

CEO Annual Report 2018



Our Funding Bodies

For the 2017-18 Financial year TASC was funded by 6 government departments or agencies:-

1. Commonwealth Attorney General
2. State Attorney-General
3. Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services
4. Department of Housing and Public Works
5. Queensland Health
6. Relationships Australia
7. National Disability Insurance Scheme

And with the upcoming commencement of the National Disability Advocacy Program this year that will increase to include

8. The Department of Social Services.

From these 8 departments or agencies, TASC provides services for 17 different programs:

1. The Toowoomba Community Legal Service
2. The Ipswich Community Legal Service
3. The Roma Community Legal Service
4. The Disability Legal Program
5. The Regional Women's Outreach Legal Service
6. The Queensland Social Justice Centre
7. The Continuing Legal Education Program\
8. The Family Relationship Centre Service
9. Regional and Disability Advocacy
10. The Seniors Legal and Support Service
11. The Elder Abuse Prevention Service
12. Queensland State-wide Tenant Advice and Referral Service
13. The Community Managed Mental Health Program
14. The National Disability Insurance Scheme
15. The Domestic & Family Violence Duty Lawyer Service
16. The Child Protection Duty Lawyer Service
17. Mental Health Review Tribunal representation

And coming soon the National Disability Advocacy Program.

Our Legal Services

The past year at TASC has been one of significant development and organisational change. We have consolidated our generalist and specialist Legal and Advocacy programs into two cohesive and distinct operational units, TASC's Legal Services and the Queensland Criminal Justice Centre.

TASC's Legal services are now coordinated by two Lawyers, Ms Katrina Potter, who coordinates our generalist services and works in Toowoomba and Mr David Manwaring, who coordinates our specialist services and works in Ipswich. Katrina coordinates our Ipswich, Toowoomba and Roma Community Legal Services, and the significant work that is done under the Community Legal Services Program with the Department of Justice and Attorney General and Legal Aid Queensland. This includes our Disability Law services in Toowoomba and Ipswich, our work with the Family Relationships Centres in Toowoomba and Ipswich, and the Women's Outreach Legal Service that provides regular attendances of our lawyers in Warwick, Stanthorpe, Tara, Chinchilla and other areas of South West Queensland. Katrina also manages our many and varied clinics in Toowoomba, Ipswich, Kingaroy, and the USQ campus and coordinates our increasingly busy Legal Aid Duty Lawyer representation in both the Ipswich and Toowoomba Child Protection and Domestic and Family Violence Courts.

This year Katrina took the role of Principal Lawyer, responsible for our TASC Legal Services under our National Association of Community Legal Centres Risk Management Framework.

David Manwaring coordinates our specialist legal services that include our seniors' Legal Advice Service in Toowoomba and Ipswich, and more recently our Elder Abuse Prevention Service that we service on an outreach basis in Mackay, Rockhampton and Gladstone in association with Relationships Australia.

With an increase in specialist services in Disability Law, David also coordinates TASC's Mental Health Review Tribunal representation. In the past year TASC lawyers provided representation at 58 MHRT hearings.

To make our Vision of Social Justice real, and to be practical in applying the principles of Social Justice to the work that we do, TASC appointed David in the position of Human Rights Coordinator to focus on these issues. All TASC programs are monitored to ensure that both Human Rights and Social Justice remain and are promoted as part of our core, best practice and reflect TASC's values and Social Justice Principles.

Over the next year, TASC's aim is to focus more significantly on issues of Human rights. Our Goals include

The Promotion of Diversity

The promotion of systemic human rights advocacy based upon our existing programs (for example by promoting disability rights as a human rights issue, as it is in the area of seniors rights)

Capacity Development through print, social media language and human rights messaging

And through

Policy and Comment by addressing submissions relevant to our existing programs and policy development in the area of Human Rights.

In addition to setting targets and meeting deliverables, our TASC lawyers were keen to step outside the square and engage more directly with our communities in the last year. TASC Lawyers, Advocates and Administrative staff attended many events including Child Protection Day, the Languages and Cultures Festival, Disability Action Week, and the Street links event.

