



2025 Annual Report

Championing equitable access to justice

Acknowledgement of Country

Tasc Legal and Social Justice Services acknowledge the Traditional Custodians throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, sea and community.

We pay our respects to First Nations peoples and to their Elders past, present and emerging.

We acknowledge the Jagera, Yuggera and Ugarapul people of Ipswich, the Jagera, Giabal and Jarowair people of Toowoomba, the Mandandanji people of Roma, the Bigambul people of Goondiwindi, the Kambuwal people of Stanthorpe, the Taribelang Bunda, Gooreng Gooreng, Gurang, and Bailai people of Hervey Bay and Bundaberg, the Wakka Wakka people of Cherbourg, and the Gubbi Gubbi people of Gympie.

We acknowledge our staff and volunteers that contribute to supporting our communities, their legal rights and continuing to enable justice.



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Chairperson's Report



Lesley Beames CHAIR

Over the past year, Tasc has experienced considerable growth in demand for its services. In response, our team has continued to expand its activities within our communities.

Advocacy remains central to our charitable purpose, and we are appreciative of our funding partners whose ongoing provision enables us to address increasing needs and bring positive change.

The Tasc Board extends its gratitude to CEO Megan Inglis and the entire team for their professionalism and collective dedication to serving our community members. We also recognise the tireless efforts of our former CEO, Frances Klaassen, who led Tasc for five years through to the end of 2024.

Tasc is fortunate to have many dedicated friends and volunteers, whose generosity is deeply valued. I would also like to acknowledge my fellow Board Directors for contributing their expertise and wisdom alongside their own demanding professional roles.

As the need for our services continues, I am confident that all at Tasc consider it an honour to use our skills and resources responsibly in support of those we serve.

– Lesley Beames

Chief Executive Officer's Report



Megan Inglis

CEO

The Tasc team has emerged from an intense focus on internal systems, processes, and improvements designed to improve the overall client experience.

The year began following a significant investment of resources into establishing and refining a dedicated intake and triage system to address inefficiencies and ensure consistency for clients as they interact with our service. We have continued to use internal and external feedback to improve our efforts throughout the year, eventually landing at a point where we are confident that clients will feel well supported from the moment they make contact, regardless of which of our programs they seek to access.

Fallout from the continuing crisis that soaring costs of living and housing insecurity have caused in our communities has been felt deeply across our catchment. The housing instability we have seen this year is consistent with the worst of what we saw during the peak of the Covid pandemic. As a regional for-purpose organisation centred on delivering advocacy services in disability, mental health, tenancy, and elder abuse, and the provision of legal services across a broad range of areas of law, we are challenged by an increasing demand for our services, escalating complexity of the issues we are seeing, and finding ways to improve accessibility and the reach of our services.



Photo: Tracey Bowen

Some highlights of our year include the conclusion and evaluation of the Rural Motherhood Initiative pilot program, which delivered vital support to young mothers in the Maranoa Region, building on and extending our relationships with the Chinchilla and Tara Neighbourhood centres, and Goondir Health Services, the announcement by the incoming State Government of their financial commitment to the National Access to Justice Partnership, the successful introduction of a Regional, Rural, and Remote student placement program through the University of Queensland Pro Bono Centre, and the opportunity for us to have input into the Queensland Parliamentary Committee's Inquiry into Elder Abuse.

Like so many other organisations in our sector, despite the ongoing challenges we face recruiting staff in regional, remote, and rural areas, Tasc has continued to deliver strong outcomes for our clients and communities across all our programs. Our Advocacy and Legal teams carried significant vacancies for most of the first half of the year, but a strong recruitment drive beginning in January secured some great team members who are making positive contributions to all aspects of service delivery.

Following the departure of several senior leaders in the organisation prior to Christmas, a relatively new Leadership team picked up the Strategic Planning process initiated in September, taking the opportunity to refresh our values and brand along the way, and then completed Accreditation processes for both Community Legal Centres Australia, and the National Standards for Disability Services.

In this midst of a significant period of planning and compliance, we also undertook delivery of a major project to replace two of our existing but not well integrated customer resource management systems with a dedicated project build. The new CMS was rolled out on 1 April 2025, bearing the name IRIS – Integrated Record and Information System. While not without our share of implementation problems and interruptions, particularly in relation to our reporting requirements, we can already see great opportunity in this build, particularly in measuring and evaluating our impact through the creation of bespoke reporting tools.

As the end of the year drew close, we undertook a realignment of our structure which was informed by our intensive strategic planning processes in the preceding months. This move brings all client-facing staff into three distinct professional streams – legal, advocacy, and social work, supported by our Client Engagement and Corporate teams. In recognition of the types of matters that are referred to us for resolution, the challenges of recruiting in RRR areas, and the need to maintain a client-focused approach, we see this move as the way for us to remain adaptable and ensure continuity of service delivery across all our programs, at the same time as centring the client experience.

We are grateful to our voluntary Board Members for their commitment to continuous improvement in governance and risk management, to our state and federal peak bodies in disability services and legal assistance who are there to guide and support us, to our industry peers, pro bono and referral partners, to our stakeholders who work with us to ensure high quality services make their way to where they are most needed, and to our invaluable volunteers.

I would like to acknowledge and thank each of our dedicated, purposeful, and brilliant staff, without whom we could not do the incredible work we do. Every day, they show up with enthusiasm, creativity, and resilience to solve problems, find solutions, celebrate wins, and support each other through challenges both professional and personal. Their willingness to adapt through periods of significant change and maintain a focus on improving client experience is a highlight of our work. We accept that the outcomes we get are not always the ones that we or our clients want, but we work intentionally, with commitment and accountability, and in doing so, we amplify voices that should be heard and create space for justice. I would further like to thank the staff who created or contributed to content for our Annual Report. The insights you gain from working within our programs shows in the care and consideration you have given to the impacts of socio-political, economic, geographic, and environmental factors that affect our clients and service delivery.

Lastly, I would like to extend my gratitude to our clients, without whom our service would not exist. The patience and strength they exhibit in the face of the adversity they face keeps us grounded and reminds us daily of the value and impact of the services we offer. Client feedback is essential to continuous improvement and the trust our clients place in us to guide them through some of the most challenging experiences of their lives is humbling. One of the most rewarding aspects of the work we do is being paid in stories.

– Megan Inglis

Overview

Liam Anderson & Michelle Edden

Trends

In 2024-25, Tasc saw a substantial increase in both the number of clients who accessed our service as well as the volume of services themselves, eclipsing the peak witnessed during the Covid period in the 2020-21 year.

These increases can be attributed to both demand from the communities we serve, and efficiencies garnered within our organisation through improved client engagement and service delivery processes.

On the demand side, a combination of the socio-economic stressors of the concurrent housing and cost of living crises experienced during the year have played a strong role, as has Tasc's substantive efforts to expand awareness of our services through engagement with community organisations.

The efficacy of adjustments to our client engagement and service delivery systems can be seen in the year-on-year changes in the volume and type of issues presenting for assistance. In particular, we saw a significant increase in the number of legal services delivered while simultaneously seeing a reduction in the number of clients we referred elsewhere. This is directly attributable to the decision to say yes to a greater variety of, and more complex matters, and the willingness of our staff to accommodate growth.

Demographically, the proportion of female to male clients remained similar to previous years, while the trend of more clients in their middle years (35-49) has continued. The demand from an older client cohort is steadily increasing, and we welcome a renewed focus on the rights of older people from our state government.

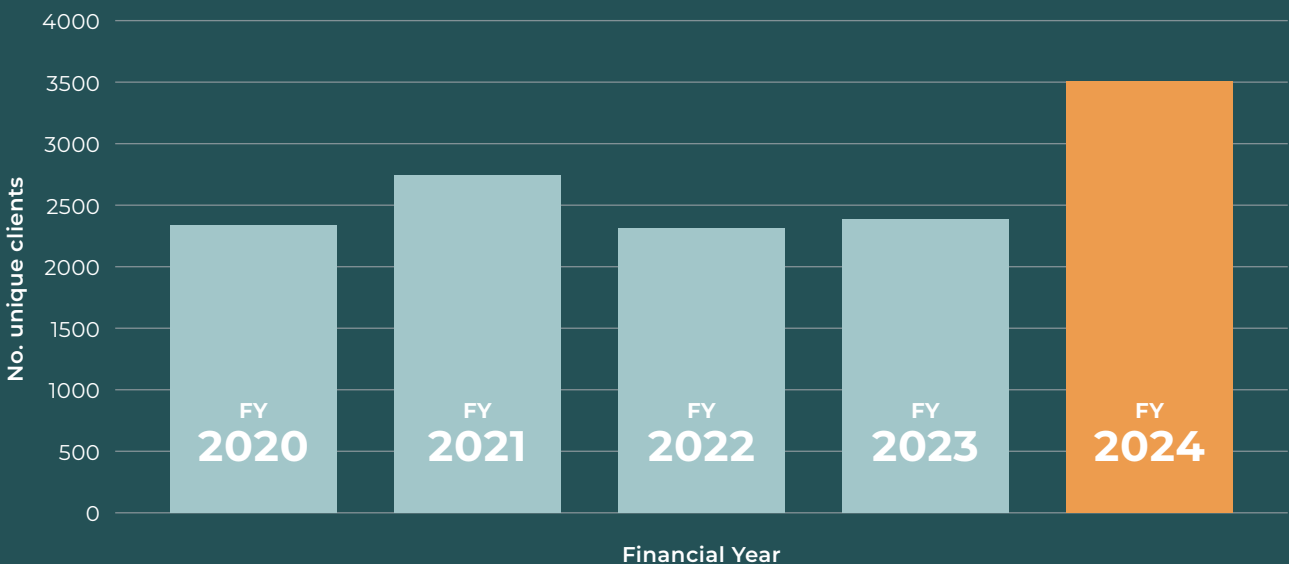
Insecure housing also remains a major issue, with the number of clients experiencing or at risk of homelessness continuing to edge closer to the peak seen in the wake of Covid.



