



CREATING SOLUTIONS TOGETHER

ANNUAL REPORT 2015
THE ADVOCACY & SUPPORT CENTRE INC



our mission

To uphold principles of

**SOCIAL JUSTICE AND
SOCIAL ACTIVISM**



in the delivery of all services.

To provide a range of collaborative

**SOCIAL, LEGAL AND
EDUCATIONAL SERVICES**



to help people and communities
in Queensland.

To identify and address

CLIENT NEEDS



in a responsive, proactive and
preventative manner.

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president's comments

Pain is often silent. It lies in the belly, oblivious to most, except to the person who carries it and those around them that know about it.

The writer, Laurel K Hamilton once said, "there are wounds that never show on the body that are deeper and more hurtful than anything that bleeds."

In the context of life's biggest challenges that cause the most pain, legal and advocacy problems are up there with the most notable.

It's not only the gnawing of the problem itself, but often it's the helplessness that one feels in trying to resolve it themselves and then of course, the realisation that it's beyond them and it requires more minds than just their own. It's soon followed by the shame, embarrassment and awkwardness of telling the story to a stranger.

I spend some of my days in an office adjacent to the reception at TASC and I sometimes see the procession of people come and go, austere, worried, reminiscent of the darkest painting you would ever find by Charles Blackman or even Robert Dickerson.

The face of the Mum who is scared for her life and that of her children if her ex partner breaks the DV order.

The man in his late seventies who knows things aren't what they seem when his daughter keeps withdrawing large sums of money from his account, supposedly to pay his bills.

The young man who suffers from an acute mental illness who while unwell steals things from a shopping centre and is fear-ridden thinking that he is going to jail.

I know enough about the law and bureaucracy that by and large it's driven by process. In fact, increasingly legal services are becoming commodotised with technology that steps professionals through every imaginable sequence of a legal problem, down to drafting all the requisite documents, correspondence and even, legal advice.

But of course not everything can be manufactured into process work-flows. At the very eclipse of where things spiral out of control in a person's life, compassion and understanding trumps everything else and is most remembered.

The great characteristic of this organisation is not only its capacity through its diverse teams and their collective

knowledge to help resolve complex, multi-dimensional problems, but a deep-seated commitment to the person themselves.

It's what motivates and keeps people working at TASC, irrespective of whether you're a lawyer, receptionist or a member on the management committee.

Thank you to all who have journeyed with TASC over the last 12 months. Your contribution is valued and appreciated. In particular, thank you to those whose time has come to turn another page in their own lives, we and the many people you have helped, are blessed by your contribution.

Thank you to CEO, Philippa Whitman for her leadership and all the work that is done at that level, which by its nature, is often oblivious to most and rarely acknowledged.

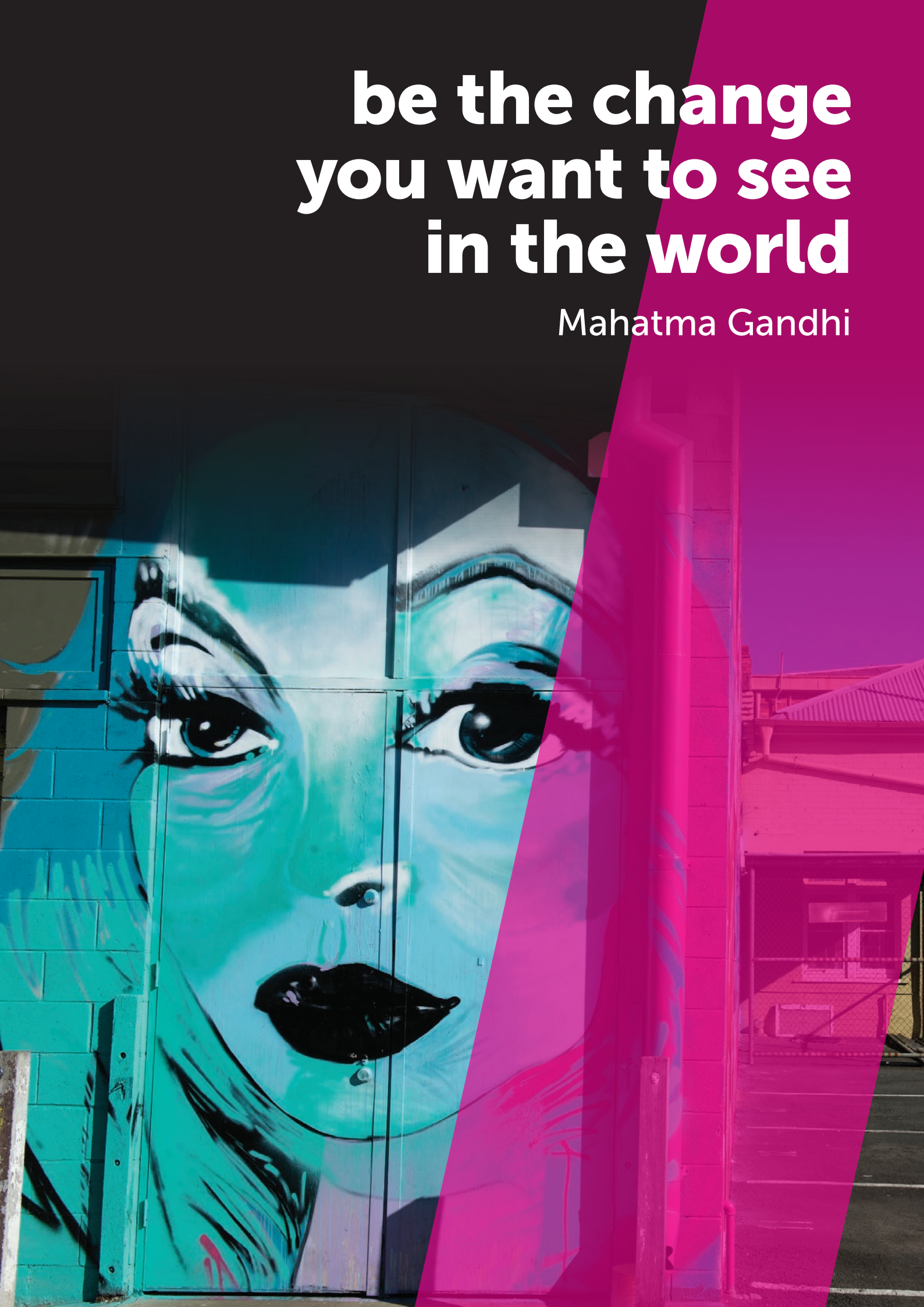
Last, but by no means least, the TASC Management Committee, thank you for your on-going commitment to this organisation and of course, our funding partners, thank you for helping us create solutions together to make this little patch of the World, a better place.

Dan Toombs
President



**be the change
you want to see
in the world**

Mahatma Gandhi





**be kind,
for everyone
is fighting
their own battle**

ceo comments

TASC has been fortunate to be able to continue to deliver our Legal, Advocacy and Social Services during the past year in addition to new initiatives introduced to provide better services to our clients, and to improve their access to justice.

We have significantly extended our generalist legal services in the Toowoomba Community Legal Service and the Ipswich Community Legal Service. We have worked with our Toowoomba, Ipswich and Warwick Offices to increase direct client services and to streamline administrative services. We have also evaluated and addressed our internal governance and organisational practices and have undertaken a substantial review and upgrade of our communication strategies, social media and infrastructure.

Australia's growing justice gap for people facing disadvantage – for the vulnerable and marginalised members of our community who are our clients – threatens us all. People who are not able to seek legal assistance or whose access to justice services is limited face even further disadvantage as current financial resourcing and constraint worsens. Social Justice for all remains TASC's Mission. We acknowledge the significant investment by the Commonwealth and the State in the continuation of TASCs Program Delivery and we look to the future of a justice system more accessible to all.

TASC made a significant contribution to community education in the past year, with staff from our Legal, Advocacy and Social Services teams providing numerous community based presentations in Toowoomba, Ipswich and South West Queensland on our services and issues of regional significance. We have done this with regional partners on topics such as Mental Health Challenges in regional and rural communities; Talking to Police and Legal Rights/Responsibilities; Human Rights Law; and Anti-Discrimination Law. Through our collaborative legal education partnership with Legal Aid Queensland, we have, for another year, also visited a number of South West Queensland regional schools and delivered education sessions on the legal implications of Social Media - Cyber bullying, Sexting and Facebook Violations.

