

Annual Report

2015-16

Relationships Australia®
TASMANIA

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President's Foreword

This year the Board focused on maintaining good governance and a balanced approach as it dealt with a range of complex issues.



It ensured that strong management performance continued while, at the same time, it began a process that will enable us to confidently address future challenges.

I am therefore pleased to report that Relationships Australia Tasmania (RA Tas) continues to be in a healthy financial situation, once again achieving an appropriate surplus which can be re-invested back into the organisation.

The Board convened a Strategic Planning workshop to consider the changes that could affect RA Tas in the future: a rapidly changing and highly competitive market, changes to funding and service models, pressure on the sector to become more efficient but also more collaborative, and the opportunities and threats arising from various service tendering processes.

In this area we can celebrate that we

are the successful provider for the Mental Health Services tendered by Primary Health Tasmania for Southern Tasmania. This was made possible by the high standard of services we previously delivered, an excellent tender document and a robust performance reporting system. These elements ensured that our funder had confidence in our capacity to deliver high quality services.

The Board is delighted that the Enterprise Agreement negotiations have been successfully completed. The organisation demonstrated how much it values its staff, providing conditions and salaries above award rates while, at the same time, it ensured that the results were financially sustainable. Congratulations to the negotiating team, to all staff who contributed to the process and to all who will benefit from the new agreement.

The Board has maintained an active interest in three areas of continuous improvement. We are proud to review the positive client outcomes reports. We continue our interest in the new workplace health and safety system and its metrics. We have welcomed the restructuring of the HR area and look forward to work continuing on organisational culture.

We are absolutely delighted that RA Tas was recognised as an Employer of Choice in the State Government's Awards program. This application process involves testimonials and interviews from staff at all levels and is a real honour.

My thanks to my Board colleagues for their voluntary service to RA Tas and the commitment they show the organisation.

My thanks again to our CEO, Mat Rowell, for his leadership throughout the year, and also to Michael Kelly, our Chief Operating Officer and the rest of the Leadership Group for their hard work this year. And to all staff, thank you for your professionalism – you make RA Tas what it is – a leader in its field.

Mary Bent PSM

President
Relationships Australia Tasmania

We are absolutely delighted that RA Tas was recognised as an Employer of Choice in the State Government's Awards program

CEO's Year in Review

It is a pleasure to present to you this Annual Report for Relationships Australia Tasmania for the financial year.



The past financial year has again been one of many highlights. There is so much good work that goes on in our organisation, that to single out or highlight every success is almost impossible in this amount of space.

In the past year we have seen 7,942 individual clients across the breadth of our programs statewide. This equates to 22,162 individual sessions. About 57% of our clients are female and 43% are male, with some identifying as transgender or intersex.

This is a very high volume of work, but it is not the only picture. Our client outcomes again demonstrate that while our number of clients is appropriate, the outcomes we assist them to achieve by choosing to work with us are also outstanding.

We have embarked on White Ribbon Workplace Accreditation, we achieved Employer of Choice status with the State Government and we again participated actively in Neighbour Day.

We continue to contribute to the health and reputation of the national federation through our work on

various networks and working parties. These include HR, Finance, Research, Family Dispute Resolution, Clinical Practice and Communications.

We were successful in continuing to grow our mental health services in the new version of Access To Allied Psychological Services announced in June, and we established a new partnership with Lifeline Tasmania to assist in this program.

We have continued to evolve and adapt to the funding body's requirements by taking on SCORE as an early adopter and in adjusting to the new DSS Data Exchange and its requirements.

We have also well progressed our adoption of the Amovita supervision framework, a framework identified and recommended by practitioners and now being rolled out to all staff in the organisation, including those that are not directly client facing.

We successfully, collectively negotiated a new staff Enterprise Agreement, with new wages and conditions. This was a long process, and involved a lot of work for those involved in the negotiations,

and resulted in a yes vote for the agreement from 84% of those voting.

I want to thank all staff who work tirelessly every day with our clients and keep our organisation running smoothly. I want to thank all the members of our Board of Directors, who volunteer their time, skills and insight to the effective and rigorous governance of the organisation and, the management team and leadership group for their stewardship and collegiality. Michael Kelly, as COO, as always is a steady hand as my deputy, and I want to thank him specifically for being responsible for so much of our success in the past year.

We continue to grow from strength to strength and, as we consolidate our successes, the next financial year will be one of looking to new opportunities and to further securing our financial and service delivery security for the years ahead.

Mat Rowell
Chief Executive Officer
Relationships Australia Tasmania

Board and Management Team

Patron

Her Excellency, The Honourable
Professor Kate Warner AM,
Governor of Tasmania

Board Members



Mary Bent PSM, President



Sarah Gracie, Treasurer



Maureen Doherty, Vice
President



Kim Barker, Southern Representative



Ella Dixon, Secretary



Wendi Key, Northern Representative

Management Team



Daryl Lohrey, North West
Representative



Mat Rowell, Chief Executive Officer

Michael Kelly, Chief Operating
Officer

Navin Ram, Chief Financial
Officer

Jules Carroll, Director Early
Intervention Services

Ruth Davidson, Director Family
Law Services

Kristy Brown, Director People
and Culture

Robin Black, Manager Early
Intervention Services South

Debra Burden, Manager Early
Intervention Services
North/North West

Claire Jones, Manager Post
Separation Services South

Simon Reeve, Manager Post
Separation Services
North/North West

Craig Allen, Manager Client Intake
and Site Support

Honorary Life Members

Mr Giffard Causon
Mrs Margaret Watson
Mrs Greta Marshall
Mr Ron Adams
Dr Russell Pargiter
Mr Graham Marshall



Kristian Falconer, General
Representative



David Dilger, General Representative

About Relationships Australia Tasmania

We are a community-based, not-for-profit organisation with no religious affiliations.