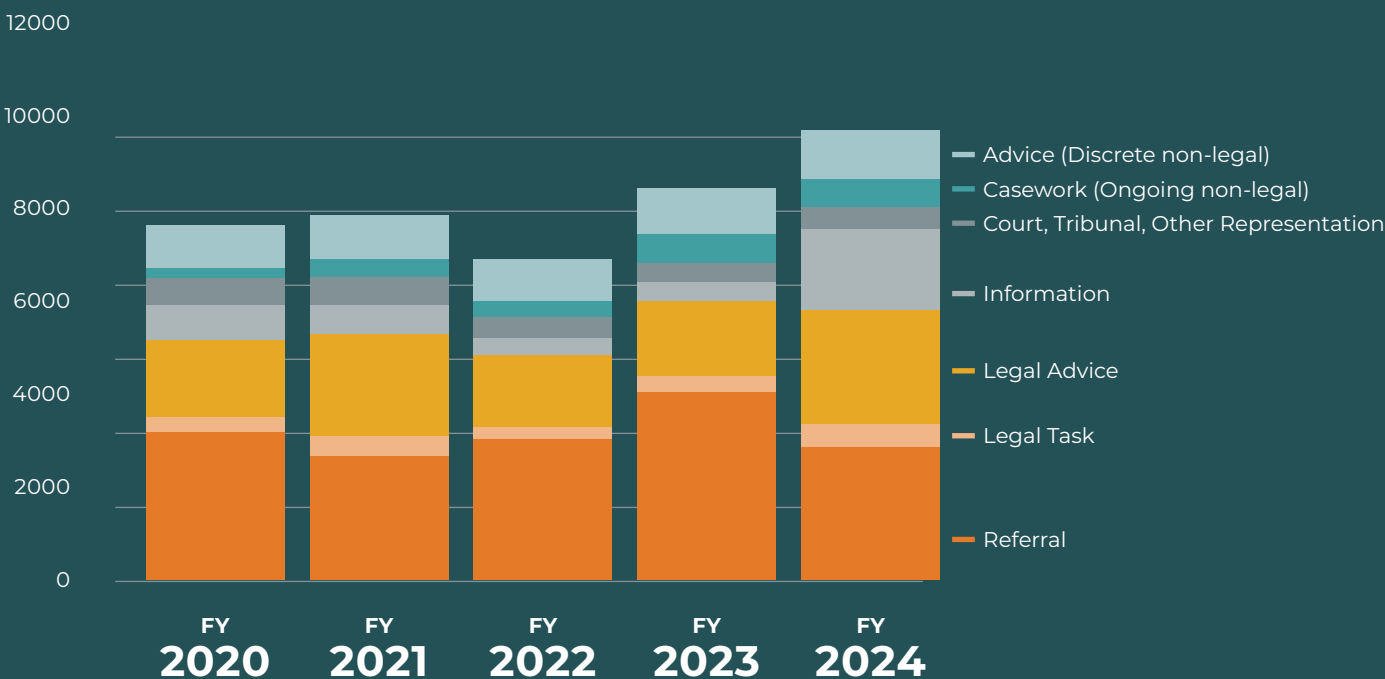
Photo: Karryn Goode

5 Year Comparison of Number of Individual Clients

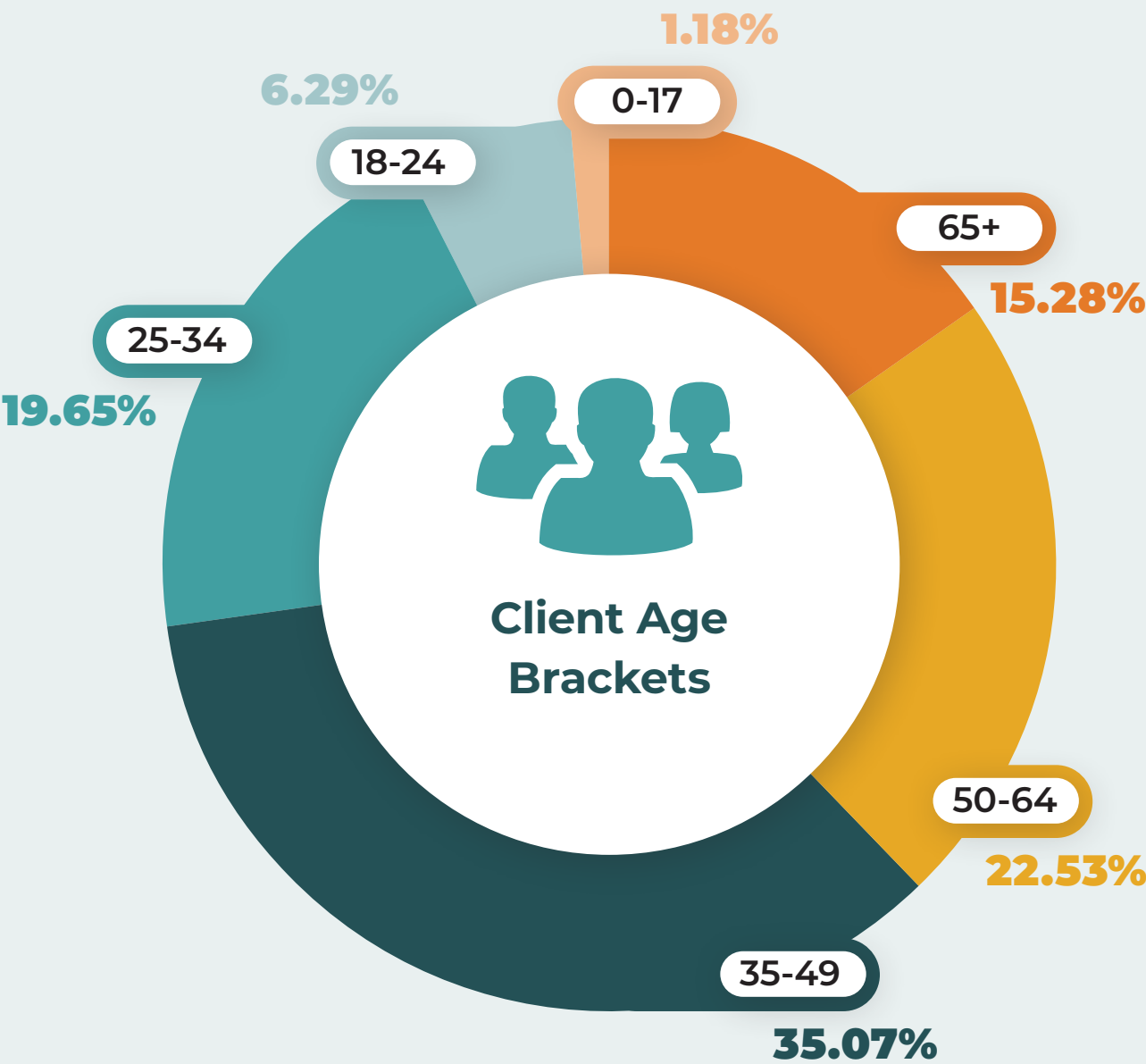
Number of clients by financial year

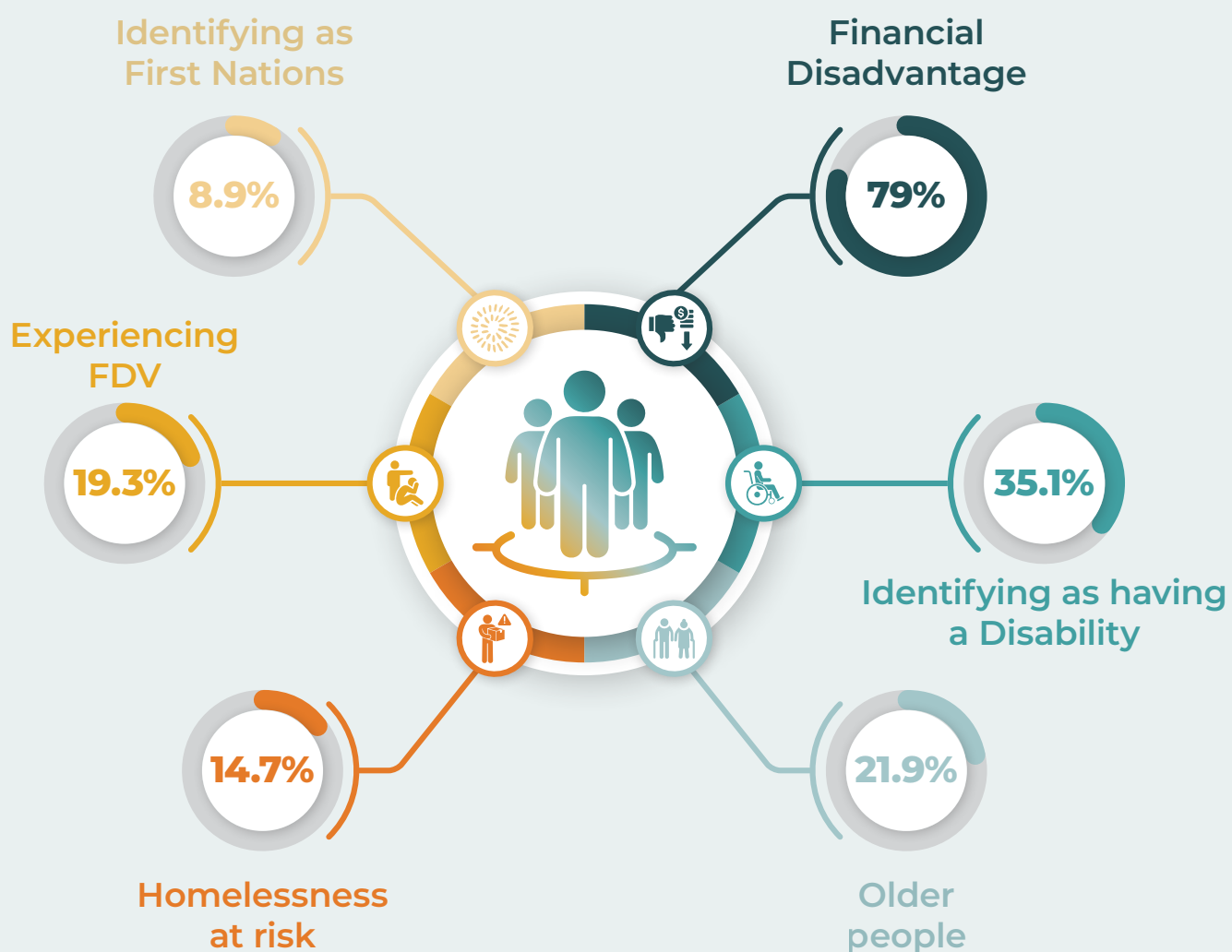


5 Year Comparison of Number of Services by Program



Overview – Demographics





Client Engagement



Tina David

CLIENT ENGAGEMENT DIRECTOR

Client Engagement Team – The Foundation of Integrated Service Delivery

To strengthen and launch our new integrated services model, streamlining referrals between the three professional streams: legal, advocacy, and social work, was central to the work of the Client Engagement team.

Comprising four interconnected sub-teams—Front Desk/Intake, Volunteer and Student Management, Client Data & Information Systems, and Marketing & Communications—the Client Engagement Team worked collaboratively with the other teams to enhance the effectiveness of our professional streams and ensure clients receive coordinated and accessible services.

Front Desk / Intake – A Critical Frontline Role

The Front Desk/Intake team plays a vital frontline role as they are often the first point of contact for individuals seeking legal or social support. Their responsibilities go far beyond answering calls or greeting clients—they ensure accessible, timely support and help triage urgent matters, all while creating a safe and respectful environment for our often-vulnerable client base.