TASC is fortunate to have had the assistance of many dedicated local Lawyers and volunteers to assist us in the past year. I would like to thank them for their generosity and commitment.

I would like to provide a special thanks to the dedicated, motivated and good humoured staff of TASC who have shown such commitment in the past year. The outcomes that have been achieved for our clients – with the assistance of our clients - and the feedback that we have received, create equity and truth every day in this organisation.

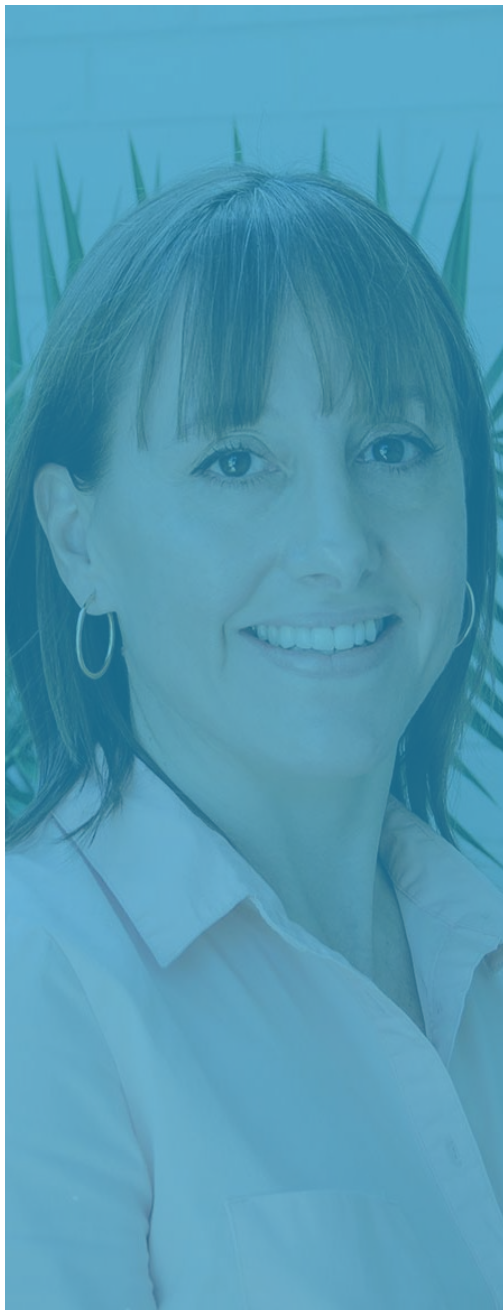
The Management Team of Coordinators – Meg O'Neill, Terri-Ann Dwyer, Sib Redfern and Jess Bichel – are a constant source of pride and inspiration. My thanks also to the Management Committee led by Dan Toombs, President and Kurt Alexander, Vice President – their experience, daring and supportive presence makes my role as CEO a privilege.

Working together: TASC Staff, Management Committee, Volunteers and Clients - all engaging to find positive solutions for those of our community in need – is a significant achievement for us all. I am honoured to be part of this engagement and I am proud of the work that we have all done together in the past year.

Philippa Whitman
CEO







**social
justice
for all**

legal services report

At TASC, the level of demand for legal services has continued to grow over the last 12 months as our Legal Team assisted a total of 1,458 clients across a range of programs, including the Toowoomba and Ipswich Community Legal Services (TCLS and ICLS), the Rural Womens' Outreach Legal Service (RWOLS), the Disability Law Project (DLP), the Family Relationships Centre (FRC) and the Seniors' Legal and Support Service (SLASS). These programs operate via our Toowoomba and Ipswich offices, as we service both these regions and the regional, rural and remote communities across South West Queensland.

TASC has remained committed to seeking alternative ways to improve our equity and access to justice for our Toowoomba, Ipswich, regional, rural and remote communities in a range of ways throughout the year, including by:

- Reviewing our Eligibility Criteria for all programs to improve access for clients;
- Reviewing and enhancing the collation of our referral pathways for clients;
- Implementing Forms Clinics in Ipswich and Toowoomba to assist people who may have literacy or related disability issues or who simply require assistance to navigate their way through government and other associated forms;
- Implementing a pathway for TCLS clients to access our Social Services Officer for social supports where required in addition to the legal support they identified;
- Implementing a free Telephone Hotline service to offer legal advice to South West Queensland residents in family, civil and generalist law;
- Reviewing our RWOLS to respond to greater need identified in some South West communities through an extended presence and to increase access to our services via greater use of technology for residents;

- Partnering in Darling Downs South West Queensland Mental Health First Aid workshops roll out, focusing on legal services for people with mental health issues;
- Reinstating fortnightly Wednesday night clinics in Ipswich to provide family, civil and generalist legal advice to meet the growing demands of the Ipswich community;
- Implementing a service assisting unrepresented litigants during the Federal Circuit Court sittings at Ipswich from May 2015;
- Commencing delivery of fortnightly University of Southern Queensland (USQ) Student Consultation Clinics at the request of USQ to provide triage and either referral to TASC funded programs or to other appropriate service providers or agencies;
- Enhancement and delivery of our Clinical Legal Education Program delivered in conjunction with USQ;
- Upgrading our websites (TASC and Queensland Criminal Justice Centre) by enhancing our content with the addition of webinars, podcasts, fact sheets and other information for greater access to meet the needs of people across our region and beyond.

Through review of our Eligibility Criteria for all programs to improve access for identified clients and our collation of referral pathways for clients, we have strengthened our ability to guide people to the right services due to our extensive connections with our community. TASC is considered a hub of information for people to access and obtain a referral to the right place where TASC may not otherwise be funded to provide the assistance requested.

Some disadvantaged and vulnerable people still have difficulty identifying when their problem has a legal dimension and are not able to access the system without additional assistance. We are already using methods to effectively reach these clients – e.g. our collaborative practices, internal referrals and extensive

referral pathways, a greater use of holistic services, outreach, training of non-legal staff to identify legal problems – all help identify those who need additional assistance and help them to navigate the legal system.

While much focus is on delivering the services engaged via our funding and programs, much is also done to support those front line services - community legal education, legal information and minor advice assist to ensure that parties are better equipped and informed. Better coordination and greater quality control in the development and delivery of these services have improved their value and reach. In the past year, our Legal Team reviewed our Community Legal Education power point presentations and completed over 66 sessions and 30 community legal education opportunities on matters including:

- Mental Health First Aid & Partners in Recovery workshops;
- Social Media/Cyberbullying presentations – Rights and Responsibilities; You and the Police; Cyberbullying/Sexting and Facebook Violations;
- FRC Information Sessions – Parenting matters;
- First Year Constable Training;
- Homeless Persons' Legal Clinic through Queensland Public Interest Law Clearing House (QPILCH);
- USQ Student Consultation Clinics;
- Toowoomba Family Law Collaborative Pilot Project;
- Toowoomba Family Law Pathways Network meetings.

Targeting these forums across our region has assisted to build on individual and community capacity to access information about TASC's services and how to navigate the various legal and non-legal systems available.

Our key role in writing the recently published Cyberbullying booklet in conjunction with Legal Aid Queensland (LAQ) has ensured that the key messages about the impacts of social media and cyberbullying continue to be shared across the State, beyond the immediate sessions presented by TASC and LAQ staff.

The upgrading of our websites (TASC and Queensland Criminal Justice Centre) and increased content via the addition of webinars, podcasts, fact sheets and information for greater access to the community has also been an effective way to ensure that we have improved our reach and continue to provide valuable education and informative resources to our community.

Meeting the needs of our community has also been achieved through the offer of access to the

Collaborative Law process for families separating and finding a healthier, less costly way to separate, co-parent and finalise smaller property pools via the Toowoomba Family Law Collaborative Pilot Project.

Our attendance at the 3rd National Rural Law and Justice Conference, Charles Sturt University Reframing Rural: Driving Innovation in Rural Justice has also assisted us in addressing access to services in regional, rural and remote locations and we will continue to build on this in the coming year to further improve our reach across all of our communities.

