploma level qualifications.

DHHS Consumer Engagement Strategy Reference Group

Overseeing the implementation of the 'Your Care Your Say' consumer engagement strategy.

Emergency Relief State Advisory Committee

The Emergency Relief State Advisory Committee represents providers receiving emergency relief funding from FaHCSIA, community sector peak bodies and FaHCSIA. The purpose of the Advisory Committee is to:

- Provide advice to FaHCSIA on communities and areas of need in Tasmania,
- Identify emerging priority areas and issues that will impact on the provision of Emergency Relief to identified communities within Tasmania, and
- Provide advice on training and support needs for Tasmanian Emergency Relief service providers.

Health in all Policies Collaboration

Collaboration with the Tasmanian Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance, the Australian Health Promotion Association (Tasmanian Branch) and the Public Health Association of Australia (Tasmanian Branch) to progress a whole of government approach to health promotion.

Hobart City Council Community Sector Reference Group

Convened as part of HCC's Social Inclusion Strategy.

Homelessness Reference Group

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

The Industry Association Forum convened by Skills Tasmania

The Forum includes industry association representatives across various industries who work with the Skills Tasmania Workforce Development team to enhance the capability of businesses and industry associations to identify and respond to workforce development needs and to provide a mechanism to encourage and enable industries to develop their own workforce plans. The forum

Representations

also seeks to identify other opportunities for the group to explore in terms of fostering relationships between industry associations, strengthening the network and exploring the common ground for further collaborations.

Office of the Tasmanian Economic Regulator – Customer Consultative Committee

This committee meets quarterly and covers electricity, gas, water and sewerage regulation and also 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.

The Oral Health Services Tasmania Community Consultative Committee and Oral Health Services Tasmania Health Promotion Committee

Committees comprising community sector representatives and oral health professional groups to provide advice and monitoring on the delivery of public oral health services.

Tasmanian Gambling Consultative Group

Stakeholder consultative group in relation to State Government gambling policy.

Ageing
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Financial Statements

Tasmanian Council of Social Service Inc.
Financial Statements for the year ended 30th June 2010

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Separate Download

Auditors

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