Following an internal audit, several key operational changes were implemented this year, with notable outcomes:

- **Streamlined intake and assessment processes**
- **Reduced intake finalisation timeframes from 10 days to 5**
- **Successful transition to a new client management system (IRIS)**

The impact of these improvements has been significant, with services delivered increasing by 75.24% between the last financial year and this year. Tasc also saw a 44.88% increase in the number of clients supported over the past financial year.

This near doubling of services and substantial growth in client numbers reflect the success of our enhanced intake process and the foundational role played by the CE team in making our integrated model both efficient and client focused.

Volunteer Program

Volunteers & Students – The Heart of Our Work

At Tasc, we are proud to provide a supportive, inclusive, and enriching environment for our volunteers and student placements. Each play a vital role in advancing our mission. We presently have volunteers in our Client Engagement, Legal, and Social Work teams, and are planning to significantly expand our volunteer program next year. Volunteering is a mutual relationship, and we endeavour to ensure our volunteers get as much out of the experience as possible.

Our volunteers and students bring energy, compassion, and a commitment to learning that strengthens every aspect of our work. In return, they gain meaningful professional experience, personal growth, and a strong sense of community.

We are also deeply grateful to our board of directors, who generously volunteer their time and expertise to guide the strategic direction of the centre. Their leadership and dedication are invaluable to our continued success.

Together, these individuals are the heart of Tasc, helping us create lasting impact every day. The reflections below highlight the impact of volunteering at Tasc, from developing legal skills to reconnecting with purpose and community.

Professional Growth and Learning Opportunities

“The work culture, collaboration and learning opportunities mean that I am very grateful to be able to work at Tasc.”

— Imogen Price, Legal Volunteer & Project & Intake Officer

Imogen joined Tasc in March 2025 as a legal volunteer while completing her Practical Legal Training. With support and mentorship from the legal team, she was able to develop practical legal skills and later transitioned into paid employment as Project Officer. She successfully finalised a major archiving project and has worked with both the Client Engagement and Project teams.

Her journey reflects Tasc’s commitment to fostering growth, offering real-world legal experience, and providing pathways into employment.

Reconnecting Through Volunteering

“Sometimes the best way to move forward is to return to where it all began—with fresh perspective and renewed energy.”

— Lyn Aplin, Volunteer Receptionist & Former Staff Member

Lyn’s long-standing connection with Tasc began in 2007. After stepping away from paid roles, she returned in 2025 as a volunteer receptionist. Her reflection speaks to the strength of the Tasc community and the personal rewards of volunteering — from mental wellbeing to social connection and a renewed sense of purpose.

Lyn’s story demonstrates the value of long-term engagement and the many ways individuals can contribute meaningfully over time.

Client Engagement

Firsthand Insights into Legal Practice

“It was incredibly eye-opening... confronting, challenging, emotional, tiring and rewarding all at once.”

— Gaby Wilson, Student Placement

Gaby's placement provided early-career exposure to Domestic Violence Court proceedings in both Ipswich and Toowoomba. She observed Tasc solicitors in action, reflected on the emotional dimensions of legal work, and gained confidence through tasks such as legal drafting and client correspondence.

Her experience highlights the powerful learning environment Tasc offers — one that balances technical skill-building with real-world compassion and a focus on access to justice.

The Lasting Impact of Volunteering

Across these stories, common themes emerge: a supportive and inclusive workplace culture, a commitment to personal and professional development, and a deep respect for community and social justice. Our volunteers and students not only gain experience — they carry forward a lasting connection to the mission of Tasc.

Client Data and Information systems – Enhancing Customer Engagement and Operational Efficiency

During the financial year, Tasc implemented the Salesforce CMS Project, a key initiative aimed at strengthening both customer relationship management and overall organisational agility. This transition was necessitated by the directive from Community Legal Centres Australia (CLCA) to discontinue the CLASS platform by mid-2025, compelling Tasc to adopt a more advanced and sustainable client management system.

Implementation Process

In response, we undertook a comprehensive review of our customer engagement processes and developed workflows to deploy to Salesforce CMS. Cross-functional collaboration during the planning phase ensured alignment with organisational objectives and operational requirements. This collaborative approach enabled the configuration of a CMS platform and ensure it was tailored to Tasc's unique needs and aligned with long-term strategic goals.

The implementation was executed via an organisation-wide rollout on 1 April, adopting a ‘big bang’ approach to ensure uniform adoption across all departments. Core functionalities introduced included automated client management, customisable dashboards, enhanced reporting tools, and integrations with pre-existing systems such as email. Throughout the build, the project team put emphasis on data security, regulatory compliance, and user accessibility. Comprehensive training and ongoing support contributed to high user adoption rates. To facilitate user acceptance, comfort with and ownership of the system the new CMS was renamed “IRIS” for internal users.

Outcomes and Benefits

Since deployment, IRIS has yielded measurable improvements in client management efficiency and internal collaboration. Automation of routine tasks has reduced manual workloads and error rates, while the centralised client database has enhanced information sharing and operational transparency. With access to real-time analytics and performance metrics, teams are now better equipped to address client needs and adapt to changing conditions. Advanced reporting functionality has enabled leadership to make timely, data-driven decisions in alignment with organisational strategy.

Outlook

The Salesforce CMS Project is a cornerstone of Tasc’s digital transformation strategy. Ongoing user feedback and adherence to industry best practices will inform future system enhancements, ensuring continued innovation and excellence in customer engagement. This investment positions Tasc to strengthen client relationships and achieve sustainable growth in an evolving business landscape.

Challenges

Since IRIS went live on 1 April 2025, several challenges have been addressed to ensure data integrity, system usability, and accurate reporting. Key issues included complex data migration from CLASS, inconsistent legacy data, and system limitations such as non-searchable date fields and duplicate file attachments. These were resolved through targeted remediation, automation, and custom flows. Enhancements to validation rules, user permissions, and field requirements improved data capture and lifecycle management. Comprehensive dashboards and reports were developed to meet internal and funder reporting needs, while ongoing administrative support ensured system stability and responsiveness to organisational changes.

Client Engagement

Feedback and Client Survey

Feedback from clients, staff, and stakeholders remains central to Tasc's commitment to continuous improvement. Insights gathered throughout the year have directly informed the refinement of practice models and service delivery, ensuring our work remains responsive, effective, and client-focused. While positive trends in client satisfaction and confidence are encouraging, we acknowledge areas for development and are dedicated to addressing them to ensure the best possible outcomes for all clients.

Two formal surveys were conducted this year, in addition to ongoing feedback via various channels.

NLAP Client Survey – May 2025

Under the National Legal Assistance Program (NLAP), now the National Access to Justice Partnership (NAJP), we conduct an annual Client Survey. The survey measures key metrics of service quality and delivery, which are then compared to state-wide averages to provide a benchmark. This sector-wide survey is conducted with clients who received a service from us under this funding during the month of May.

The feedback received through this survey is used to inform service delivery and identify areas of achievement and improvement, both in terms of service and staff development. Tasc achieved a 49% response rate from clients who received legal advice services in May 2025:

Client Satisfaction

95%

found it easy to contact the service when needed.

98%

felt staff listened in a friendly and respectful manner.

93%

agreed staff helped them understand their legal problem and provided options.

92%

found information and resources useful.

75%

would recommend the service to others.

Clients described the service as vital, especially for vulnerable or first-time clients. The service was recognised for its accessibility, particularly for those facing financial hardship or living with disabilities. Trends noted included an increase in client participation and willingness to recommend the service compared to the previous year. More clients felt their cultural and personal needs were met and had confidence in knowing where to seek help in the future increased.

Client Feedback

"Keep up the good work. It was easy and they are straight shooters, which I like."

"First time receiving legal advice and I found the service very helpful."

"Tasc legal services were highly recommended to me and I in turn recommend them to others. I have never handled a legal matter in my life so without Tasc I would not have been able to get done what I have. People with a disability need Tasc. They understand."

"I feel like I am not on my own anymore."

"Staff have been very understanding of my dyslexia."

"Vital service for the community, especially for those that are vulnerable and most in need."

"In stressful times it is nice to have access to free legal services, especially when the cost of living is so high and everything is becoming unaffordable."

In summary, the feedback we have received reinforces our commitment to providing accessible, high-quality legal support to those who need it most. We are grateful for the trust and gratitude our clients have shown, and we remain dedicated to continuing our mission of serving the community with excellence.

Corporate Services and Operations



Jenny McCloy

CHIEF FINANCIAL AND OPERATIONS OFFICER

The Tasc Corporate Services team provides the essential backbone that enables the organisation's client focused teams to deliver on the organisations purpose.

The Corporate Services team achieves this via the following functions:

- Finance
- Governance and risk
- Compliance and Quality Assurance
- Human Resources
- Operations
 - Information and communications technology (ICT)
 - Fleet and facilities
 - Workplace health and safety

Each function is distinct, but all ensure that resources are used effectively, processes are continuously reviewed for efficiency, risks are managed responsibly, and staff are empowered to focus on creating impact.

The team's role is to create a stable, efficient, and values-aligned foundation that supports the organisation's mission and amplifies its reach in the community.

Key Achievements

ICT Infrastructure Standardisation Project

During the 2024-25 year the Operations team developed a plan to standardise the ICT infrastructure across the organisation. It was identified that there was a lot of downtime occurring across the organisation due to combination of ageing and inconsistent ICT infrastructure. By the end of the 2024-25 year over half the organisation had received their updated laptops and docking stations. With a significant reduction in downtime across the organisation. The full rollout is expected to be completed by October 2025.

Controlled Documents Review

The Quality Assurance team has successfully reviewed and updated over 80% of the organisation's controlled documents such as policies, procedures, forms etc.

New CMS Implementation

The Quality Assurance team successfully project managed the implementation, rollout and training for the new Salesforce CMS (which internally has been named IRIS). This occurred due to the imminent retirement of one of the previously used CMS's. The new system replaced two of our previously used systems and has resulted in a significant number of efficiencies across the organisation.

Finance

Continued to review processes for improvement and efficiencies including a trial process for invoice approval that was successful and will be rolled out across the organisation in 2025-26.

Accreditation

Tasc underwent two accreditation processes this year. The National Accreditation Standards (NAS) under our peak body Community Legal Centres Australia (CLCA), which was finalised in April, and during June, much of the Tasc organisation participated in the accreditation audit against the National Standards for Disability Services (NSDS).

Tasc is proud to have achieved recertification for 3-years against the NSDS for our National Disability Advocacy Program (NDAP) as well as successfully passing the surveillance accreditation audit for the advocacy and social work services in our IASP, RIA and SLASS programs, and has achieved Level 4 Accreditation under CLCA's NAS.

During the accreditation processes client feedback was extremely positive and it was noted that the teams demonstrated commitment to affording individuals with dignity and respect. It was also noted that management was committed to reviewing continuous improvement activities.

This achievement reinforces Tasc's dedication to maintaining excellence in service delivery, supported by frameworks that ensure compliance, quality, and accountability.