**"Look at a day when
you are supremely
satisfied at the end.
It's not a day when you
loungue around doing
nothing; it's when you
had everything to do,
and you've done it."**

Much credit for the above achievements over the last 12 months is due to a team of committed and creative lawyers, willing to assist the more vulnerable in our community to obtain positive solutions to their legal and, at times, social issues through their ability to collaborate.

My personal thanks go to Kirsten, Kim, Lindsay, Nick, Joe, Allana, Martha, Hayley and our Practical Legal Trainee Brenton who have all worked tirelessly in their commitment to their clients and TASC's values.

Meg O'Neill
Legal Services Coordinator



what they said

"Thank you for the wonderful service, I am grateful for your help a positive outcome has been achieved."

"I can't thank you enough for your help and expertise, but more importantly, your kindness, genuine sincerity and the gift that you have been given to be able to help others, including me and my children."

"Was scared of this whole process but your workers have been fantastic and made it quite stress free. A less daunting experience. Thank you."

"Very professional and communication between the parties was outstanding. Thank you!!"

"The positive outcome achieved by both parties was in no small part due to the excellent work and skills that were displayed throughout the three hour process."

"I am very happy with the assistance provided and will recommend TASC to my friends."



case study

TOOWOOMBA COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE

TASC assisted a client in a Family Law matter after he refused to return the child of the relationship to the mother when the mother moved away from the region.

The mother relocated herself (intending to take the child with her) without considering our client's refusal for the mother to relocate the child's place of residence, or engaging in mediation, or signing an undertaking, or providing a forwarding address. We were instructed by our client to assist in preparing and filing an Initiating Application and Affidavit but the mother filed first, hence we assisted the client in responding to the mother's Recovery Application.

We assisted the client in subsequently filing all relevant court documents up to and including for the final hearing of the matter.

A Family Report was also prepared in this matter.

We then assisted our client in retaining a barrister at a discounted rate through a direct access brief. We subsequently provided the barrister with a paginated brief. On the day of final hearing, Final Orders were made by the presiding Federal Circuit Court Judge which were by and large as per our client's precise minute of Final Orders sought.

The client expressed satisfaction with our assistance throughout the course of the matter, and in comparing our assistance with the mother's legal representation, felt that TASC had really 'heard' and 'understood' our client throughout the process, and this in spite of the fact that our client was self-represented in court against legal representation throughout.

case study

DISABILITY LAW PROJECT

The story of this matter is one of perseverance, of difficulty and of the complexities involved in the criminal justice system when a client may have a mental illness.

Our client was charged with stalking his next door neighbour over a four year period. It was by no means a minor or trivial offence. Some of the measures allegedly taken caused people in the neighbourhood to call the next door neighbour and make threats. The conduct was protracted and, according to the prosecution, initially caused the neighbour of our client great stress and fear. Our client denied that he engaged in the alleged conduct, though there was some compelling evidence raised by the prosecution.

The cause for this behaviour, however, was not a straight forward matter. Our client was a retired man of late middle age, a devoted husband and a father whose children were successful and contributing members of society. In addition to this, our client presented with many unusual ideas about his life, including ideas that were indicative of someone with a mental illness. The stress of these charges caused him to consider ending his own life.

The client's matter was referred to the Mental Health Court.

In the Mental Health Court, there were no clear answers. Two different psychiatrists examined our client, and they both provided two different opinions. One opined that, whilst our client's thoughts were not 'within the norm', he was able to understand what he did was wrong, and that he could stand trial. The other gave the opposite opinion; that our client was psychotic at the time, that he should not be punished and that he was not able to stand trial. The Mental Health Court found somewhere in the middle; he was unable to immediately stand trial, and he was detained in an Acute Mental Health Unit.

Our client was detained against his will in an Acute Mental Health Unit for 13 weeks. He spent Christmas in there. In the end, it was decided that he was finally well enough to be able to face the charges and he was released.

By the time he was released from hospital, the matter had been going for 3 years. The client had, 'had enough of fighting'. He couldn't take the stress of the proceedings any longer. The next door neighbour had moved out of the house about midway through these proceedings for reasons that had nothing to do with the alleged stalking. He had even told the police that once he suspected it may have been our client writing the letters that he ceased being stressed as he was not afraid of our client. We represented our client at sentence, and he received a nominal penalty.

This case highlights the shortcomings of the criminal justice system to deal with some of the extraordinarily complex issues surrounding crime. Far from being the straightforward 'detect and punish the guilty' system that many may consider it to be, the criminal justice system instead represents an area where complex, interacting and sometimes indefinable issues cause anti-social behaviour. The causes of that behaviour are varied and multifaceted, and defy easy characterisation.

This case is difficult because it does not fit our meta-narratives of good and evil, of harm and punishment, and of wrong and justice. It instead demonstrates the difficulties of some of the issues surrounding mental health and intellectual disability, and the need for programs such as the Disability Law Project to operate in this challenging sphere.



**it always
seems impossible
until it's done**

Nelson Mandela

The Queensland Criminal Justice Centre

The Queensland Criminal Justice Centre (QCJC) is a web-based resource that is available throughout Queensland for lawyers, family members, carers, professionals, advocates – for anyone working in the area of disability and the criminal justice system. The complexities of dealing with intellectual disability, mental illness or acquired brain injury through the Magistrates Court system is a complex maze – the QCJC helps to both navigate people through the maze and to find personal, suitable solutions. Support, employment, housing, training, educational opportunities that integrate people with their communities and break down barriers are effective ways of breaking the criminal justice cycle. The QCJC, through a number of small but successful initiatives, seeks to improve the wellbeing and other outcomes for people with mental health disorders and cognitive impairment that result in a diversion from the criminal justice system.

There is currently much support for the call that is being made to provide broader sentencing options to the Courts and to address specifically the issues of capacity for defendants and prisoners in Queensland.

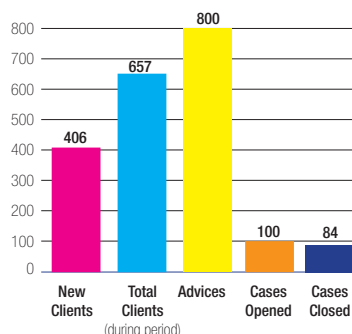
www.qcjc.com.au



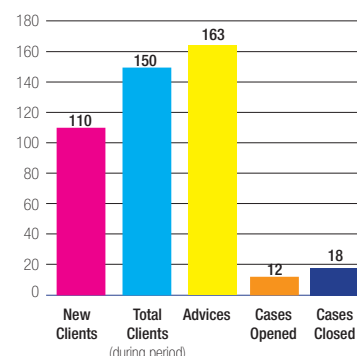
statistical highlights

PERIOD:
01 JULY
2014 TO
30 JUNE
2015

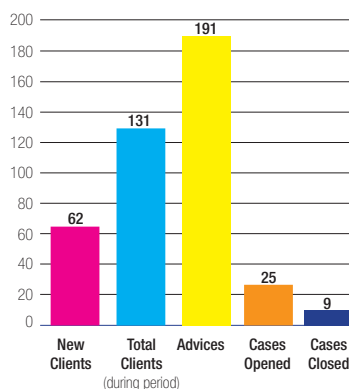
Toowoomba Community Legal Service



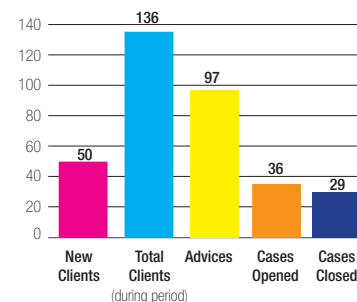
Family Relationship Centre (Ipswich & Toowoomba)