Our services are for all members of the community, regardless of religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, lifestyle choice, cultural background or economic circumstances.

We are committed to enhancing the lives of communities, families and individuals and supporting positive and respectful relationships. We are part of a federated structure with large autonomous member organisations in every state and territory and a national office based in Canberra.

With over 65 years' experience, RA Tas has been helping Tasmanians to build positive relationships through

the provision of confidential relationship support services by our professionally trained and highly skilled staff.

Our Vision

All Tasmanians enjoy positive, respectful and fulfilling relationships.

Our Mission

We offer people the services and support they need, when they need it, to assist them when life presents challenges. This may be to do with a relationship, work, past trauma or other personal challenges. We aim to support people to transform their lives and their relationships in ways that matter to them.

Our Values

At RA Tas, we believe we should be:

- + Client-centred
- + Clear in our purpose and expectations
- + Optimistic and hopeful
- + Part of a collective effort
- + Committed to outstanding service
- + Professional and responsible

We are committed to enhancing the lives of communities, families and individuals and supporting positive and respectful relationships.

2014-19 Strategic Plan

In 2014 we developed a 5-year strategic plan for the organisation with a list of priorities for the continuous improvement of RA Tas.

This plan is an important framework to ensure that the work we do and our culture are aligned with our goals. Our work continues to be shaped and influenced by these key focus areas.

Our Priority Areas and Goals are as follows:

- + Client Experience and Outcomes
- + Community Profile and Reputation
- + Well-Functioning Organisation

- + People and Culture
- + Service Design and Business Development

We are happy to report that we have progressed initiatives and outcomes in all 5 of these areas. Of particular note is an increased media presence, including positioning ourselves as an opinion leader on issues of importance. We have also successfully negotiated a new enterprise agreement which provides improved pay and conditions to our

staff members, and we've performed well across all client satisfaction evaluations in our program areas, which means we are meeting and exceeding the needs of our client group.

All of these priorities enable us to deliver the best possible service to our clients and the community. The articles in this year's annual report provide an overview of the great work we have done to align with our goals and live our values and vision.



Key Programs, Projects and Staff Achievements

RA Tas recognised as an Employer of Choice

As an organisation we want to do everything we can to attract the best quality staff and also ensure that our hardworking team members are rewarded for their efforts. As part of this strategy, RA Tas applied for Employer of Choice recognition and we were delighted to be named as an Employer of Choice at the awards dinner on 30 May 2016. Employers of Choice are recognised by the Tasmanian Government for demonstrating contemporary workplace practices and outstanding support for their staff.

The health and wellbeing of our staff are core to the values of our organisation, and to how we achieve our shared goals. We all collectively have a responsibility to create a safe, healthy, professional and respectful workplace, and we are privileged that every one of our staff members chooses to work with us.

It is both significant and esteemed recognition of the range of initiatives we have on offer, and our continuous efforts to provide staff with a supportive and inspiring work environment and to make sure all staff get home safely at the end of the day. At the awards dinner special mention was made of our policy of celebrating achievements and important occasions with cake!

Acknowledgment of our standing as an Employer of Choice is a wonderful recognition that we are well and truly heading in the right direction and are living our values. Look out for the prominent Employer of Choice branding on many of our promotional and recruitment materials!



Employers of Choice are recognised by the Tasmanian Government for demonstrating contemporary workplace practices and outstanding support for their staff.



Elder Relationship Services Pilot

At RA Tas we want to foster positive relationships between all members of the community. The work we do goes much broader than relationships between couples, and a great example of this is the Elder Relationship Services mediation and counselling pilot service that began in 2016.

This program assists older people and their families to:

- + prevent or resolve family conflict or have difficult conversations
- + plan for the future, including medical, health, financial or living arrangements
- + resolve differences, to improve family relationships
- + make decisions that protect the interests, rights and safety of older people

It is part of a national trial coordinated by the Relationships Australia national office which is occurring in 6 locations across the country, with Launceston being the site chosen for Tasmania. As an organisation, we are always listening to what our clients and the community tell us, and the catalyst for the trial was client feedback referring to the stress that occurs within families when there is a need to make decisions. With Tasmania being the oldest and fastest ageing state in the country, it is imperative that we have the necessary support in place to aid people and their families through times of transition.

Many people spoke of how difficult it is to have conversations when making arrangements for the care of their elderly parents. Similarly, older Australians often feel the same stress when there are disagreements in their family, especially when the arguments are related to them or their care arrangements. With this in

mind, a key component of the trial is research, to be able to demonstrate if this service improves outcomes for older Australians and their families.

As a new service, contact has been made with aged care providers, social workers at hospitals, Centrelink, lawyers, and aged specific services from Council on the Ageing (COTA), Red Cross, the Tasmanian Guardianship and Administration Board and the Elder Abuse Hotline.

RA Tas staff members have attended elder-specific training provided by Professor Dale Bagshaw. This covered topics to consider when working with older clients and methods used to ensure the older person remains at the centre of the discussions and has significant input on decisions being made.

This pilot has already had a positive impact and we look forward to continuing to work with ageing members of our community.

A woman with blonde hair and glasses, wearing a blue cardigan, is smiling and holding a black camera up towards the viewer. The background is a warm, slightly blurred indoor setting.

Crystal Neep

14 years with the Children's Contact Service,
and still going strong.