Corporate Services and Operations

People and Culture

Gabby Hopkins

This was a pivotal year in Tasc's cultural and organisational journey. The first half of the year was marked by transition and a realignment of expectations, with a strong focus on strengthening leadership accountability, clarifying roles, and addressing longstanding organisational matters. While turnover and grievances were more prominent in the early months, the organisation experienced a notable shift from January onwards.

Leadership continuity was reinforced with the appointment of an Acting CEO in late December 2024, followed by their permanent appointment to a three-year term on 9 June 2025. This stability was further supported by the appointment of a new Chief Financial Officer on 9 January 2025, bringing fresh perspective and continuity to the executive team.

Throughout the second half of the year, the organisation also invested in strategic planning and preparatory work to position Tasc for the future. While the organisational realignment formally commenced in late June and will continue into next year, the groundwork was laid through values workshops, staff consultation, and executive planning discussions earlier in the year.

During this period, Tasc also strengthened its internal HR capability. An HR Adviser was appointed in early June 2025, complementing the support already provided by an external HR consultancy. The consultancy continues to work alongside the Adviser and Executive team, ensuring that Tasc benefits from both in-house expertise and strategic external guidance.

Together, these changes provided a strong and stable foundation for workforce culture, reflected in reduced resignations, fewer formal grievances, and higher levels of engagement.

Focusing on Wellbeing

In recognition of the nature and demands of the work we do at Tasc, the second half of the financial year placed deliberate emphasis on employee wellbeing and psychological safety. Initiatives supported staff to feel valued and heard, while reducing risks of burnout and disengagement. With a suite of support and development initiatives still in development, it is our intention to continue this trend.

Living Our Values

A major milestone during FY24/25 was the organisation-wide review of Tasc's values. Six values workshops were facilitated across all regions, ensuring that every employee had the opportunity to contribute. The outcome was a renewed set of organisational values to be launched next year that will guide decision-making, behaviours, and strategic priorities in the years ahead. This process strengthened transparency and provided employees with a clear voice in shaping the culture of the organisation.



Photo: Karryn Goode

Strengthening Leadership and Capability

Leaders were supported through targeted development resources and opportunities. New grievance management tools were launched, DiSC profiling and coaching sessions commenced, and the HR for Non-HR leaders training modules were designed for delivery next year. These initiatives are laying the foundation for stronger capability, consistency, and accountability across the leadership team.

Celebrating Our People

Tasc is proud of the many milestones achieved by employees during the year, from career development and promotions to secondments and length-of-service anniversaries. These moments reflect the commitment and growth of our people and contribute to building a positive and connected workplace.

As we embed our new values and launch future initiatives, we remain focused on supporting, developing, and celebrating every member of our team.

Looking Ahead

As we move into the next phase, our focus will be on embedding the strong foundations established this year and continuing to invest in the people and culture of Tasc. Key initiatives include:

- Launch and embed Core Values – ensuring the new organisational values are lived day-to-day and guide decision-making and behaviours.
- Position Description and Role Review – clarifying responsibilities, aligning roles to strategic priorities, and supporting career progression.
- Remuneration Strategy – reviewing remuneration and classification structures to ensure fairness, transparency, and competitiveness across the sector.
- Performance Accountability Framework – strengthening accountability and consistency in performance expectations, feedback, and development.
- Workforce Development Framework – building long-term capability and succession planning through structured development pathways.
- Internal Communications Strategy – enhancing transparency, connection, and trust through consistent and effective communication across the organisation.

These initiatives will drive the next stage of cultural maturity at Tasc, supporting a safe, engaged, and values-driven workplace aligned with our Strategic Plan 2025–2028.

Corporate Services and Operations

Organisational Structure

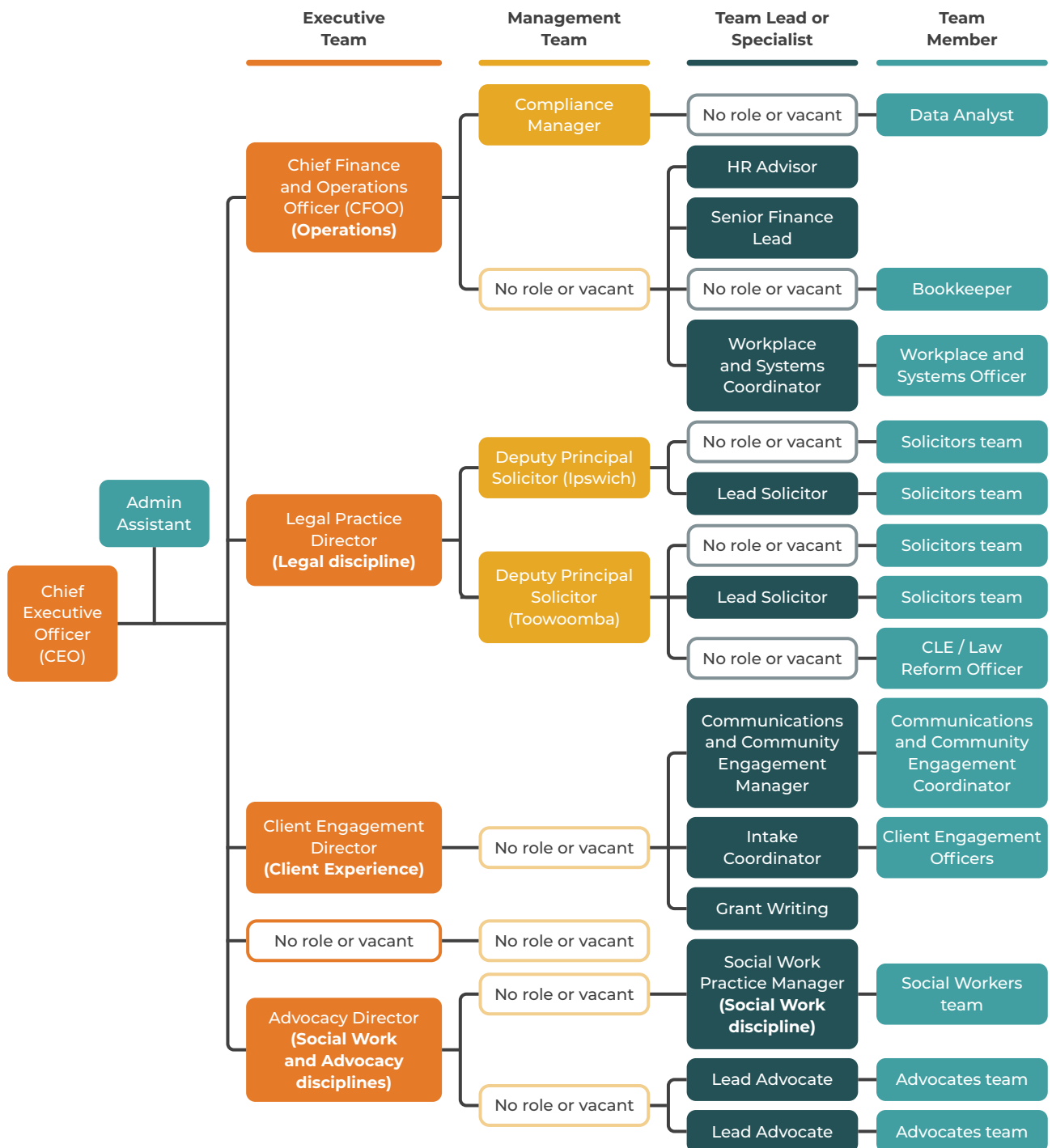




Photo: Tracy Bowen

Social Justice and Advocacy Services



David Boden ADVOCACY DIRECTOR

Advocacy in Action: Challenges and Successes

At Tasc, safeguarding the rights and wellbeing of people with disability is central to our work. Across the past year, our advocacy services have continued to address one of the most critical issues facing the sector: the prevention of abuse and exploitation.

People with disability are disproportionately vulnerable to abuse, neglect and exploitation. Barriers such as limited access to information, social isolation, reliance on support workers and systemic inequities increase this risk. Advocates often encounter situations where abuse is hidden or difficult to prove, requiring persistence, sensitivity and careful navigation of legal and social systems.

Despite these challenges, Tasc's advocates have achieved notable successes in assisting people experiencing vulnerability. Our team has:

- **Identified and intervened in high-risk situations:** Advocates have supported clients experiencing financial exploitation, neglect or unsafe living arrangements ensuring their immediate safety, autonomy and dignity.
- **Strengthened collaborative networks:** By working closely and collaborating with non-government organisations, government departments, hospitals and regulatory bodies we have been able to escalate concerns quickly and coordinate comprehensive responses for people with a disability.

- **Empowered clients through education and advocacy:** Through one-on-one assistance and community education initiatives, people with disability and their supporters have gained a stronger understanding of their rights.
- **Influenced systemic change:** Tasc advocates have been a part of and actively contributed to broader discussions and practices aimed at improving the outcomes and lives of people with a disability.

Our commitment is clear: preventing abuse and exploitation is not only about responding when things go wrong but about building safer, more inclusive communities where people with disability have a voice, their choice respected and control. Advocacy plays a critical role in this, by standing beside individuals, challenging systems and pushing for cultural change so that every person with disability can live with autonomy, safety, and dignity.

Testimonials

"My advocate provided suggestions on the social things I could do so that was great" and "They increased my confidence, and I can do more things for myself, and people did listen to me when I advocated for myself."

"The advocate was very knowledgeable, very personal, knew how to deal with a whole lot of different environments and situations" and "They were well trained and knew their stuff".

"My advocate really made a big difference to my relationship with (my family). I really thought I would not talk to them again, but I am now going over there for dinner."

"I'm very glad and touched to receive your email. I'm very grateful for yours and the lawyer's kind help and hard work, which made me see the kindness and warmth in the world and gave me a new confidence and hope in life. Everything was very gloomy and difficult, plunging into an abyss of pain. Your support has given me a glimmer of hope and light in the dark tunnel of my tortured mind and life. I am sincerely grateful to you both."

Social Justice and Advocacy Services

Rural Motherhood Initiative (RMI)

Beth Wagland – Advocate

The Rural Motherhood Initiative (RMI) pilot commenced in 2023 and ended in December 2024. Its aim was to support young mothers in rural Queensland communities (Tara, Chinchilla, and Miles) where male-dominated industries, entrenched gender norms and recent community hardships have heightened challenges for women.

The program was grounded in the belief that enhancing women's sense of personal and collective agency, alongside fostering 'holistic hope', equips them to make decisions in their own and their children's best interests, particularly in the face of domestic and family violence (DFV) and social isolation.

Rather than a skills-based parenting program, RMI used a trauma-informed and group-based approach that placed maternal struggles in the context of structural inequity. This was particularly relevant for participants, who were mostly in their twenties, from a First Nations background, with histories of trauma, DFV, and systemic disadvantage. Often, many feared judgment, Child Safety involvement, and community gossip.