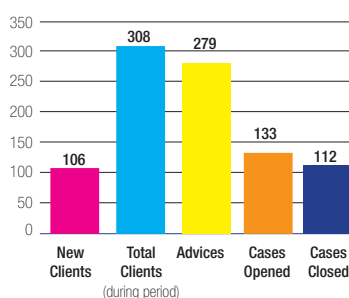
Rural Women's Outreach Legal Service



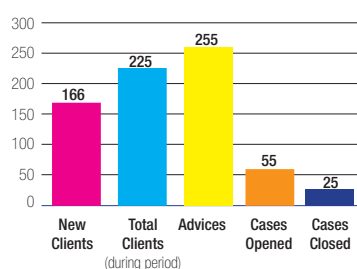
Disability Law Project



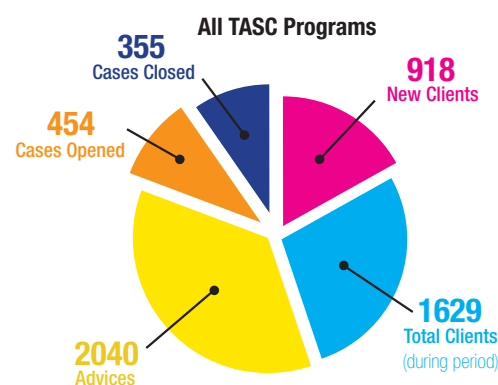
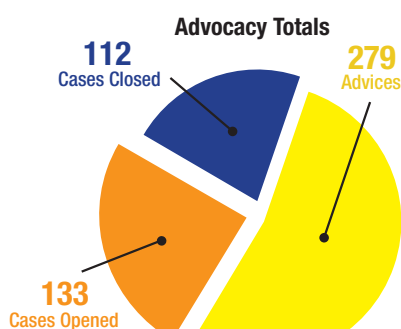
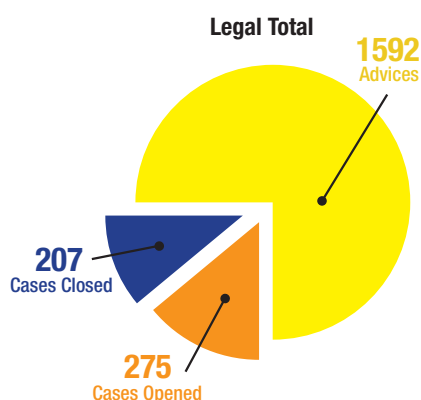
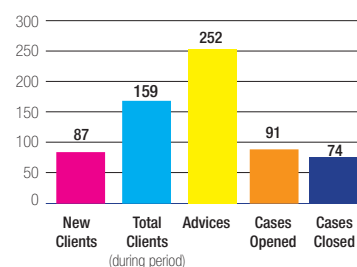
Disability & Regional Disability Advocacy, and Community Managed Mental Health Program



Ipswich Community Legal Service



Seniors Legal and Support Service (Toowoomba & Ipswich)



advocacy and social services report

We assist in understanding and navigating the system.

Many clients are, or feel, unable to understand or navigate the many systems we all work and live within, such as the mental health sector, National Disability Insurance Scheme, guardianship and administration and complaints mechanisms. There are a range of options to build knowledge and capacity to make the system more accessible — both for the general population and for those who experience disadvantage. For those who have multiple road blocks to accessing systems, TASC's Advocacy and Social Services Team (A&SS Team) has assisted clients to find the detours; creative ways that meet their needs and enables them to engage, understand and participate in the process that assists towards a resolution of their issue. During the last year the A&SS Team were able to assist over 825 people to do this.

Public knowledge of legal assistance services is generally low; often because it is unclear which service to use. A well-recognised entry point or gateway for Advocacy Assistance and referral makes it easier for people to navigate the system. However, there are some disadvantaged people who are not able to use a well-recognised entry point and require additional assistance to identify and resolve their problems.

Personal services and contact offered by the A&SS Team are important as mechanisms that can be used to seek out people who are likely to be experiencing problems but are unable to identify them themselves. One example of this is the TASC Disability Law Project where a volunteer attends the Toowoomba Magistrates Court three mornings per week to engage with people who have been charged with an offence and who might identify as having a mental illness, intellectual disability or acquired brain injury.

This community access point is an essential safety net to provide information and advice to people that is tailored to their communication style. Individuals are also given an opportunity to meet with a TASC Criminal Lawyer and Disability Advocate to obtain legal advice and also ensure that they have access to appropriate referrals, supports and links to reduce the likelihood of re-offending.

We provide options that help to build knowledge and capacity of individuals including community education, information re: services available (including self-help resources), advocacy assistance and advice. Over the last 12 months the A&SS Team has participated in 88 different opportunities to build individual knowledge and capacity within community by sharing information about TASC services and how better to navigate systems. Effective coordination of the development and delivery of these measures, and a system of greater quality control, also improves the reach and value of education and information resources.

Referral pathways

Resolving the legal and non-legal problems experienced by vulnerable clients involves greater collaboration between legal and non-legal organisations. Our established networks in our communities (external); our Collaboration and training within TASC (internal) are all effective means to improve our clients' lives. Locally, TASC is seen as a referral hub with individuals often contacting us because we will know who to contact to meet their enquiry. One client recalls that "at a time when I needed help I found it!!" from TASC.

Quality assurance

Our accreditation/s; our Services that help build knowledge and capacity, and those services that specifically assist the disadvantaged, are constantly


evaluated to determine best practice and to implement the quality improvements. The Disability Advocacy program and the Regional Disability Advocacy program were successful in receiving accreditation under the Human Services Quality Framework during the year.

Annual Report time of the year is often a time of reflection. This year is no exception and as I reflect on the achievements of the Team, the improvements we have made, our goals and aspirations and our drive to do better, what I keep coming back to is the clients. I hear their voices, I see their tears, I feel their pain and as I share in their journey, I am suddenly struck by "what we do – matters". It matters to the client, their children, their partners, their parents, their friends, their support network, it matters to us and it matters to our community. Our Team considers it a privilege to share the journey of each of the 825 people that we assisted this year and we welcome the opportunity to continue to do so in the future.

A big thank you

I would like to thank the Advocacy and Social Services Team, Mark Berkovich, Marie-Louise Offner, Adam Waterhouse and Kym Allen for their continued commitment to ensure we serve our clients to the best of our abilities, fighting for fair, being professional, sincere and genuine and building such a strong and diverse team.

Terri-Ann Dwyer
Advocacy and Social Services
Coordinator



**you don't have
to see the
whole staircase,
just the first step**
Martin Luther King

case study

SENIORS LEGAL & SUPPORT SERVICE

The male client aged 70 years old with English as his second language was extremely distressed about assessments that deemed he did not have the capacity to manage his own affairs.

The client, a resident of North Queensland, travelled to rural South East Queensland early in 2014 to accommodate his partner's wishes to be in her home town in the months preceding her death. Our client expressed that he had intended to return to North Queensland.

While in South East Queensland, the deteriorating health of our client's partner led to her placement in a nursing home. The client was also deemed to lack the capacity to make his own decisions and was subsequently placed in the same nursing home.

The client's concerns included:

- the decision that he lacked capacity;
- the behaviour of the parties appointed under his Enduring Power of Attorney (EPOA) document and their management of his finances;
- exclusion from participation in decision-making;
- social isolation from friends and family;
- residing in a town where he knew no one (excluding the EPOAs) and in a nursing home where he felt like a "prisoner".

Significant interpersonal difficulties between the client and his EPOAs were articulated by both parties. The EPOAs were family members of the client's deceased partner. The client believed he was not of "clear mind" when he originally signed the EPOA document following a hospitalisation in 2010.

The client sought to prove his capacity to make his own decisions and revoke the EPOA. He sought a return to his residence in North Queensland followed by a permanent relocation to his home and family in Europe.


The Social Services Officer and Solicitor met with the client and advised him of his rights and options. The client agreed to participate in a meeting with the current EPOAs and with the support of the Social Services Officer. The TASC Solicitor also attended this meeting as the EPOAs attended with legal representation. It was

decided that a more extensive capacity assessment needed to be undertaken by the client. The Social Services Officer organised for the services of a requisite professional to conduct the assessment.

The Social Worker facilitated appropriate medically supportive transportation for the client to attend this appointment in Toowoomba. This involved a waiting time of several weeks due to unforeseen cancellations by the transport service based on emergency demands on this service. The Social Worker provided ongoing phone and in person support to the client to help him manage his feelings of anxiety and distress.

Extensive capacity testing was undertaken by a Psychologist. The Psychologist's final report found that the client was capable of making his own legal, personal and financial decisions. The Solicitor undertook the processes for revocation of the EPOA and liaison with the nursing home director to notify of the client's changed circumstances. The Social Worker assisted with the processes and planning for the client to exit the nursing home and relocate, with a support person, to North Queensland.