STAFF STORY

About 14 years ago, Crystal Neep started her work with RA Tas as a 'Children's Support Worker' at the Launceston Children's Contact Service (CCS). As a casual staff member, Crystal worked on weekends and, on some occasions, worked every weekend for several months in a row. For the first 8 years, the Launceston CCS provided services from a childcare centre, which leased its facilities to RA Tas for use on the weekends. The files came in two suitcases that were delivered on Friday afternoons and collected on Mondays.

Fast forward to 2016 and Crystal is now the Coordinator of Children's Contact Services in the North and

North West, which includes the Launceston and North West CCS.

Over these 14 years Crystal has seen thousands of children and families benefit from the use of the CCS. Some of the biggest changes over that time include the move to a dedicated premises on Paterson Street and implementation of the CCS Case Management Model. This approach to working more effectively with CCS clients has helped many to move through the process of using the CCS, and hopefully towards being confident to manage their own contact arrangements.

"The families have come and gone, staff may have changed, processes

have been tweaked and modified, but the heart of what we do remains the same," Crystal says.

"It may not be the easiest type of work, as we are dealing with families who are adjusting to some of the most difficult changes in life. For some families this is a very long journey and we don't know where the end point is or what it will look like.

"But I'm still here, after all this time, because I can see that I'm making a difference to individuals, families, and especially for the children."

A renewed Agreement: *The Relationships Australia Tasmania Enterprise Agreement 2015*

It's been a big year for our staff and bargaining team as we negotiated a new enterprise bargaining agreement.

The *Relationships Australia Tasmania Employee Collective Agreement 2009* was past its nominal expiry date, and on 23 September 2015 the first bargaining meeting was held, with numerous employee bargaining representatives and the representative union actively participating.

Throughout the negotiating process, regular progress updates were communicated to all staff. The negotiating team carefully listened to, considered, and responded to all proposals that were put forward by bargaining representatives, and adopted elements of bargaining representatives' proposals in the proposed Agreement that was taken to ballot.

After nine months of productive bargaining, all RA Tas staff had the opportunity to review the proposed Agreement and ask any questions prior to being asked to vote on the Agreement. During this period, the RA Tas negotiating team visited all RA Tas sites to hold information sessions for interested employees. An independent ballot was conducted by the Australian Electoral Commission from 14-28 June 2016.

We were thrilled to report that 84% of employees who voted supported

the new Agreement and it was terrific to see such a large number of staff casting their vote (78 votes, 66 Yes and 12 No).

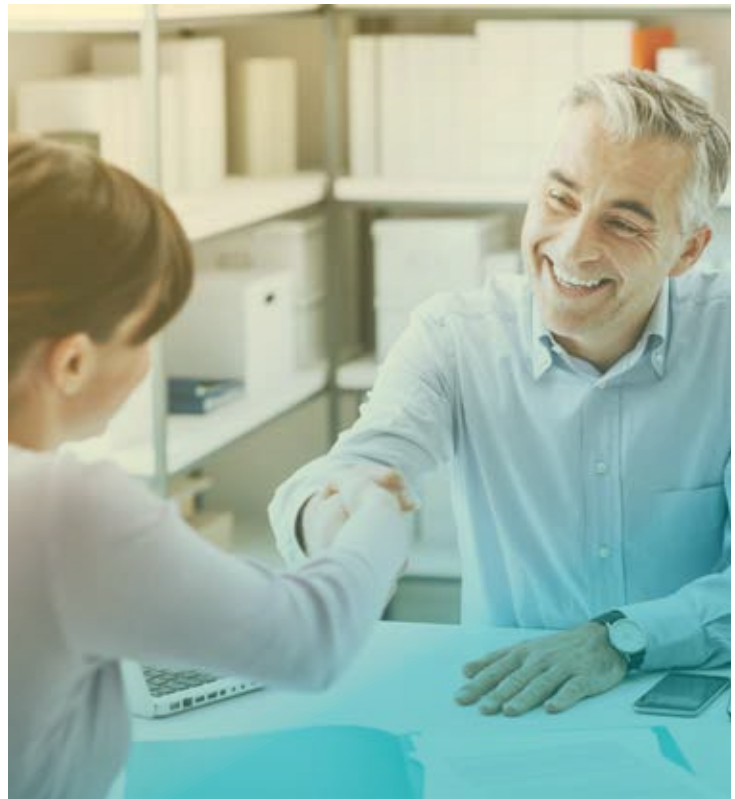
The new Agreement has been approved by the Fair Work Commission and has come into effect. Employees currently employed under the Agreement received a retrospective salary increase from the first full pay period commencing on or after 1 September 2015.

The negotiating team would like to thank the employee bargaining representatives for their participation in the bargaining process and for keeping their colleagues up to date and informed. Thanks also to all

those staff members who attended the information sessions and who took the opportunity to have their say on the proposed Agreement. You are to be congratulated on your willingness to be heard and for making the most of your opportunity to vote.

This process has provided a terrific opportunity for more engagement between all of our team members and for everyone to gain a broader understanding of the different roles and responsibilities of RA Tas.

We're pleased that the increased salary and improved conditions recognise the outstanding contribution that all of our staff make to our organisation.





Jess Hartley

Helping clients at every age and stage.

STAFF STORY

Jess Hartley, Access to Allied Psychological Services (ATAPS) Senior Practitioner and Clinical Psychologist, has worked for RA Tas for just over four years, and moved to the senior practitioner role 18 months ago. Thriving on the chance to play more of a leadership role in the organisation, Jess also enjoys working with different members of the community.