After initial stakeholder resistance, community trust grew, leading to the establishment of groups in Chinchilla and Tara (approx. eight participants each) and engagement with over 80 people through direct participation and outreach. Over time, participants reported and demonstrated:

- Increased confidence, agency and mutual support.
- Reduced fear of social judgment and greater openness to sharing.
- Willingness to explore future education, employment and life pathways.
- Tangible acts of empowerment, such as leaving violent relationships with peer and facilitator support.

The initiative also seeded broader community engagement. Local organisations, including health services, education providers and early childhood programs, all expressed interest in co-designing culturally safe perinatal and school-readiness programs. Notably, the Goondir Medical Centre invited RMI to collaborate on culturally aware baby-welcoming ceremonies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

RMI's impact extended beyond individual participants, contributing to early signs of community-driven change. Participants began generating their own ideas for addressing inequity in their towns and stakeholders increasingly saw value in RMI's approach. The program demonstrated that, given time, trust, and place-based collaboration, it is possible to plant the seeds of intergenerational change in communities facing deep-rooted social challenges.

RMI at a glance

Location

Tara and Chinchilla, QLD (pilot).

Participants

80+ women and community members engaged.

Focus

Empowering young rural mothers through agency, hope, and peer support.

Key Achievements:

- Built trust in communities where stigma and fear often prevent women from seeking support.
- Two ongoing groups formed, with sustained attendance and peer referrals.
- Participants reported increased confidence, mutual support and future planning.
- Three women safely left DFV situations with program support.
- Strengthened partnerships with local organisations, including health and education services.
- Sparked community-led ideas for addressing inequity and supporting mothers.

Impact

- Planted the seeds of intergenerational change by fostering maternal agency, hope and community connection in towns facing entrenched disadvantage and social isolation.
- Goondir Medical Centre invited RMI to collaborate on culturally aware baby-welcoming ceremonies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

Rural and Remote Advocacy Project

David Boden

Tasc's Queensland Disability Advocacy Program (QDAP) was grateful to receive additional funding from the Queensland Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services, and Child Safety to develop the Rural and Remote Advocacy Project. This initiative set out to address the unique advocacy needs of people with disability living in Queensland's rural and remote communities.

Working on this project has been one of the most rewarding experiences of the year, as well as being one of the most challenging. Many factors such as long distances, limited services, high costs and persistent stigma create significant barriers for people with disability living outside metropolitan areas and often restrict their choices and independence. As a result, our goal was to listen deeply and co-design advocacy models that reflect the realities of life in these communities.

A key strength of the project was our partnership with DCA Mentoring Supports (DCAMS), a consultancy organisation led by people with lived experience of disability. Their peer-led approach and local insight opened doors and built the trust needed for honest and meaningful conversations to occur. Tasc together with DCAMS, conducted community consultations, distributed surveys, held one-on-one and group discussions in Goondiwindi, Gympie, Chinchilla, and Tara.

Social Justice and Advocacy Services

Another factor that was equally important was the use of relationships forged during Tasc's Rural Motherhood Initiative (RMI) and other prior outreach efforts. These established connections gave the project immediate traction in some of these communities. They also highlighted the frequent intersections between disability and domestic and family violence, further reinforcing the importance of a holistic community-informed approach. The cumulative effect of previous engagement and peer-led approach contributed the creation of a growing sense of trust between Tasc and local communities, making it possible to have deeper, more constructive conversations.

From these engagements, the learnings were clear:

- Face-to-face advocacy matters. In areas where digital communication is unreliable, personal connection is essential for building trust and understanding.
- Local solutions work best. Community hubs empower people to speak up and access the support they need.
- Better transport and clearer information are critical to overcoming isolation and service gaps.

This project demonstrates that lasting change begins with listening and collaboration. By centring lived experience, drawing on long-standing relationships, and partnering with organisations like DCA Mentoring Supports, Tasc is helping to create advocacy models that are sustainable and tailored to the realities of rural and remote Queensland.

National Redress Scheme Support

David Boden

The Redress Program plays a central role in supporting survivors of institutional child sexual abuse to seek acknowledgement, justice, and healing. Many survivors who come to us have lived with the weight of their experiences for decades. For them, engaging with the National Redress Scheme is often not just about financial compensation, but about being heard, believed, and respected. Our advocates walk alongside survivors through this journey, providing a safe, trauma-informed space where people feel supported and in control of their choices.

Throughout the past year, the program has worked closely with individuals to prepare and submit applications, explain the steps of the process, and ensure that survivors understand their rights and options. Importantly, our support does not end when paperwork is completed. We remain available to people as they wait for outcomes, navigate counselling and psychological care, or engage in direct personal responses from the institutions involved. For many survivors, having a trusted advocate present makes the process less isolating and gives them confidence to continue when it feels overwhelming. We have seen powerful outcomes as a result of this work.



Photo: Megan Inglis

At the same time, the program faces ongoing challenges. The lengthy waiting times for outcomes, and the emotional strain of revisiting trauma all impact survivors. Our advocates are deeply aware of the courage required for people to step forward and engage in this process. By working with compassion, patience, and cultural sensitivity, the team helps survivors to navigate these barriers in ways that uphold their safety and wellbeing.

Looking to the future, the Redress Program will continue to evolve in response to

the needs of survivors and the broader community while acknowledging that an end date for the Scheme is in sight. We will strengthen partnerships with counselling providers, community organisations, and specialist services to ensure holistic support. We will also continue to advocate for improvements to the Scheme itself, so that it becomes more responsive, accessible, and survivor-focused. Above all, we remain committed to walking beside survivors with dignity, respect, and the unwavering belief in their right to justice and healing.

Social Justice and Advocacy Case Study

Access to identity documentation

Jason* approached our advocate during an outreach visit to the hospital. A young Aboriginal man in his 20s, Jason had never had access to his own identification documents and wanted our help.

Jason presented with complex mental health issues, and the systemic neglect of his social supports including this issue of his identification documents had contributed to limiting his access to healthcare, study, employment, welfare assistance, and community participation generally.

Tasc's intervention

Tasc's advocate arranged for Jason to access limited community treatment leave, which enabled him to attend a Centrelink office to start the process. He was able to apply for a Low-Income Health Care Card, and with further assistance from our advocate and another support organisation, he then initiated a fast-tracked, subsidised Mob ID Connect process to gain access to his birth certificate.

The processes were not without barriers, and Jason's recent substance use had an impact on his ability to make progress with applications for other documents, but his commitment to his treatment plan and working with hospital social workers meant he was able to stay on track, and follow through to obtain all the documents he needed to successfully seek other support.

Unfortunately, Jason's case is not unique, in that a lack of proactive support by hospital staff, and a lack of urgency in attending to these issues is common for patients under involuntary orders. Systemic racism, socio-economic disadvantage, and other intersecting issues conflate to create risks for clients like Jason at the point of discharge, with no documented plan to account for this most basic need to have proof of identity, in order to be able to access appropriate community-based healthcare interventions, medication, and other social supports such as housing and welfare.

The outcome

Without our advocate's assistance, Jason would have continued to face social exclusion, and financial difficulties due to an inability to access welfare, healthcare, and other government support services. This has a flow-on effect on housing, employment, and social participation.

Jason's case highlights that assumptions around the existence of basic identity documentation, or the need for it, for someone in the mental healthcare system can be dangerous. Advocates play a vital role in disrupting systemic, and intersectional neglect, and in amplifying consumer voices.

Social Justice and Advocacy Case Study

Systems Navigation and Safeguarding

George* is single, in his early 60s, and is socially isolated, having been estranged from his family. He was referred to Tasc for assistance initially in relation to a mismanaged NDIS plan which was discovered after George had an extended stay in hospital and was discharged into an unsafe and unsupported environment. George's plan had no funding remaining for support hours to help him with his complex psychosocial and health needs. George's support workers were operating without oversight and engaging in inappropriate use of his funding. There was no provider monitoring, and no service documentation.

Tasc's intervention

Tasc's advocate worked across hospital, community, and NDIS systems, addressing safety, advocating for a plan review, and supporting the client to build trust and make informed and safe decisions. This resulted in a complete overhaul of George's supports, a substantial plan increase, reconnection with George's family, and other services to assist in his recovery.

Systemic neglect, including hospital discharges into an unsafe environment are not uncommon. The lack of monitoring, safeguards, and the barriers to being able to resolve these issues through the proper channels mean vulnerable people like George can experience unnecessary neglect and trauma.

The outcome

Complex cases like George's require persistent, sustained advocacy and cross-agency collaboration using trauma-informed practices. Oversight and safeguards in program management matter. Lack of documentation, poor coordination, and unchecked provider behaviour placed George at serious risk of harm.

Tasc's advocate ensured that George not only got the help he needed to get his plan on track, but that he understood his plan, his rights, and the need for professional boundaries to be in place. This type of advocacy can drive systemic change, not just help individuals like George. Removing non-compliant providers from the system helps all participants to access appropriate supports.

Legal Services



Megan Inglis
LEGAL PRACTICE
DIRECTOR/CEO

Legal Services overview

Tasc's General Legal Services operate in Ipswich, Toowoomba, Southern and South-West Queensland.

The services we offer include providing legal information, advice and in some cases representation to our clients. In many situations where we can't offer full representation, clients can often receive other ongoing assistance with drafting or editing documents such as affidavits, applications, and letters. For those matters

in which we don't have the capacity or expertise to assist, we refer clients to our network of other organisations and law firms better equipped to provide a specialist service. The objective is always to go beyond just the advice we provide to give clients the tools and strategies they need to carry themselves through their legal process. This often means clients walk away with the confidence to resolve matters on their own, knowing they can always return to us for more assistance when they need it.

We have physical offices in Toowoomba, Ipswich, Goondiwindi, and Roma, but we also continue to work collaboratively with many community and neighbourhood centres across our catchment for face-to-face appointments, to facilitate phone and online outreach, and to provide comprehensive Community Legal Education to develop the knowledge and capability of our stakeholder groups to better support their own communities.

Our legal services programs are funded for specific geographic areas within Tasc's wider catchment area.

Year in Review

This year saw a significant expansion of the areas of law in which we provide services. Beginning the year primarily focussed on family law and domestic violence, civil and some administrative law, and minor criminal matters, our solicitors met the growing needs of our community with great enthusiasm. We invested considerable time and resources in professional development, education, and upskilling of the team to ensure that we could advise and support as many clients as possible.

Solicitors responded to increasingly complex matters that involved multiple legal and non-legal issues including local laws, child protection, employment, human rights and discrimination, and broader advocacy, often in collaboration with our disability and mental health advocates and social workers, ensuring that the client's experience remained at the centre of our work.

The recruitment of a Roma-based solicitor has contributed to improved, place-based service delivery in our remote offices, and the teams in Toowoomba and Ipswich continue to service our Goondiwindi office regularly to ensure clients have access to vital in-person services.