The Social Worker facilitated the return of property and monies held by the EPOAs. The client was able to exit the nursing home, return to North Queensland and then reunite with his family in Europe. The Client described these events as some of the happiest moments in his life with his emotional wellbeing and outlook for the future significantly enhanced.

A portrait of an elderly man with a blue overlay and a yellow diagonal stripe. The man has a serious expression and is looking directly at the camera. The text is white and bold, positioned in the lower right quadrant of the image.

**before you give up
think of the reason
why you held on
so long**

reflection

This is the old quirky fella's recall of the journey over the past eight years at TASC as Disability Advocate. It has been a great privilege to work with the clients of TASC. I am very grateful for the opportunity to apply my profession and I sincerely hope that I have contributed to their lives in general. I believe what the difference between a Rottweiler and a good Advocate should be is that eventually the Rottweiler lets go!



Having survived so many changes, theories and goals, are we becoming just another bureaucratic agency? Time will tell all.

To use the old cliché much water has passed under the bridge within TASC and my own life. Births, deaths, funerals, birthdays, welcome and farewell morning teas, celebrations, the highs and the lows of a human service organisation. Relentless change, restructures, politics, intrigue, rumours, gossip, plots, the good, the bad, laughter, tears, black humour, white humour, friendships, all in the tea room and all before lunch. Such is the nature of human services in our quest to support and assist other humanity.

My starting point is to acknowledge past and present people at TASC to whom I owe so much for their guidance, support and acceptance of my personality at work and in personal capacities. There has always been a family style culture, yet at times we have had many disagreements. This has never spilled over to our client base. What happens at TASC stays at TASC. I have enjoyed so much the characters at TASC and the friendships I have made with the team. Each of us have supported each other professionally and on many occasions in our personal lives.

I have a strong belief that to be an effective advocate is a genuine calling and my early development to work with people who are disadvantaged and marginalised came from my parents - namely my mother. Her belief was that all people are inherently good and that, through life, many

circumstances can emerge that people are simply unable to cope with and often find negative ways to survive. Compassion, understanding with a lifelong genuine interest in human nature with realistic, practical, common-sense solutions to problems is a great starting point to be an advocate. Dedication, loyalty, sustained tenacity, all within an ethical framework is also essential in working for client interests. Personal investment in rapport and gaining genuine trust of clients leads to great outcomes and shifts attitudes that reaps rewards particularly in the mental health area.

Being older now I have seen a lot of sunrises and it does "rise in the east".

This has been my explanation and well known "quip", to relentless change in our sector which invariably repeats and redesigns the past as a new and innovative process to meet the future. Many modern advances in communication technology such as electronic websites, social media, and apps continue to try to replace the long proven human face to face interaction. While accepted as a corporate norm these days, I believe that it actually increases marginalisation of disadvantaged people who cannot afford or have access to the overwhelming levels of information being presented. In many cases people do not process the written word or understand concepts.

I firmly believe that advocacy must be based on human interaction in the context of a person's circumstance allowing the person to tell their story and to identify their needs. Often the intentions of modern philosophy

and the relevant legislations in human services do not align at the service delivery level. Tensions exist with the imposed requirements of funding bodies, service provider self-interest and client needs. Bureaucracy thrives and breeds in our human service sector and takes away precious resources that should be applied to clients rather than self-promotion and pre-occupation on relevance. It is my very strong belief that our organisation, like all human services, needs to never lose sight of the basic inter personal human interaction, as the very essence of our existence. Genuine rapport and trust with the client is, in my opinion, the very basis of advocacy, without which outcomes cannot flow. Assisting clients to have a change of attitude in their various circumstances is often life changing and continuity with an advocate over time produces positive changes in clients' lives. The advocacy experience is deeply personally rewarding when surrounded by like-minded assertive, committed people of the TASC family.

To me, being in a position where I can look into the eyes of frail aged parents, witnessing the death of their long suffering adult child, holding hands wiping away tears of pain has been the most privileged place of all. Working with disadvantaged, marginalised people to solve their problems is just a privilege of humbling proportions. Working and assisting a person with a severe mental illness or other disability leave an institution after periods of up to 35 years and resuming their rightful place in the community is simply beyond words. Cases that last for years to achieve a seemingly impossible positive outcome are the so rewarding for the client, obviously, and likewise for the Advocate.

Some examples of work by our advocates are related below:

- The case of an older person in a remote rural with an intellectual disability, to redress a financial abuse situation by a

relative appointed as a formal guardian, resulted in returning very substantial amounts to the client and appointment of a new guardian acting on behalf of a frail, terminally ill, indigenous man living in squalor, paying rent for a condemned property without power, water or sewerage. He was sleeping in a urine soaked bed when found. He was assisted for guardianship; he was moved him into a health care facility which stabilised his illness; recovered illegal rent and was reunited with his spiritual community. He lived out his days in comfort surrounded by his community which provided such welcoming supports. His funeral was attended by all support services that made his final days enjoyable and dignified.

- The extremely sad case of a young man with mental illness, who suicided in police custody (containment) in a rural area at his parents place. The advocacy support given to him and the parent prior to his death consisted of representation at Mental Health Tribunal hearings and related matters as well as support to the parent to maintain her resilience to cope. Supporting the parent through five days of the Coronial Inquest: again holding hands wiping away tears as she relived the horror of her son's death. To be able to humanly support a person who trusts and relies on your counsel is a privilege that cannot be described.
- Being witness to a single, aging, parent of a middle age son with intellectual disability and mental illness that has cared for him since birth, announce her terminal illness and seeking ongoing support for her son. Her quivering voice and desire to maintain his wellbeing will never leave my mind. In this case support was provided

for services, accommodation, Guardianship, clinical and legal representation by the TASC legal team in the Mental Health Court. I am certain that his welfare will continue as a client of TASC.

Working long term with clients in the mental health area both in institutions and the community has been of particular interest to me. TASC has been able to secure and grow relationships with our mental health services for the benefit of clients over many years. Our working relationships are ones of mutual respect acknowledging each others' roles and collaboratively working for the greater good of the clients.

In broader terms, TASC has always contributed to many legislative changes and reviews and works with all Government and Non-Government agencies in the South East. We also have tried to have fun both at work and away - our Social "Party Animal" Club has operated over eight years and provides a much needed outlet to download our built up emotions in dealing with client interactions. The club has also contributed to charitable causes in our community.

On a final note, I would like to thank and acknowledge all other players in the local disability sector, NGO support agencies and Government agencies such as Public Trustee, Public Guardian, Mental Health Review Tribunal, Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal and in particular the staff at Disability Services for all their outstanding efforts for clients. Most will probably relish that I have turned into a Rottweiler and finally have let go.

Sincere thanks to each person that passed through my journey. It has been an amazing fulfilling experience.

My regards to all.

Mark Berkovich



business services report

Towards the end of 2014 the decision was made to separate the duties of the Office Manager role into two positions. TASC welcomed Jess Bichel to the management team in September 2014 to take on the role of Office Manager with the primary responsibilities of office and human resources management. I moved into the new role of Business Services Coordinator, continuing the responsibilities of Finance, Information Technology and Corporate Governance but to also take on a more active role in fundraising and sponsorship management. Both roles have evolved over the year and have seen significant advances and quality improvements in the administration and business service areas supporting the organisation.

In 2014 an Information Technology review was undertaken with the aim to move TASC forward in this fast moving information age. A significant investment in technologies has been made over the past twelve months to make interactions with stakeholders and clients more efficient and to support efficient and effective case flow management. Ongoing investment in technology is required to generate longer term savings and improved access to services for TASC and its clients. As a not-for-profit organisation TASC has access to donated software products which assists TASC to fulfil its strategic goal of creating and maintain systems which positively support services across sectors and geographical regions.

Workflow and data collection and reporting processes were also reviewed. These tasks are critical to evaluating the effectiveness of existing procedures and other reforms. Improved efficiencies reduce the time staff need to spend on administrative tasks, letting them focus on valuable client-focused activities.

TASC has extended the use of telephone conferences and online technologies for the purpose of stakeholder and client contact. Further investigations are currently underway to widen the reach within the community through improved communication systems. A review of the current internal telephone system is also underway

to work towards an integrated communications solution for data and voice connectivity both within and outside of the TASC office.

On a personal note, my thanks go to Betty Seth for her hard work and dedication within the Business Services area, her enthusiasm in supporting the TASC culture and the great work she undertakes in the staff Wellness Program. As a team we look forward to another exciting year ahead.