"I really love our work with clients and the opportunity to engage with different clinical presentations and age groups," Jess says.

"It's rare to be part of a program where you get to work with people throughout the stages of life - from newborns and their parents to older adults.

"I'm also pleased to be involved in one of the only programs within RA Tas that works specifically with mental health presentations, providing focused psychological treatments and strategies."

Jess says a highlight for her working with the ATAPS team is how supportive they are.

"At RA Tas we don't just talk about supporting people and fostering relationships, we walk the talk as well!"

Parenting Separately Program (Parenting Orders Program)

One of the most difficult yet crucial areas that we are responsible for at RA Tas is looking after the best interests of children after family separations. The Parenting Separately Program is an integral part of RA Tas' Post Separation Services, providing coaching, education and case management to separated parents who are experiencing high conflict, especially over arrangements for their children's care.

In keeping with RA Tas' commitment to continuous review and improvement, Parenting Separately was reviewed in late 2014. Although the aims of the program were

retained, significant changes were introduced to make the program more relevant to its clients.

Access to education workshops within the program is now much more flexible. A wider range of dates and times for education sessions, and clearly segmented topics, provide clients with new choice options. These changes have led to significantly reduced waiting times for our clients.

Additionally, during the review, research into current adult learning principles was linked with key messages from client feedback, activity within other Centres, and current case management practices. The result has been a

refreshed program that now has statewide consistency, rejuvenated documentation and a strong commitment to working with clients' learning styles within a more informal environment.

Clients using the program have found it to be flexible, engaging and highly relevant to their current parenting and communication challenges.

Crucially, the review maintained children's best interests at the heart of the program, while updating and refreshing the activities and approaches which support their parents to achieve positive and respectful relationships.

MindOUT

RA Tas is proud to be a MindOUT champion organisation, with a committed and supportive Board, CEO and Leadership group. We have been involved in the MindOUT Project since March 2015.

This project was established by the National LGBTI Health Alliance in response to research identifying that LGBTI people have significantly higher rates of depression, anxiety and risk of suicide. The key focus area for the project is ensuring as a mainstream organisation we continue to build on the inclusive culture of RA Tas, recognising through our actions our commitment to be responsive to the needs of

LGBTI people and communities.

We have continued to build on a culture that is accepting and embracing of diversity. The MindOUT project has continued to provide training for all staff, which builds on our mandatory core competency for best practice principles of working with LGBTI people.

Other initiatives include an inclusivity audit throughout the organisation, which involved ensuring that we sustain inclusive principles beyond the life of this project by incorporating our commitment into policy, procedure and promotional material.

During November last year, some staff and their families participated in the Pride Parade in Hobart. Staff across the state were involved in spraying their handprint in rainbow colours onto an RA Tas banner that was carried during the parade.

These events provide a great opportunity for us to raise awareness around the issues facing LGBTI people and communities and the important role we have to play in providing an inclusive, safe and supportive service from the first point of contact with RA Tas and at each interaction with LGBTI people in our communities.



Tania Ratnayake

Our newest, and possibly youngest, Family Dispute Resolution Practitioner at RA Tas.

STAFF STORY

Tania Ratnayake's supervisor in Melbourne suggested Family Dispute Resolution (FDR) as she thought mediation would be a great addition to her counselling skills.

"At one stage I almost dropped out of the FDR training because it was not what I expected. Now I am so glad I didn't as my love for process thrives in this role!" Tania said.

Tania's start in Tasmania was a slightly bumpy one as her accommodation arrangements fell through, and she lived in a hotel for the first few weeks before she found a more permanent location.

While trying to work out her home situation, she was also learning

about intake interviews and 'second sessions' for the first time.

"As time progressed, and I learned more from the team at RA Tas, I soon realised that I am doing exactly what I should be for my set of skills and interests. I was also boosted by having the same values as RA Tas."

Tania says the move had been made possible because of the support she received from her family and from the team at RA Tas. In the future she would like to become a registered psychologist, child consultant and have dancing classes every day!

Client Services Team

The Client Service Workers (CSW) are often the first people that clients and members of the community interact with when dealing with RA Tas. We are fortunate to have an array of dedicated CSWs who are committed to a culture of continuous systems and process improvement.

One of the main themes for our CSWs over the previous year has been a desire to provide efficient, effective and professional client services.

The documentation of our team processes has been a large undertaking and has achieved consistency in processes for all venues statewide. From these documents the team can easily identify how best to support practitioners and clients, as well as attend to general office requests at each site.

With Client Intake Centre (CIC) and Site Manuals completed, it can be expected that if a client contacts RA Tas via phone or arrives at one of the various locations around the state, they will receive excellent and consistent service. The team will continue to focus and advise on constructing statewide procedures that result in RA Tas' clients receiving the support they need, when they need it.

The CIC team, located in Hobart, has an excellent record in call service rates. In 2015-16 CIC answered 32,664 calls, up from approximately 30,000 the year before. Despite this rise, the team has excelled with

an average waiting time for clients of under 15 seconds. The efficiency of the team is attributed to the cohesion that has been established in recent years. With the departure of the Senior Client Services Worker on maternity leave and the introduction of new employees, this cohesion has assisted the team to provide program knowledge to new employees to advise clients of the best service available for their needs.

Each of the site offices also maintains a professional representation of RA Tas. As Front of House (FOH) is a face-to-face encounter with clients, the friendliness and professionalism of the staff is paramount. The staff in

challenges and reinforces RA Tas' missions and values is an example to be commended. It is exciting to see what lies ahead for this team over the next 12 months.