Law Reform

As always, the Legal Services team rose to the challenge of a heavy year of systemic advocacy, again working closely and in collaboration with other teams at Tasc. We participated in many law reform opportunities, with staff attending round table discussions, making overarching recommendations on how our sector should respond to law reform at state and federal level, and providing submissions on specific issues.

One highlight of our advocacy in this space was the request for submissions on sentencing reforms in domestic and family violence, which was initiated by the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council. With a focus on systemic disadvantage, cultural considerations and other impacts on marginalised and disadvantaged groups, we called upon the government to investigate the evaluation of research into radicalising content, early intervention, geographical factors, and the political or gendered differences that contribute to overall social attitudes that tend towards the justification of the use of violence. We suggested that programs that go beyond the immediacy of financial redress should be considered particularly through the lens of regional, rural, and remote communities where the geography, isolation, and accessibility of support services contribute to systemic disadvantage. We also highlighted the space between initial interventions and escalations that lead to contravention and criminalisation as being the greatest opportunity for further study, evaluation, and intervention.

A small but dedicated team also responded to a call from the Federal Department of Social Services, providing submissions on the National Principles for the regulation of Assistance Animals. Our focus was predominantly on achieving national consistency, but we also gave consideration to the welfare of assistance animals both throughout their working life and into retirement, and the enormous opportunity presented to us by rapid advancements in assistive technologies in increasing accessibility options for people living with disabilities.

Legal Services



Photo: Megan Inglis

Rural Women's Outreach Legal Service

Catherine Andersen

Tasc's Rural Women's Outreach Legal Service (RWOLS) continues to be a trusted source of legal support across the Western Downs, with regular outreach to Miles, Chinchilla, and Tara. Domestic and family violence is still a primary concern, but the service has also seen a noticeable rise in civil law matters—such as tenancy, debt, and consumer disputes—across all three towns.

RWOLS has seen a shift in client demographics: while women with children experiencing domestic and family violence are still the target audience for this program, with many seeking help for divorce and financial settlement, a rise in enquiries relating to consumer disputes has seen us offering more in-person advice to men in these areas during our regular trips to the region, which we service under our generalist funding.

Clients have shared powerful insights into the barriers they face when seeking help. Many describe feeling isolated—both geographically and emotionally—with limited transport and digital access making it difficult to connect with services. RWOLS has responded by tailoring its outreach to meet each town's unique needs, building strong local partnerships, and offering culturally sensitive support. Clients say the regular presence of RWOLS makes a real difference, helping reduce stigma and empowering people to act to protect their legal interests. The service continues to evolve, ensuring that rural communities have a trusted legal ally close to home.

Duty Lawyer Service

Tracy Bowen

Duty lawyer services provided via partnership with Legal Aid Queensland at the Toowoomba and Ipswich Magistrates courts for Domestic and Family Violence matters are a vital community service. This year, we added Townsville to our roster, and this service is provided remotely. As part of our duty lawyer service our solicitors provide particularised advice to parties named as Respondents to both police and private applications.

As a regional, rural, and remote service, of particular interest to us are the ways in which geography impacts applications, outcomes, and breaches of protection orders. We often see Respondents from rural areas whose livelihood can be affected by the potential loss of a Weapons Licence, and the impact upon the capacity to apply for or retain a blue or yellow card on current or future employment stability. The flow on effects of the making of protection orders are not well known in the wider community, and raising awareness of these impacts remains a focus of ours in our community legal education efforts.

It has been said that duty lawyers are like first responders and are fundamental in triaging legal need. Our solicitors interact with clients without judgement to provide them with plain language explanations of likely outcomes and advice tailored to their circumstances. We offer referrals to our wider team where further advice in relation to their matter is required, and where they need assistance with related areas of law such as criminal or family law. We are often able to intervene and mitigate the risks to the escalations that can lead to matters proceeding to trial or criminalisation. We aim to promote awareness and educate our service users about what domestic violence looks like and arrange formal or informal options for interventions to help end the cycle of violence.

Community Legal Education

Amanda Worsley

Our team have been delivering education sessions to local high schools, focusing on awareness and prevention of domestic and family violence, coercive control, and promoting respectful relationships and consent. We believe that reliance on frontline services is too little, too late, as the damage is already done. The sessions we run are usually an hour long, are

aimed at senior students with a focus on identification and prevention. They are well received with students engaging and asking thoughtful questions. Some schools have asked us back for repeat sessions in the next year or two. While the students sometimes take a little while to warm up, young people tend to quickly engage with insightful questions and discussion, and they have all reported that they are better equipped to recognise domestic violence after the sessions. The year ahead has a busy calendar, with our team also being asked to return to TAFE colleges to talk to the classes on child, youth and family intervention, counselling, and social work about domestic violence, elder abuse, and informed consent.

Collaborative and Expanded Service Delivery

With the rising complexity of intersecting legal and social matters presenting to Tasc, our collaborative service delivery model continues to develop with much greater inter-team involvement. Often when clients first contact us, they are unaware of just how many issues across legal, accessibility, and social structures they may be experiencing. The first critical steps we take are to carefully triage the presenting problems for priority assistance. We assess each enquiry to determine the best course of action for our legal, social work, and advocacy teams to take.

Tasc has invested strongly in developing a model of intake and triage that is sensitive to each of the programs we deliver ensuring our legal team are well supported with the information they need to progress our client's matters. The greatest benefit of this system goes to our clients, in ensuring that we rise to meet their needs.

Legal Services

Mind My Legals Program

Kristilee Cullen – Solicitor

Program Overview

Mind My Legals is a specialised legal support program for individuals experiencing mental health challenges. Established via a Health Justice Partnership and based at the Toowoomba Hospital and surrounding services, we provide assistance in Family Law, Domestic and Family Violence, Child Protection, Civil and Consumer Law, and minor Criminal Law matters.

Services include legal advice, referrals, casework support, and representation, delivered on the wards, in-office, or via telephone to suit client needs. The program supports adults who are current inpatients at the Acute Mental Health Unit or Baillie Henderson Hospital, with continued assistance available post-discharge. Support also extends to other Toowoomba Hospital in-patients who have mental health concerns, and Headspace Toowoomba clients referred by staff.

Key Achievements

Throughout the reporting period, Mind My Legals achieved several meaningful outcomes for clients, including:

- **Recognition for Clients:** Successfully submitted Victims of Crime Assistance applications, resulting in recognition payments that acknowledged clients' experiences and supported their recovery.
- **Prevention Through Legal Advice:** Provided clear, accessible legal advice—particularly around court orders—to help clients better understand their legal obligations and improve compliance, reducing the risk of future legal issues.
- **Challenging Stigma:** Supported and empowered clients to assert their parenting rights, including developing parenting plans and accessing mediation, in situations where their mental health was unfairly used to question their fitness as parents.
- **Collaborative Outreach:** Strengthened connections with headspace Toowoomba through targeted networking and outreach. The program continued to evolve by learning alongside partners and customising our approach to meet client needs—creating a “one-stop shop” where therapeutic support and legal advice work hand in hand.

These outcomes highlight the program's commitment to individuals navigating both legal and mental health challenges.

Program Challenges

Key challenges that the program faced during the reporting period included re-establishing the program after a period of inactivity, which involved rebuilding referral pathways and raising awareness of the service. The initial lack of referrals highlighted the need for ongoing stakeholder engagement and education. Additionally, ensuring stakeholders were equipped to effectively identify and refer clients with legal issues remained an ongoing area for development.



Photo: Megan Inglis

Criminal Law & Integrated Advocacy Support

Anthony*, in his mid-50s from regional Queensland, was facing serious domestic violence-related criminal charges when he came to see us. He was experiencing multiple vulnerability factors that had contributed to this situation, including mental health issues, disability and chronic pain, extreme social isolation and estrangement from his family, housing instability, and financial pressures.

Following a workplace accident that ended his career, persistent and escalating pressures over many years led to him losing control in an interaction with his former partner, which led to him being charged. The prosecution was seeking a custodial sentence and recorded conviction, which would have severely impacted Anthony's health, access to services, and future prospects. Anthony had no money to pay a private lawyer to assist him. He was in crisis.

Tasc's intervention

Identifying quickly that Anthony's legal issues had intersections with disability advocacy and social security, Tasc's solicitor engaged one of our advocates via internal referral.

The complexity of Anthony's case presented an opportunity for collaborative intervention from our team. The solicitor was able to provide full representation in the criminal proceedings, which included obtaining clinical reports and other evidence to support submissions for a non-custodial sentence with no conviction recorded. Anthony's genuine remorse and willingness to engage in rehabilitation positioned him well to make this argument in proceedings.

Our advocate assisted Anthony to make a successful application for the Disability Support Pension, easing his financial concerns. They also supported him in making an application to the NDIS, including navigating the process and accessing appropriate support services. Helping him to maintain his engagement with health and other supports through this challenging time, our advocate was able to demonstrate that Anthony could stabilise, and this gave weight to his legal case.

The outcome

No conviction was recorded, preserving Anthony's eligibility for services and improving his prospects for long-term rehabilitation and community reintegration. He received a sentence of supervised probation, which enabled him continuity of access to therapy and rehabilitation.

Anthony's story is a common one seen in community legal. His complex vulnerabilities required a holistic, wrap-around response, tailored to his specific needs. These integrated services of disability advocacy and legal intervention are not readily available outside the legal assistance sector, and it highlights the importance of constructing and funding collaborative working models to resolve complex issues. Without Tasc, Anthony would very likely have ended up in custody, which could have affected his eligibility for the DSP and NDIS. Instead, he has the necessary financial and health supports he needs, a reduction in the stressors that contributed to his crisis, and hope for the future.

Legal Services Case Study

Family Law

Thomas* had been separated from his former partner while living under the same roof, co-parenting their pre-school aged daughter with significant and life-limiting medical needs. Following her recent re-partnering, the child's mother announced her intention to move the child to a new residence, which would have significantly reduced Thomas' time with his daughter.

The child has a complex medical condition requiring intensive and continuous care. Thomas was deeply concerned about the change in care arrangements and the potential disruption to their daughter's health management and overall emotional wellbeing. The proposed relocation put at-risk Thomas' ability to remain an active carer and jeopardised the child's stability and continuity of care with known and trusted medical professionals.

Thomas had made the suggestion that the mother could relocate, but that the child should stay with Thomas, so he could continue the medical care arrangement, and the mother would be welcome to come and go as needed to help with the care of their daughter.

Tasc intervention

A court-approved exception allowed the matter to be filed without mediation due to urgency. With the first return date scheduled for more than a month later, further legal intervention was necessary to hasten the process. An application for parenting and restraint orders were drafted and filed, and we represented Thomas at mediation to ensure efforts to resolve the issues were meaningful and child-focused.

The outcome

We were able to ensure through consent orders that Thomas continued to have significant and meaningful care of his daughter both during the week and on weekends, with all the necessary medical aids and equipment, including a modified vehicle and mobility devices, travelling with the child so that her care remained consistent and stable.