Sib Redfern
Business Services Coordinator



organisational services report

Since my commencement at TASC as Office Manager in September 2014, I have seen TASC and, in particular, the Administration Team rapidly grow and improve. It has been a year full of changes and improvements within the administration team and TASC as a whole. We have implemented a new database Community Data System (CDS) to assist with capturing client information and this new system has proved to be beneficial for both our Legal and Advocacy teams in providing more detailed reporting and statistical information.

A significant development in the last 12 months is our focus on Social Media. In April, we launched the new and improved TASC website in conjunction with Fast Firms. We have received much positive feedback from the community and the content on the website continues to grow. Within the first month of launching the new TASC website it had been viewed 2,418 times. In conjunction, our Facebook page has expanded and since September 2014 our 'likes' have increased by more than 100. We have also commenced a TASC newsletter that is being sent to over 350 email addresses monthly and includes key news stories from the TASC website. We have recently created a LinkedIn page and this is assisting TASC to be more connected with local businesses. Our digital marketing has grown over the last year and continues to go from strength to strength to enhance our presence in the community.

Part of my role as Office Manager also encompasses Human

Resources. I have endeavoured to continue to maintain the positive culture that has been embedded in TASC since before I began. I have also worked to update processes and procedures and ensure that the HR side of TASC is both efficient and proactive. In July, a staff survey was sent to all staff to enable them to provide feedback on key areas in the organisation. From this survey we have identified the key areas which will be reviewed and evaluated over the next few months.

In January 2015, we centralised our administrative support in Toowoomba and our Ipswich Office now works in conjunction with us, to meet these administrative needs. Our Ipswich Receptionist commenced full time in the role of Administration Officer at the Toowoomba Office. This has allowed us to focus on maintaining CDS/CLIS and ensuring all statistical reports and data entry are centralised and accurate. We have streamlined processes that have involved new procedures, flowcharts and training for all staff. Quality Assurance is maintained in all areas of quality control, review and updating of policies and workplace health and safety requirements.

The Ipswich Office Administration is now managed by our growing team of volunteers. They have provided assistance to ensure that the Ipswich Office continues to run smoothly. We have also begun to utilise administration volunteers at both our Ipswich Wednesday Night Clinic and Toowoomba Monday Night Clinics. Supervision of Volunteers has proved to be a large component

of the Office Manager role and the assistance they have provided to the Administration Team and the organisation as a whole has been invaluable.

We have continued to hold our monthly TASC staff closure days, when we focus on internal management. These days prove necessary to help with enhancing our skills, workplace culture and teamwork. During the fourth Wednesday of every month we hold all staff meetings, sector meetings and staff training. Recently we held a beneficial training session on Mental Health Awareness and Suicide Prevention. This provided staff with an opportunity to gain additional skills and knowledge to enhance their ability to deal with people who are experiencing or presenting with a mental health issue, threats of suicide or who have feelings of desperation or hopelessness.

I would like to extend a special thanks to the Administration team - Allana, Emily, Kerry, Louise, Lyn and Natalie. Without the support of these lovely ladies we would not have accomplished so much this last year. I am looking forward to the 2015/16 year, as the best is yet to come!

Jess Bichel
Organisational Development
Coordinator



volunteers

Volunteers are an integral part of any organisation and in particular TASC. As a not for profit organisation volunteers have provided invaluable assistance to all sectors within TASC.

TASC has engaged 14 volunteers in the 2014/15 financial year. They have provided assistance in roles ranging from administration, legal and advocacy. They are in addition to the ongoing support that is received from pro bono solicitors for both our Monday and Wednesday Night Clinics.

The experience allows the volunteer to gain valuable skills within their chosen area and to provide a valuable contribution to a not for profit organisation.

Should you wish to volunteer in Administration, Legal, Advocacy and Social Services please contact TASC.

We wish to acknowledge the contribution of all TASC volunteers, including our volunteer Toowoomba & Ipswich law firms.

A close-up, high-angle portrait of a woman with long, wavy blonde hair. She is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. She has a small hoop nose ring in her left nostril. The background is dark and out of focus.

**We make a living
by what we get,
but we make a life
by what we give**

financial report summary

INCOME STATEMENT For the year ended 30 June 2015

INCOME	2015	2014	EXPENSES	2015	2014
Interest	38,801	42,855	Premises fit out expense	0	0
Rental income	16,982	18,745	Marketing expenses	6,808	20,111
Grants	1,855,182	1,867,653	Occupancy expenses	125,191	123,224
Donations	590	837	Administration expenses	1,559,213	1,482,428
Other	14,620	4,055	Depreciation	33,686	33,204
			Other expenses from ordinary activities	206,456	231,051
			Borrowing costs expense	5,213	11,324
REVENUE	1,926,175	1,934,145	EXPENSES	1,936,567	1,901,342

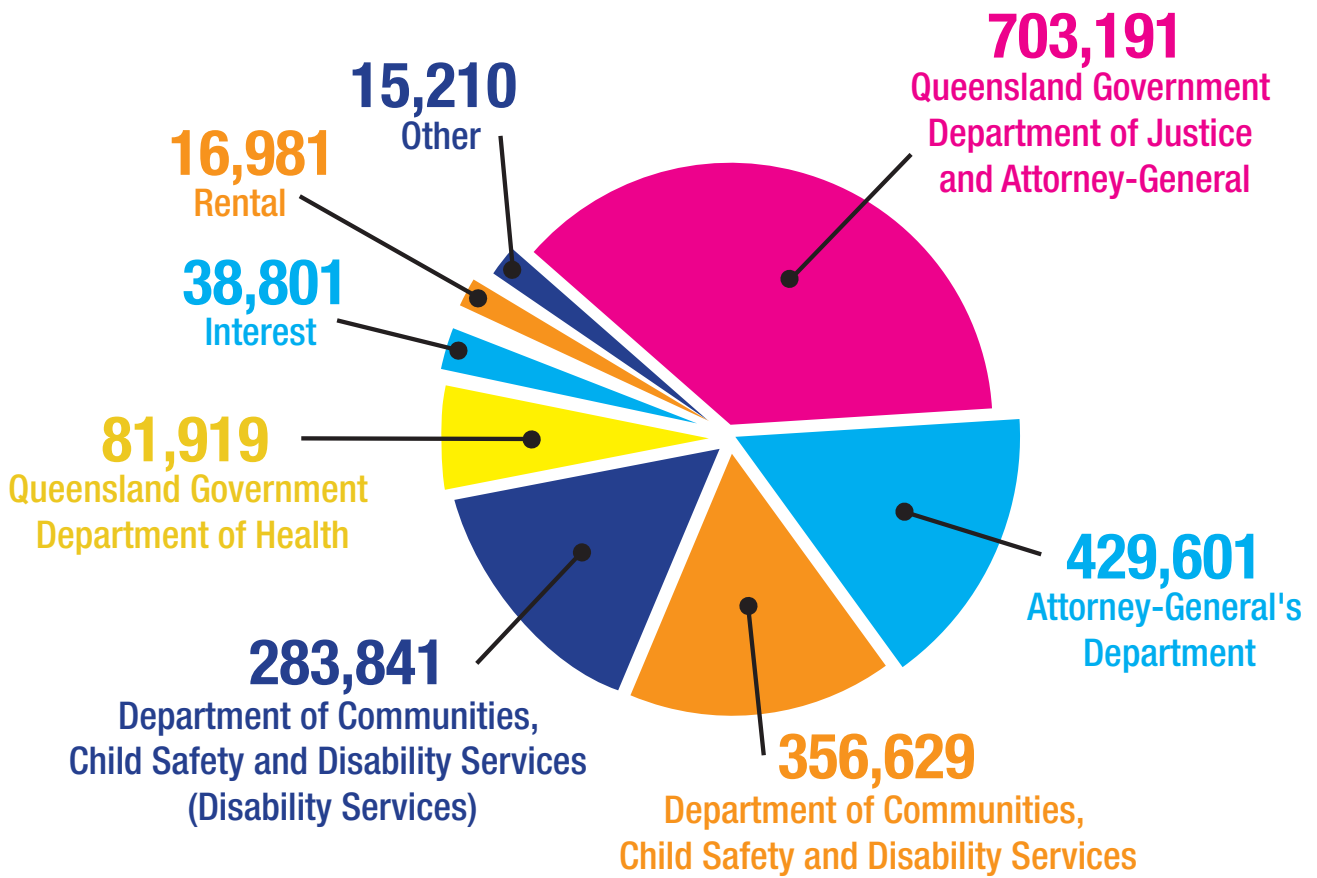
SURPLUS FOR THE PERIOD	2015	2014
SURPLUS	-10,392	32,803