The positive nature in which the CSW statewide team embraces new challenges and reinforces RA Tas' missions and values is an example to be commended.

this role at each site maintain a level of professionalism and excellence sometimes in very difficult circumstances with distressed or agitated clients.

This year has seen the FOH take on additional administrative roles, such as scheduling practitioner diaries, report production and analysis, site account maintenance and more.

The positive nature in which the CSW statewide team embraces new



Co-location to the Clare Street Site

RA Tas provides services in the main population centres right around Tasmania to ensure we can offer the support needed to assist people when life presents challenges. We recognised the benefits to our staff, clients and service delivery if our southern services were co-located, and in July 2015 the Family Relationship Centre/Family Dispute Resolution (FRC/FDR) service re-located to our Clare Street premises.

This co-location has resulted in improved links between the FRC, existing services and administrative staff, particularly within the Post Separation Services (PSS). We are very happy to see that increased understanding of what PSS offer and the commonality of presenting issues across the client base have led to greater confidence in, and accuracy of, referral.

Another benefit has been the improved efficiency of administrative processes as services consult and work together to create a structured, predictable and seamless process. There has also been the opportunity for team bonding, and the opportunity to chat and get to know each other better at events, such as the Wear it Purple morning tea.

CCS and Parenting Orders Program (POP) workers have been attending monthly Collective Minds and Group Supervision meetings, where they actively participate with Family Dispute Resolution Practitioners (FDRPs) in discussions about multifaceted cases, problem-

solving issues and sharing ideas for therapeutic approaches. Three FDRPs are now, alongside their mediation roles, working in PSS to either deliver parenting separately workshops or work individually with clients. This cross-service understanding for the FDRPs facilitating these courses also supported their work in FDR, as they felt better able to deliver information in FDR second sessions.

FDRPs have been invited into the Client Intake Centre to observe the scope of calls. This has allowed both teams to correlate information given to clients, confirm supporting resources and possible referral pathways, and confidently create links between their presenting needs and potential services.

significantly expedited this process.

Importantly, clients who are engaged in family dispute resolution report satisfaction in receiving one-on-one support from POP workers and reinforcement of child-focused information and resources via individual and group sessions. The 'circle of security' in knowing that practitioners from both programs have an understanding of their personal circumstances and knowledge of the services in which they are engaged creates support and structure.

The team members in each program will continue to work actively to support clients in complex cases (where multiple issues or service

Another benefit has been the improved efficiency of administrative processes as services consult and work together to create a structured, predictable and seamless process.

Practitioners from the FRC team are working within a case management model wherein they are able to provide greater support for clients via referral to and subsequent discussion with POP workers. We are pleased to see that proximity of services has

providers are involved) to engage in our services more effectively, which will ensure the best possible outcomes for all involved.



Kate Cunningham

From Counsellor to Accountant!

STAFF STORY

Not many people at RA Tas probably realise that our Accountant, Kate Cunningham, started her career as a counsellor in drug and alcohol services. She originally went to university and completed a Bachelor of Arts with a double major in psychology before retraining and studying a Bachelor of Business and Commerce and becoming an Assistant Accountant with Federal Group while living in Strahan. She then went on to work in a range of accounting roles before joining the organisation.

Kate has worked at RA Tas since November 2015, is based in the Montpelier Retreat office and enjoys

the diversity of her role, which includes compliance work and looking after building maintenance.

"It's a great place to work," Kate says. "People support you on a professional and personal level."

Not having worked at a not-for-profit organisation before, it's a different environment for Kate who likes that there's not a bottom-line profit target to meet.

"At the end of the day, accounting is accounting and obviously we still have a budget to prepare and stick to. But we're not trying to make money, our focus is on helping people."

Adult Specialist Support Services

Over the last decade there has been increased recognition of the harm caused to many thousands of Australians by past institutional and child welfare practices. RA Tas is funded by the Federal Government to play an important role in providing three specialist services to support and assist those adults still living with the trauma of their experiences.

The three services are:

Find & Connect Support Service

This service provides specialist counselling, referral, peer, educational and social support services for Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants. Forgotten Australians are the estimated 500,000 people who experienced institutional or other out-of-home care as children and young people in the last century in Australia, many of whom suffered physical, emotional and/or sexual abuse while in 'care'.

The people who identify as Forgotten Australians are generally now aged from around 40 years of age up.

For Forgotten Australians, the loss of family, usually including separation from siblings, caused grief, feelings of isolation, guilt, self-blame and confusion about their identity, as well as feelings of abandonment. The Find & Connect Services supports Forgotten Australians to deal with the legacy of this trauma as well as to search for and reconnect with family members.

Former Child Migrants are people who, as children, were sent unaccompanied from the United Kingdom to Australia following World War II. Many of these children were placed in institutions where they suffered the same abuses as Forgotten Australians. The Find & Connect Service provides access to specialist counselling, support services and assistance to search for records and family members.

Forced Adoption Support Services

This services provides specialist support to people affected by forced adoption. This was the practice of taking the babies from unmarried mothers, against their will, and placing them for adoption. Former Australian prime minister Julia Gillard offered a national apology to those affected by forced adoptions in 2013. The services aim to improve access to peer support, records and family tracing for all those who were affected.

Royal Commission Community-Based Support Services

This service provides support to people affected by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (the Royal Commission). This includes a broad range of assistance including counselling, information and referral and case management to ensure victims and survivors of child sexual abuse, and their families, are able to access support and participate in the Royal Commission.

For Forgotten Australians, the loss of family, usually including separation from siblings, caused grief, feelings of isolation, guilt, self-blame and confusion about their identity, as well as feelings of abandonment.