TASC's Legal Continuing Legal Education Program, a collaboration with the University of Southern Queensland, continued this year. 10 students studying Family Law at the USQ were able to take the opportunity of working in a Community Legal Centre. This was a chance to share with these students our vision of Social Justice, and give to them an opportunity to gain real experience in addressing the needs of vulnerable and marginalised clients. Two impressive guest speakers – senior members of the legal profession, were able to offer words of wisdom and encouragement. The event was well attended by over 50 members of the profession, students and stakeholder representatives.

Our Queensland Social Justice Centre

Our second main stream of service provision sits within the Queensland Social Justice Centre-TASC's Agent for Social Change.

For many years, TASC's Queensland Criminal Justice Centre has provided support to persons with impaired capacity facing the Criminal Justice system, and their families and carers in need of information and assistance. In the past year, the Centre has matured as the Queensland Social Justice Centre. All the work done through the Centre has Human Rights and the achievement of Social Justice at its core – advocacy, seniors' advice and support, psychology, counselling, access to NDIS services, access to regional services. All staff working through the Centre, with its mix of persons, programs, skills and experiences contribute significantly to this social change for our clients.

QSJC services are:-

TASCs Disability Rights Advocacy Service - Ipswich, Toowoomba and Roma

TASC Mental Health Rights Service – Toowoomba *providing Advocacy services to persons in acute mental health care facilities*

Rights, Education and Advice Program – Toowoomba *providing comprehensive advocacy to assist people funded under the Community Managed Mental Health Program to navigate mental health service systems*

TASC Psychology & Counselling Services Limited – Toowoomba, Roma and surrounds *providing Psychology and Counselling Services including private consultations, Mental Health Care Plans, Employee Assistance Program consultations, National Disability Insurance Scheme referrals and capacity assessments.*

National Disability Insurance Scheme – Queensland Wide– *providing Coordination of Supports to understand and implement their Plan under the Scheme.*

Queensland State Tenancy Advice & Referral Service (QSTARS) servicing Toowoomba and South West Queensland

And most recently The National Disability Advocacy Program – Rights, Education and Advocacy Service – Ipswich, Toowoomba, Roma, Nanango, Gympie and surrounds *providing extended Advocacy services to members of the community in need of advocacy services and support.*

Our Strategic Plan

The TASC Strategic Plan 2017-2018 identifies opportunities to diversify and develop funding opportunities in order to grow our services and extend our reach. In the past year, we have continued with the development of three business models to provide complementary legal and non-legal services to lessen our reliance upon government funding, and to continue to ensure a secure future for the organisation. We have also proceeded with the staged development of our three new businesses -TASC's Psychology and Counselling Service; the Coordination of Supports under the National Disability Insurance Scheme and our Incorporated Legal Practice, TASC Law Pty Ltd.

TASC's Psychology and Counselling Service is in its second year of operation. Our Psychology Practice operates on an outreach basis in Roma with the support of the Roma community, and, more recently, our practice in Toowoomba has expanded with a resident senior Psychologist. TASC's Coordination of Supports for persons accessing the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) has commenced as our second new business model in the past year. This service reflects the work that our Advocacy Team has done throughout the history of TASC – identifying the needs of our clients and creating solutions together with our clients. Modern, innovative practice combined with strong, independent advocacy has seen our Coordination of Supports role grow steadily to produce measurable, positive outcomes for our clients.

In the past year, TASC has taken steps to incorporate a legal practice, TASC Law Pty Ltd. The business model of this Practice will be focused on meeting the unmet legal need faced by our clients where their ineligibility for not-for-profit or free legal services might otherwise restrict their access to legal assistance, or where the legal assistance required is not otherwise available to them in an affordable way. TASC's Social Justice Principles will be promoted in our new Law Practice and will be reflected in the service that we provide to our clients.

Philippa Whitman

Chief Executive Officer