BALANCE SHEET As at 30 June 2015

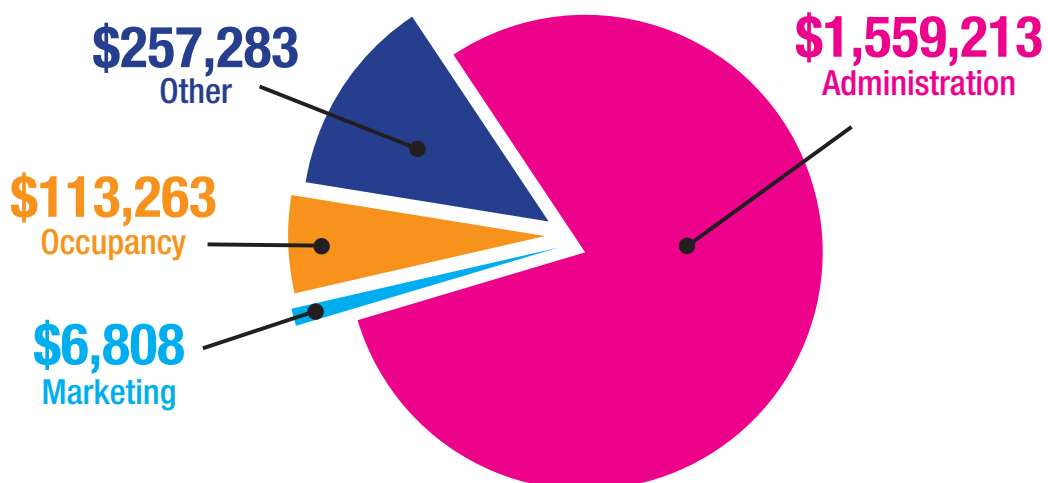
ASSETS	2015	2014	LIABILITIES	2015	2014
CURRENT ASSETS			CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Cash and cash equivalents	1,407,697	1,406,018	Trade and other payables	169,900	106,846
Trade and other receivables	198	1,850	Financial liabilities	39,765	66,469
Other	0	0	Provisions	106,133	112,237
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	1,407,895	1,407,868	Other	0	0
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			Income paid in advance	0	0
Property plant and equipment	125,453	133,858	TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	315,798	285,552
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	125,453	133,858	NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		
			Financial liabilities	0	33,077
			Provisions	25,719	14,609
			TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES	25,719	47,686
TOTAL ASSETS	1,533,348	1,541,726	TOTAL LIABILITIES	341,517	333,238

EQUITY	2015	2014
Reserves	0	0
Retained earnings	1,191,831	1,208,488
TOTAL EQUITY	1,191,831	1,208,488

Source of Operating Funds 2014 - 15



Use of Operating Funds 2014 - 2015



statement by members

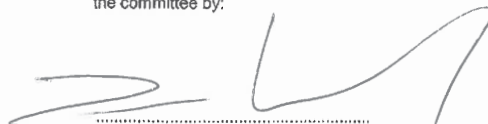
THE ADVOCACY AND SUPPORT CENTRE INC.
STATEMENT BY MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

The committee has determined that the association is not a reporting entity and that this special purpose financial report should be prepared in accordance with the accounting policies outlined in Note 1 to the financial statements and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*.

In the opinion of the committee the financial report as set out on pages 1 to 10:

1. Presents a true and fair view of the financial position of The Advocacy and Support Centre Inc. as at 30 June 2015 and its performance for the year ended on that date.
2. At the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that The Advocacy and Support Centre Inc. will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

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



.....
Daniel Toombs



.....
Philippa Whitman

Dated 26/08/15

case study

ADVOCACY

This case involved a young man that was the last person to be admitted into Baillie Henderson Hospital due to an intellectual disability and remained in this institution for 17 years.

In May 2012 his formal Guardian, an aging and very frail parent, was asked by a Social Worker about where her son may wish to live if not at Baillie Henderson Hospital. The Guardian approached TASC Disability Advocacy to assist navigating the process for her son to live in the community.

It was identified that the client wanted to live closer to his parent and wished to relocate to Bundaberg. The client is a young man with a kind nature. He is non-verbal and exhibits behaviours resulting from his long survival in ward settings. Social Workers from the hospital investigated the availability of supports that the client required to relocate however the visit could not secure accommodation or services to meet his complex needs in that area.

The Advocate explored the situation with the Guardian and began a collaborative working relationship with Mental Health and Disability Services staff. After multiple meetings it was identified that the client would be eligible to receive the maximum package to re-enter community living i.e.; 65 hours support weekly with 7 sleepovers. However, because of the nature of the client's disability, this funding would only meet half of the required supports.

Disability Services introduced a Case Manager to the client where a decision was made to provide an appropriate home in Toowoomba which the client would share with co-tenants. This alternative was

an option for the client because he was able to live within his community while services were available to support him and access to clinical supports regarding positive behaviour support plans and health issues were also available.

At this time the Guardian's health began to fail and she relocated to Toowoomba to be close to her son. During this time monthly stakeholder meetings were conducted at which the interests of the client were supported by our Advocate.

Negotiations and communication continued relentlessly as timeframes and bureaucratic procedures seemed to slow to frustrating levels. The purchase of a house prior to modifications by Disability Services was a slow tedious procedure with complexities of decision makers in the bureaucratic system.

Unfortunately the Guardian passed away and the Public Guardian was appointed for all personal matters for the client.

A home was eventually purchased and it was modified by "Q" Build to ensure it was fully accessible. The client and his support staff were involved with the selection and purchasing of furnishings and white goods to make his house a real home.

Other matters arose when a sibling of the client made contact wishing to reconnect. The Advocate was instrumental in assisting the client to reconnect with the sibling after years of estrangement. The Advocate also arranged personal and clinical supports for the client and the sibling to enable this relationship to develop and advised around the possibility of the sibling becoming the client's formal Guardian.

The entire process for our client was completed nearly 3 years after its inception. Positive behaviour support plans, staff stability and directions from professionals and clinicians have all contributed to a meaningful and positive outcome for the client. He is living a new life in his community and thriving.



professional membership

- » Australian Association of Social Workers
- » Australian Institute of Management
- » Community Resource Unit
- » Downs & South Western Qld Law Association Inc.
- » National Ethnic Disability Alliance
- » National Rural Law and Justice Alliance
- » Queensland Advocacy Inc. (QAI)
- » Queensland Association of Independent Legal Services (QAILS)
- » Queensland Community Services Employers Association (QCSEA)
- » Queensland Council of Social Service (QCOSS)
- » Queensland Law Society (QLS)

professional accreditations

- » Accredited Social Worker (AASW) Individual
- » Human Services Quality Framework (HSQF)
- » National Association of Community Legal Centres (NACLC)



our rural & regional partners

Charleville

Charleville Neighbourhood Centre
114-118 Alfred Street
PO Box 327
CHARLEVILLE QLD 4470
Phone: 4654 1307
Fax: 4654 3240
Email: coordinator@charlevillenc.org.au

Chinchilla

Family Support Centre
67-71 Middle Street
PO Box 406
CHINCHILLA QLD 4413
Phone: 4662 8528
Fax: 4668 9615
Email: chinfamsupport@bigpond.com

Cunnamulla

Local Area Co-ordinator
Disability Services
South West LAC Group, DOC, CS & DS
PO Box 10
CUNNAMULLA QLD 4460

Cunnamulla

Cunnamulla Court House
PO Box 227
CUNNAMULLA QLD 4490

Dalby

Myall Youth & Community Network Centre Inc.
Cnr Drayton & Nicholson Street
DALBY QLD 4405
Phone: 4662 0152
Fax: 4669 7350
Email: admin@mycnc.com.au

Darling Downs

Partners in Recovery, Darling Downs & South West
Queensland Strategic Leadership Panel
Phone: 1300 991 443
Email: info@partnersinrecovery.net.au