Staff Conference 2015

Our annual staff conference continues to inspire and educate with almost 100 staff coming together in Hobart on the 26-27 September for the 2015 conference. The theme of the conference was “One Team” with the key message highlighting that while we work across the state in a range of different programs, and in a number of different locations, we are all part of the greater RA Tas team.

The program was developed by a dedicated conference committee, made up of representatives of staff across the organisation, who worked hard throughout the year to engage a range of interesting and inspirational

speakers, develop some fun activities and pull together a variety of workshops aimed at meeting the professional development needs of staff.

Alisa Camplin, Olympic gold medalist, reflected on the importance of a team, even in reaching success in an individual sport. She spoke of her hard work and sheer determination to reach her dream of winning an Olympic gold medal. Saroo Brierley, whose inspirational story of finding his family against the odds has been made into a Hollywood film, highlighted to staff the importance of

self-belief and never giving up. Both speakers were well received by the group and instilled a level of energy and excitement among attendees.

A range of other workshops and sessions were held to engage and energise staff. A team challenge was also used as a way of encouraging teamwork across the traditional teams that operate in the organisation. Overwhelming positive feedback was received from staff following the conference, and we look forward to another successful Staff Conference in 2016.



Aboriginal Women's Healing Program

The Aboriginal Cultural Connections Program has been established to provide a Women's Healing Group that focuses on strengthening the physical, emotional and social wellbeing of women in Tasmanian Aboriginal Communities.

RA Tas team members have received exceptional feedback about the Women's Healing Group and the extremely positive impact it is having on the lives of participants and their families.

'I am beautiful, I am strong, I am enough just the way I am and you helped me figure that out'

This highly successful model is based on principles of CBT and uses the holistic model of wellbeing with an arts focus to deliver the program. The aim for this program is for participants to have a greater understanding of what we mean when we talk about a holistic model of wellbeing. They will have an individualised self-care plan based on their individual needs and a piece of art that represents their self-care goals.

The practitioner's aim is to reinforce that it's okay to look after your own needs and, while as women

we often tend to put others first, we can't be there for those we care about if we aren't first there for ourselves.

The Women's Healing Group focuses on 5 areas;

Self and balance

Every single person has countless relationships in their lifetime. Some have a more emotional connection than others, but every relationship we have means something to us on some level. The aim is for participants to go away with a plan of how they can achieve balance in their own life.

Heart - Emotional Wellbeing

- + to be engaged with family and friends
- + supporting yourself and others
- + understanding of what brings joy

Spirit - Spiritual Wellbeing

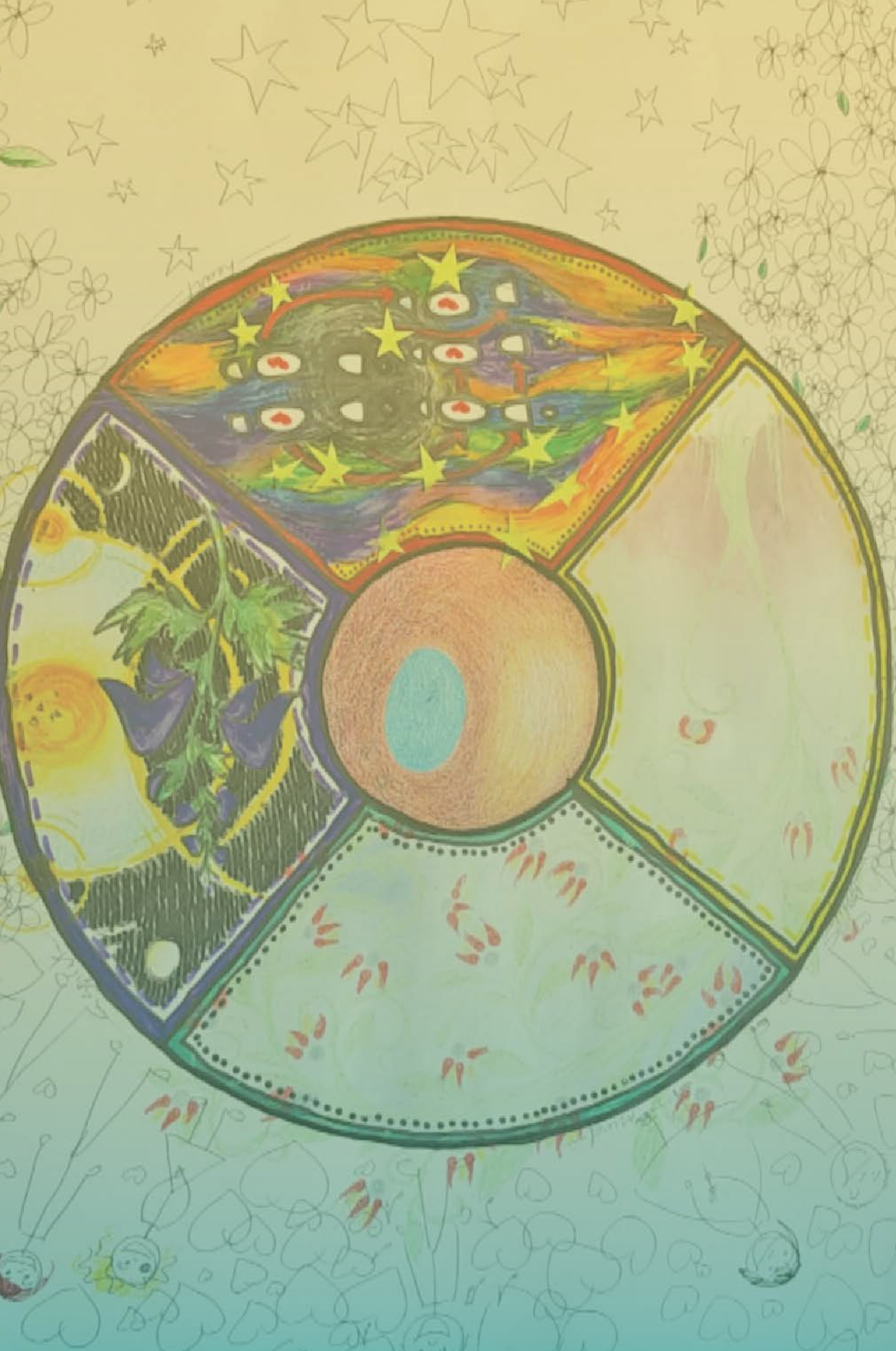
- + connection to culture/ community
- + sense of meaning in one's life
- + to contribute in some way to the world around us