The need for a sustainable and child-focused outcome was only achievable through quick and responsive advice and representation, given the time-pressures of this matter. We took a uniquely sensitive approach, with staff capable of acting urgently and demonstrating expertise in the areas of disability and complex care arrangements. Tasc's no-cost, trauma-informed service allowed Thomas to pursue orders quickly while receiving appropriate levels of legal support during mediation.

Where a child has a life-limiting health condition such as this, the desire of a parent to remain as involved as possible and keep continuity and consistency of care for his daughter's short and precious life was understandable, and of paramount importance for Thomas.

The case illustrates how community legal centres can play a critical role in matters involving disability, parental separation, and urgent parenting issues. The mediation outcome avoided further litigation and provided a stable, cooperative solution focused on the child's needs.

Tenancy Advocacy QSTARS Program



Melisa Cross

TENANCY ADVOCATE

While the housing crisis continues to affect Queensland renters, the role of QSTARS is not to source housing but to advocate for tenants experiencing tenancy issues. The ongoing rental shortage has intensified power imbalances between tenants and agents, making it increasingly difficult for tenants to assert their rights and be treated fairly.

Agents often adopt a 'take it or leave it' approach, knowing properties will be quickly re-let regardless of condition. This environment has led to tenants being taken advantage of, particularly during vacate processes, with excessive charges for cleaning or damage and limited opportunity for negotiation. Many tenants are unaware of their rights, and the pressure to secure or retain housing often prevents them from challenging unfair treatment.

As a result, QSTARS continues to experience high demand, supporting tenants through advocacy, education, and representation to ensure fairer outcomes in an increasingly competitive and inequitable rental market.

Ongoing Challenges

Housing Crisis: Persistent shortage of affordable housing options remains.

Single Income and Vulnerable Tenants: Continued struggle to meet rental affordability standards with many single individuals entering share accommodation or rooming residence.

Declining Property Maintenance: Especially in lower cost housing, standards remain poor with many tenants in fear of eviction for requesting repairs.

Power Imbalances: Tenants, particularly vulnerable groups, continue to face inequities in dealings with landlords and agents, particularly with bond disputes at the end of the tenancy.

Emerging Trends (2024/2025)

Older Single Women at Risk: Increasing number of single women over 50 unable to secure rental accommodation due to affordability and lack of employment opportunities.

Larger Families Facing Discrimination: Growing trend of larger families being declined for rental properties, often without explanation, as they compete with smaller household demographics.

Legislative Improvements: New legislation introduced on 1 May 2025 has improved transparency and security in rental application processes, including clearer documentation requirements, enhanced protection of tenant personal information by real estate agents.

Mould and Habitability Issues: Recent weather events have led to a rise in mould-affected properties, some of which have become non-liveable, raising serious health and safety concerns and further reducing housing supply.

The QSTARS program has successfully assisted many tenants in achieving fairer and more equitable outcomes in disputes with agents, particularly during bond claims and QCAT hearings for monies owed. These outcomes reflect the program's effectiveness in advocating for tenant rights and navigating complex tenancy issues.

The QSTARS program continues to adapt to the evolving housing landscape, advocating for tenant rights and supporting those most affected by systemic challenges. The trends observed this year highlight the need for ongoing legislative reform, targeted support for vulnerable demographics, and improved housing standards across Queensland.



Photo: Bonny Wallace

Tenancy Advocacy Case Study

Navigating a Bond Dispute with Advocacy and Fairness

In early 2025, Susan* reached out to QSTARS after encountering a bond dispute upon vacating their rental property. Having purchased her own home, Susan issued a Notice of Intention to Leave well ahead of the lease's scheduled end and vacated the property believing she had fulfilled their obligations, including a thorough exit clean.

However, tensions quickly escalated with the real estate agent, who disputed the condition of the property and lodged a claim with the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT). The claim included break lease costs, water charges, cleaning fees, garden maintenance, and a long list of repairs.

Feeling overwhelmed, Susan turned to QSTARS for support. Susan had extensive documentation including correspondence with both the outgoing and incoming property managers, evidence of having paid water bills despite reporting leaks, and was able to show that the property had been vacant for some time prior to being leased, which showed the agent wasn't mindful about mitigating financial loss on behalf of the owner.

Tasc's intervention

A Tasc tenancy advocate stepped in to assist. After reviewing the QCAT application, the advocate identified several grounds for dispute including fair wear and tear, and inconsistencies in the entry condition report. With these points in mind, our advocate helped Susan prepare a comprehensive submission to QCAT and argued for a significant reduction in liability.

Throughout the process, QSTARS provided practical and emotional support. The advocate helped Susan build a clear timeline, understand her rights under the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008, and navigate the Tribunal process with confidence. Together, they reviewed every invoice and report, ensuring Susan was well prepared to present her case.

The outcome

While awarding the bond to the agent, plus a few minor items, the Tribunal dismissed the bulk of the agent's claims, resulting in a significantly reduced liability for Susan.

Susan was happy with result and grateful for a fair outcome.

This case highlights the vital role QSTARS plays in empowering tenants to assert their rights and achieve just outcomes even in complex and contested situations.



Photo: Karena Griffin

Seniors Legal and Support Services (SLASS)



Jane Crosby
**SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE
MANAGER**

SLASS core mission

Seniors Legal and Social Services (SLASS), within Tasc are dedicated to upholding the rights, dignity, and wellbeing of older Australians. At the heart of this mission lies a commitment to ensuring that seniors—one of the most vulnerable groups in society—are empowered, informed, and treated with respect. These services aim to provide free accessible, high-quality legal support and holistic social assistance, helping older persons navigate the often-complex landscape of legal issues, age-related challenges, and social disadvantages.

Ongoing program development

Despite the challenges faced in program development, our commitment to serving seniors remains unwavering. Feedback from community engagement has underscored the importance of targeted outreach and practical resources, particularly as the vulnerabilities facing older Australians evolve.

This has prompted us to revisit our strategies, prioritising collaboration within the organisation to tailor our approach within the SLASS program.

Community Engagement and Awareness

Over the past year, our team has actively participated in seniors' expos, community events like NAIDOC, and presented to West Moreton Health, Men's Shed and several older persons network groups, as well as providing submissions to the state government's current Elder Abuse Inquiry, with the report on this due to be tabled later in 2025.

Last quarter, a Toowoomba-based Social Worker and Solicitor attended 22 Aged Care Facilities in Toowoomba distributing information packs and having discussions with Facility Managers to raise awareness about our service. We found that more than half were unaware of our existence and were very receptive to more information on the ways in which we can assist their residents.

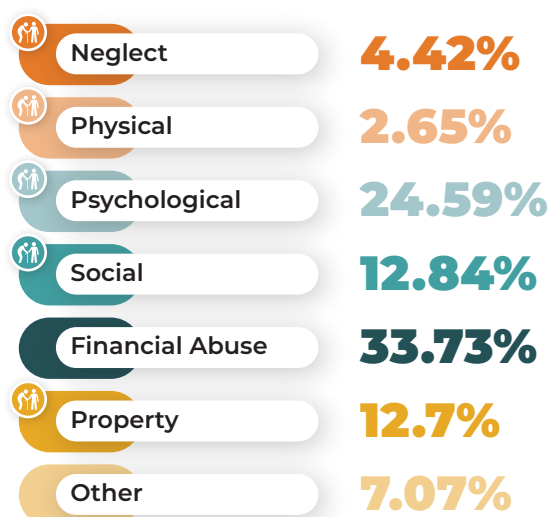
Key Issues Impacting Older Persons/Current trends

Financial Abuse by Adult Children

Financial abuse remains a significant concern, particularly in situations where adult children refuse to leave their parent's home or assume early control as Enduring Power of Attorney (EPOA). These offenders often exploit their position, resulting in considerable financial disadvantage for the older person.

Contributing Factors

Mental health challenges, along with alcohol and drug misuse, frequently contribute to these cases of financial abuse. Such factors can disrupt the stability and peace within an older person's home, compounding the negative impact.



Property and Shared Living Arrangements

Property matters also emerge as noteworthy issues, especially when there are concerns about ownership in shared living arrangements. These disputes can create additional stress and uncertainty for older individuals.

Isolation and Loneliness Among Seniors

Isolation and loneliness are widespread issues in many senior homes. These feelings can sometimes lead residents to tolerate mistreatment or remain in unsafe situations simply to avoid being alone. The desire to combat loneliness may also drive some individuals to seek out unhealthy or risky relationships as a means of filling the emotional void.

Cost-of-Living Pressures

Rising living costs are an ongoing worry for many older people. Individuals are often faced with increased council rates and may need to find alternative ways to manage financially, such as collecting ten-cent cans for recycling or restricting their own essential spending just to afford food and basic bills.

Seniors' financial protection services

Recognising the growing threat of financial abuse and scams targeting older Australians, SLASS has prioritised the delivery of senior's financial protection services. These initiatives are designed to safeguard seniors from exploitation, whether perpetrated by strangers, acquaintances, or even those closest to them. Our team offers confidential legal advice and education on issues such as undue influence, power of attorney misuse, and deceptive investment schemes. By working collaboratively with financial institutions, law enforcement, and community partners, we strive to provide early intervention and practical support for those who may be at risk.

Seniors Legal and Support Services Case Study

Elder abuse

Ellen* lives in an aged care facility. Highly dependent on others for her day-to-day care, Ellen also has significant hearing loss. When she contacted Tasc, her freedom, safety, and financial security were under threat. She was unable to access her own finances or identification documents and had effectively lost control over her personal and legal affairs. These restrictions left her unable to seek private legal advice, apply for a pension, or make decisions about her own welfare.

Staff at her aged care facility referred Ellen to Tasc for advice about an Enduring Power of Attorney (EPOA) which had appointed a family member as her Attorney. The EPOA was being used to assume total control over Ellen's finances and movements, claiming she had lost capacity. However, staff at the aged care facility did not believe this to be the case, and Ellen herself reported being lucid, although very stressed.

She was unable to access funds for personal needs or self-care and was also effectively unable to leave the aged care facility without the Attorney's permission. Over time, she had become isolated from personal and professional relationships and was unsure of her financial position, as she had not had access to her bank accounts in several years.

Tasc intervention

Given her hearing issues, a face-to-face appointment was arranged. The solicitor assessed Ellen's capacity over several meetings and became satisfied that the client had the legal capacity to make her own decisions.

With her consent, we liaised with her bank to regain access to her accounts. This was a vital step for Ellen, who wanted to confirm her suspicions before deciding whether to seek to revoke the EPOA. Upon discovering there were no remaining funds in her account, she chose to revoke the EPOA.

We issued formal notification of the revocation to the Attorney, who responded with verbal abuse. We advised the client of her right to seek a Protection Order, should she wish to pursue it in the future. At that time, she was undecided but appreciated having the option available to her.