Goondiwindi

Care Goondiwindi
56 Marshall Street
PO Box 687
GOONDIWINDI QLD 4390
Phone: 4670 0700
Fax: 4671 4132
Email: info@caregoondiwindi.org.au

Miles

Murilla Community Centre
73a Murilla Street
MILES QLD 4415
Phone: 4627 2027
Fax: 4627 2021
Email: mccm@bigpond.com

Roma

Centacare
133 a-b McDowall Street
PO Box 1514
ROMA QLD 4455
Phone: 4622 5230
Email: jboulter@tmba.centacare.org.au

Roma

Roma Community Hub
Maranoa Regional Council
57 Bungil Street
ROMA QLD 4455
PO Box 42
MITCHELL QLD 4465
Phone: 1300 007 662 / 4624 0808
Email: reception@maranoa.qld.gov.au

Roma

Aboriginal Family Legal Service
17 Spencer Street
PO Box 481
ROMA QLD 4455
Phone: 1800 185 950 / 4622 3677

St George

Care Balonne
84-86 Victoria Street
PO Box 517
ST GEORGE QLD 4487
Phone: 4625 5450
Fax: 4625 3268
Email: admin@carebalonne.com

St George

Centacare
88-90 The Terrace
PO Box 155
ST GEORGE QLD 4487
Phone: 4625 4317
Fax: 4625 3250
Email: cmcquillan@tmba.centacare.org.au

Stanthorpe

Stanthorpe Community Development Service Inc.
8 Corundum Street
STANTHORPE QLD 4380
Phone: 4681 3777
Fax: 4681 4532
Email: cdsadmin@halenet.com.au

Tara

Tara Neighbourhood Centre
49 Day Street
PO Box 158
TARA QLD 4421
Phone: 4665 3508
Fax: 4665 3894
Email: centre@taranc.com.au

Warwick

Department of Communities,
Child Safety and Disability Services
69 Guy Street
PO Box 195
WARWICK QLD 4370
Phone: 4667 5155
Fax: 4667 5150

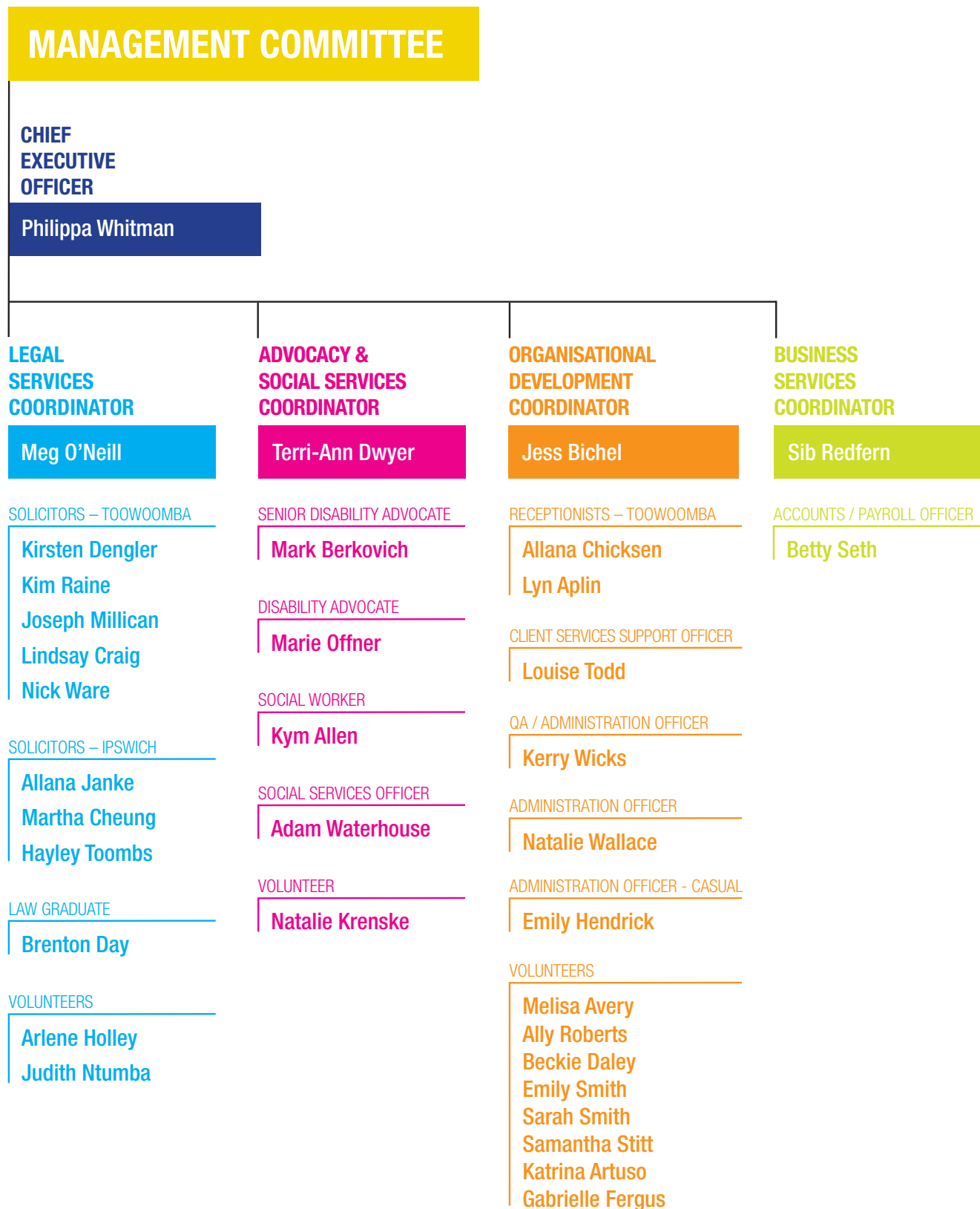
Warwick

Lighthouse Community Centre
37 Guy Street
WARWICK Q4370
Phone: 4661 8211
Fax: 4661 4065
Email: lccinc@bigpond.net.au

funding bodies



organisational structure



support us

TASC is a not for profit organisation that relies upon government funding to operate. In recent years, the ever increasing costs of running a charitable organisation, coupled with the decreasing amount of government funding have led to many organisations seeking funds from elsewhere.

Historically, TASC has been reluctant to seek funds from alternate sources. However in 2015, following some 33 years of operation, TASC is in need of a hand.

TASC not only wants to do more in this community, but in Queensland as well. With your help, we can do it.

LET'S WORK TOGETHER

Financial Donations

TASC is a not for profit, charitable organisation. All donations are tax deductible against income earned in Australia and do not attract GST.

Contact TASC on (07) 4616 9700.

Business Partnerships

Business Partnerships can benefit everyone.

To find out more about how your business and

TASC can work together, contact **TASC CEO**

Philippa Whitman on (07) 4616 9700.

Leave a Bequest

If you wish to leave a bequest to TASC and ensure your legacy continues on contact TASC on

(07) 4616 9700 for more information.

Memberships

Being a member of TASC has helped us achieve a lot in the past 12 months. Highlights include celebrating the anniversary of seven years operation in our Ipswich Office; a full website upgrade, and increased social media activity; increase in services throughout the Toowoomba Community Legal Service and Ipswich Community Legal Service; participation in a host of community events and becoming the National Ethnic Disability Alliance's Queensland representative. To become a member **download a membership application form from our website www.tascinc.org.au or telephone (07) 4616 9700.**



Toowoomba

223 Hume Street
PO Box 594
Toowoomba QLD 4350

Monday - Thursday 9am - 4.30pm

Friday 9am - 4pm

Phone 07 4616 9700

TCLS Hotline 1800 272 596

Fax 07 4616 9777

reception@tascinc.org.au

Ipswich

60 South Street
PO Box 38
Ipswich QLD 4305

Tuesday - Thursday

9am - 4.30pm

Phone 07 3812 7000

Fax 07 3812 7700

reception@tascinc.org.au

Warwick

69 Guy Street
Warwick QLD 4370

Friday 9am - 1pm

Also by appointment

Phone 07 4616 9700

Fax 07 4616 9777

reception@tascinc.org.au

www.tascinc.org.au

www.qcjc.org.au