Mind - Mental Wellbeing

- + to be happy and have fun
- + good self-talk
- + participating in areas that are stimulating

Body - Physical Wellbeing

- + to be fit and healthy
- + to be active
- + to look after your health needs/ doctors etc





Data, Evaluation and Research at RA Tas

The 2015-16 year saw a range of exciting new developments in the space of research, collection of data and outcomes reporting for RA Tas. As our Chief Executive Officer and Chief Operating Officer like to say, we are making data fun!

In August 2015 we began the collection of an extended dataset of information from our clients, as per the requirements of our main funder, the Department of Social Services. This additional demographic information from our clients gives us a better picture of the profile of people that we see at RA Tas on a weekly, monthly and annual basis. For example, in the 2015-16 year we saw almost 8000 clients (7942 to be exact) across more than 14 programs at multiple venues (plus outreach!).

We also started collecting outcomes from clients in relation to the Standard Client Outcomes Reporting Evaluation (SCORE), which will offer

RA Tas a new way of tracking client pathways and outcomes throughout our service. We know that client data (both demographic and outcomes-focused) is the best way to examine and reflect on our service delivery. It gives us the information we need to analyse our existing service structures and to plan for future service direction. It helps identify gaps in service delivery and identifies how we can best meet the needs of our clients.

The 6-monthly client satisfaction evaluation remains one of the most useful ways to gather a snapshot of client information to determine the overall level of satisfaction of clients in experiencing our services. As in previous years, we were overwhelmed with the positive feedback from the clients of RA Tas. The most recent evaluation, conducted over a 15-day period in May/June 2016, showed that overall, 96% of clients agreed that the service listened to them and understood their issues, 98% agreed

that they were satisfied with the service, 88% said they felt better able to deal with issues that they sought help with and 95% said they would recommend the service to others. This satisfaction data is very high and shows that clients are happy with the services they receive when attending RA Tas.

In the 2016-17 year we hope to further develop relationships with other institutions such as UTAS and other RA states and territories to look at what research we can do to effectively measure the results of services provided by RA Tas and to provide feedback to our staff on the importance of the work they do and the results they achieve.



Some reflections from Bill Field

STAFF STORY

Since RA Tas won the Family Mediation tender in 1994, it has been an integral part of the services offered by the organisation. Bill Field has been involved since the beginning and recalls that when the program started there were no trained mediators, so those who were recruited did on-the-job training as a group.

"Our backgrounds were quite varied; two lawyers, a teacher (me), a counsellor, an engineer, and a real estate agent.

"In the first year of operation, only 40 hours of client service were completed. Intakes were part of the joint sessions, which were all co-mediated. The service was restricted to Hobart and operated from the RA Tas buildings in Murray Street," Bill said.

Mediators were all employed in day jobs so after-hours sessions were the norm. After a number of years, Family Law Regulations were changed to exclude those without an appropriate

degree or diploma (law, social work, psychology or mediation) from continuing their practice.

Bill remembers these early years as being challenging. Experience was scarce and a model was relied on where sequential steps were standard so that the process flowed as productively as possible. Mistakes were made but the co-mediation model helped practitioners to be reasonably effective.

"There was a good deal of suspicion and some opposition, unlike now, from the legal fraternity. Lawyers now support our work, as they are legally required to do, and direct referrals by them are quite common."

Over time, Launceston mediators were appointed, with local part-time staff being supplemented by Hobart mediators.

"Family Relationship Centres further expanded mediation services for the state. There is a shortage of mediators, although the changes in entry requirements have gone some way to addressing this issue."

A noteworthy and very successful pilot program designed for high conflict families was undertaken – the Coordinated Family Dispute Resolution Program. Each party was supported by both a lawyer and a counsellor for parenting issues addressed by co-mediation sessions.

Bill has seen a great deal of change during his time at RA Tas and notes that younger people are now being attracted to the profession, with permanent full or part-time workers needed to keep up with the growing demand.