Community legal centres are uniquely positioned to help in cases like this due to our ability to provide completely free legal assistance to a client who could not access her own money. We can invest the necessary time to build trust and rapport and properly assess capacity, and do the non-legal advocacy, which can be time consuming. The issue of family abuse is a confronting and sensitive one for many older people, as is facing the personal limitations and losses of power that can come with aging.

The Outcome

The client successfully regained control over her personal and financial affairs. With our assistance, she was able to apply for and receive the aged pension, begin purchasing personal care items and services (e.g. haircuts, skincare, snacks), participate in outings and social activities through her aged care facility, and re-establish a sense of independence and well-being

The client stated that after the EPOA was revoked, she had the best night's sleep in years. She also began discussing EPOA rights with other residents, helping to spread awareness.

The intervention upheld the client's legal right to make decisions about her own life. It prevented further financial and emotional abuse and restored her autonomy. It also empowered the client with knowledge and choices throughout the process.

Without Tasc's support, the client would likely have continued living under the inappropriate control of her Attorney. She would have remained without access to her finances, unable to apply for the pension or afford basic self-care. Her psychological distress and isolation could have worsened, and the suspected misuse of funds may never have come to light.



Photo: Daniel Hudson

Board of Directors



Lesley Beames

Lesley joined the Tasc Board as a Director in 2007 and was elected Chairperson in 2019.

After many years of experience managing teams in higher education, health, and corrections, Lesley is now retired from paid employment.

In addition to contributing to the vital work of Tasc, she is writing history and studying philosophy and theology.



Craig Armstrong

Craig is the Senior Manager Group Learning at Bank South Pacific. With over 30 years' experience in the finance industry, Craig brings extensive business and leadership experience to the Tasc Board. He has strong community appreciation and connections from across Queensland. Craig has qualifications from the Australian Institute of Company Directors – Company Director Course, UNSW Australian Graduate School of Management – Executive Management.



Ann-Marie Johnston

Ann-Marie joined the Tasc Board in 2023. Ann-Marie is currently the CFO and General Manager Corporate Services at Toowoomba Regional Council and was proud to be the first female member of the Executive Leadership Team. She joined Toowoomba Regional Council in 2011 following an extensive career in financial management in diverse industries including manufacturing, insurance, transport, education, engineering, agri-business and arts management. Ann-Marie has a Bachelor of Commerce from James Cook University, is a Fellow of CPA Australia and Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Ann-Marie has extensive governance experience and is passionate about diversity and inclusion.



Dr Rhett Martin

Dr Rhett Martin joined the Tasc board in 2022, bringing with him wide experience gained from private legal practice and academia. Rhett graduated from Melbourne University with degrees in Commerce and Law and also holds an LLM and a PhD in Sustainability Regulation. Rhett is an Associate Professor in Law at the University of Southern Queensland (UniSQ), where he has worked since 2014.

His research interests include environmental and sustainability regulation which looks at the intersection of law with sustainability, and he has authored 'Understanding Sustainability Law' (2017, LexisNexis) along with a series of academic papers on ecologically sustainable forest management, regulation of ecologically sustainable development and environmental protection regulation. Before relocating to Toowoomba, he worked at RMIT and Monash University. Rhett practiced as a solicitor in medium and large firms prior to entering academia.

Rhett lives and works in Toowoomba and has two daughters and a stepson. In his spare time, infrequent as it may be, he loves to explore Queensland with his family.



Dr Sharon Boyce

Dr Sharon Boyce comes to us with expert knowledge, skills, and lived experience. As well as a disability advocate, Dr Boyce is a lecturer at the University of Southern Queensland (UniSQ), Chair of Queensland Disability Advisory Council and continues to work with many organisations across Queensland to raise awareness of living with disability.



Jan Ezidkhalo

Jan joined Tasc Board of Directors in 2023.

With a background of linguistics, research journalism, human rights activity and advocate for the Cultural Diversity and human rights with local and international organisations and agencies including UN and UN women.

Jan has worked as a cultural advisor, diversity advocate speaker/presenter, Journalist and linguist for over 20 years. In addition to his Tasc role, Jan is the manager of Cosmos Community Care and a member of CALD advisory team at Australian War Memorial.



Lelia Fallon

Lelia Fallon is a Legal Practitioner with over 30 years of experience in commercial, banking and finance, local government, and property law. Her expertise has been developed through her work with top-tier law firms, leading banking and finance institutions, all levels of government, and prominent industry bodies.

Lelia's connection to the Toowoomba region is longstanding. She spent part of her schooling in Toowoomba, continues to operate her own legal practice in the area, and maintains strong ties to the region through generations of extended family who have lived and worked locally.

She was admitted to practise as a Barrister and Solicitor of the Supreme Court of Victoria in 2004 and is also registered as a Practitioner of the High Court of Australia. Lelia holds a Bachelor of Arts (Economics & History) from NTU, a Bachelor of Laws from QUT, and two Master of Laws (Applied Law) degrees from the College of Law, specialising in Commercial Litigation and Family Dispute Resolution Practice.



Jessica Goldie

Jessica Goldie is a barrister at the private bar in Toowoomba and an Adjunct Professor with the University of Southern Queensland, School of Law and Justice. Jess was born and raised in Toowoomba and has worked all throughout regional Queensland. She practices primarily in criminal law, having appeared in serious and complex criminal jury trials in regional Queensland and Brisbane.

Jess was previously employed with the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions from 2009 to 2018. In 2011, Jess was commissioned as a permanent Crown Prosecutor and then Senior Crown Prosecutor in 2016, being head of the Toowoomba Chambers at that time.

Risk and Governance

In the 2024-25 financial year, Tasc continued to strengthen its risk management processes to ensure the organisation's resilience in the face of both existing and emerging challenges and opportunities.

Organisational risk register

The risk register has been updated, and a new system was implemented to provide a more effective way of managing the administration of the risk register. The register is reviewed regularly by the Audit and Risk Committee. This has improved the organisations capacity to manage and mitigate risks, which is essential for maintaining operational stability and, ultimately, our ability to continue serving our clients effectively. By proactively managing risks, we safeguard our organisation's sustainability and ensure that we are well-positioned to navigate the complexities of our operating environment.

Governance

The Audit and Risk Committee continued to meet quarterly, monitoring and providing recommendations on key areas including audits, financial reports, identification and management of emerging risks.

The Board had a busy but exciting year culminating in the development of the 2025-28 Strategic Plan which sets the strategic direction for Tasc in the coming years, ensuring we can respond to evolving community needs.



Photo: Allana Janke

Governance framework

Several key governance documents were updated this year, ensuring that Tasc's policies reflect contemporary standards. These updates include:

- Delegations of Authority
- Board role and Responsibilities
- Financial Management
- Controlled Documents Development and Approval

While substantial progress has been made, work is ongoing to ensure all aspects of the governance framework are comprehensive and up to date.

Treasurer's Report

I am pleased to present the Treasurer's Report for Tasc National for the financial year ending 30 June 2025. This year has been one of stability with sustained growth, underpinned by strong financial management.

Tasc recorded total income of \$7.5 million against expenditure of \$7 million, resulting in an operating surplus of just over \$500,000. This outcome builds on the previous year's positive result and demonstrates the organisation's prudent approach to managing resources while continuing to deliver essential services to the communities we support.

The ongoing support of our funding partners has been critical, particularly in allowing the carry-forward of funds. This flexibility has enabled Tasc to maintain service continuity, allocate resources to priority areas, and respond effectively to workforce challenges and the needs of our community. The surplus achieved this year reflects the diligence of the Board and the Audit and Risk Committee in upholding strong financial governance and accountability.

Strategic investments have been made to strengthen human capital, recognising that our people continue to be central to the success of Tasc. These efforts align with our long-term objective of building a sustainable and capable workforce to meet the evolving needs of our communities.



Photo: Hollie McDonald

With a strong asset position and diversified funding, Tasc remains financially resilient and well-placed to pursue future opportunities. Looking forward, we will continue to strengthen our funding base, apply prudent management practices, and invest strategically in areas that will maximise community impact.

In closing, I extend my appreciation to our funding partners, our CEO and in particular our CFO, and our dedicated staff for their continued support and commitment. Together, we have ensured that Tasc remains in a sound financial position, ready to serve our communities with stability and confidence into the year ahead.

– Ann-Marie Johnston

Financial Report Summary

Financial Report



Donations	0%
Government Grants	95.5%
Non-Recurring Grants	1.4%
Other Income	3.1%



Marketing expenses	0.2%
Occupancy expenses	2.6%
Client support services	86.3%
Depreciation	2.4%
Other expenses	8.3%
Borrowing costs expense	0.2%

Income Statement

For the year ended 30 June 2025

	2025	2024
INCOME STATEMENT		
Grants	7,215,577	5,808,974
Donations	624	17,514
Non-Recurring Grants	109,000	-
Other Income	236,661	179,507
Revenue	7,561,862	6,005,995
EXPENSES		
Marketing expenses	13,244	34,690
Occupancy expenses	183,832	145,470
Client Support Services	6,068,257	5,108,536
Depreciation	170,356	177,876
Other expenses	582,530	477,916
Borrowing costs expense	15,315	8,831
Expenses	7,033,533	5,953,318
Surplus	528,329	52,677

Balance Sheet

As at 30 June 2025

ASSETS		
Current assets	3,018,049	1,825,475
Non-current assets	290,893	317,924
Total assets	3,308,942	2,143,399
LIABILITIES		
Current liabilities	1,475,729	892,402
Non-current liabilities	143,593	89,706
Total liabilities	1,619,322	982,108
EQUITY		
Retained surplus	1,689,619	1,161,291
Total equity	1,689,619	1,161,291

Our Funders

Tasc National thanks the following bodies for funding our services:



Department of Child Safety,
Seniors and Disability Services



Queensland
Health



Department of
Social Services



Tenants
Queensland



QLD Department of Justice and Attorney General
Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department



Memberships and Accreditation

Tasc is certified by the National Association of Community Legal Centres (NACLC) for legal services and the National Standards for Disability Services (NSDS) for advocacy services.

Professional Memberships

Australian Institute of
Company Directors

Australian Institute of
Company Directors

Community
Legal Centres
Queensland

Community Legal Centres
Queensland (CLCQ)

Council on the Ageing
Queensland

COTA
Queensland

N E D A

National Ethnic Disability
Alliance (NEDA)

ourcommunity.com.au
Where not-for-profits go for help

Ourcommunity.com.au

qcooss

Queensland Council of Social
Services (QCOSS)

Queensland
Law Society

Queensland
Law Society

DANA Disability Advocacy
Network Australia

Disability Advocacy Network
Australia (DANA)

Community Legal Centres
Australia

National Association of Community
Legal Centres (NACLC)

Australian Government
Department of Health, Disability and Ageing

National Standards for
Disability Services (NSDS)

AASW
Australian Association
of Social Workers

Australian Association of
Social Workers (AASW)