Financial Management

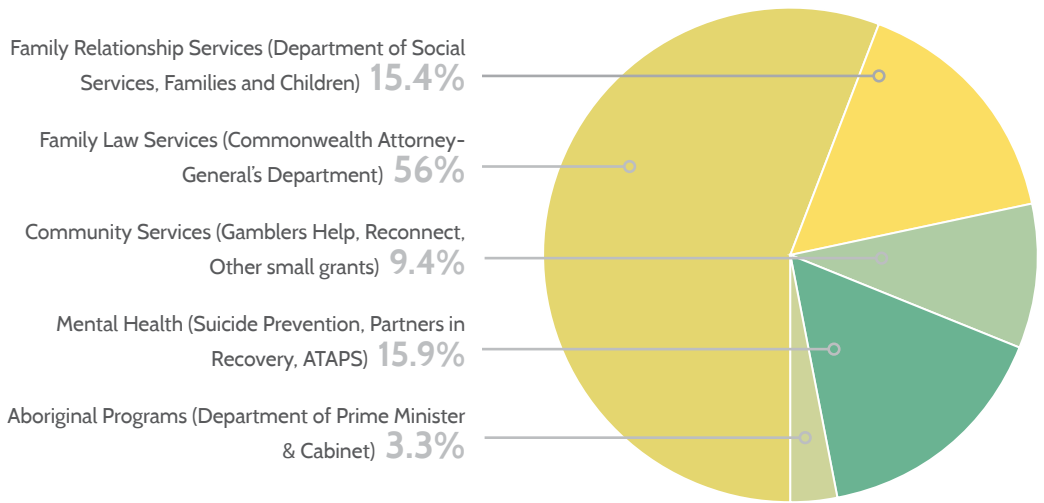
Relationships Australia Tasmania made an operating surplus of \$357,847 in the 2015-16 financial year.

Total expenditure increased by 3.9% in the 2015-16 financial year compared to the 2014-15 financial year while overall income increased by 5.9%.

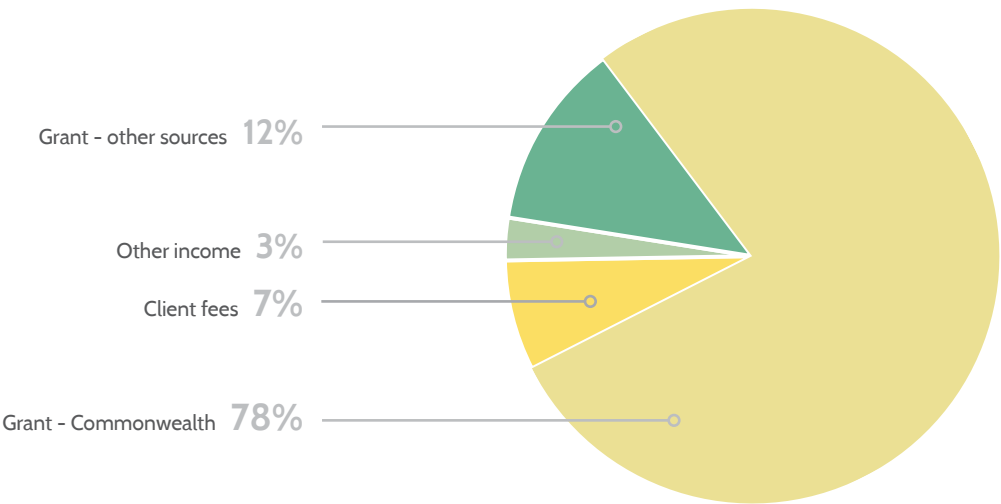
Grants from the Commonwealth Government did not change significantly compared to 2014-15. Other income, increased by 32.2% compared to 2014-15. This is mainly due to a one-off bequest from a former client. Client fees increased approximately 13.6%.

	2016 (\$)	2015 (\$)
REVENUE		
Grant income and fees	8,456,149	8,026,405
Other income	205,707	155,543
Total Revenue	8,661,856	8,181,948
EXPENDITURE		
Employees	6,819,840	6,469,615
Other operations	1,484,169	1,521,319
Total Expenditure	8,304,009	7,990,934
NET SURPLUS	357,847	191,014

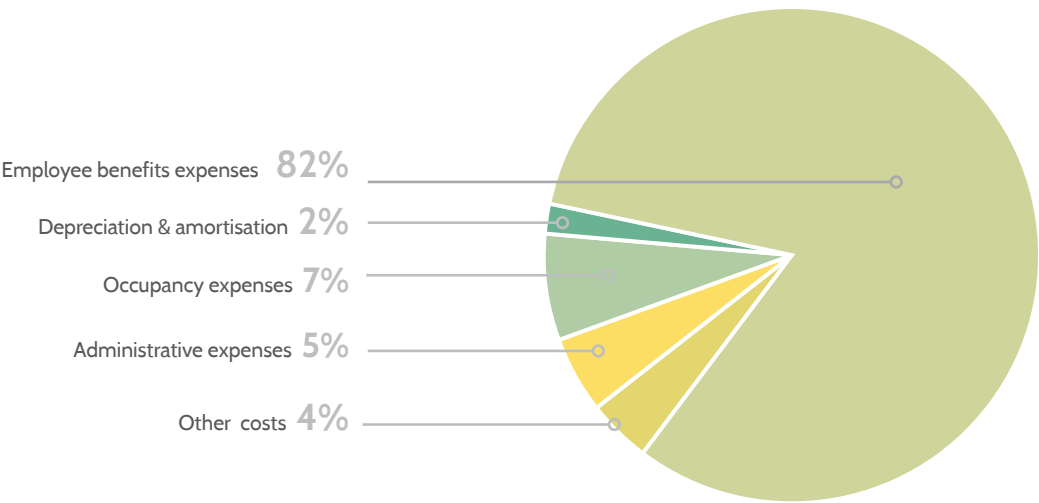
Funding by Service Type 2015-16



Sources of Income 2015-16



Areas of Expenditure 2015-16



Locations

Hobart

18 & 20 Clare Street
New Town 7008

38 Montpelier Retreat
Battery Point 7004

Launceston

6 Paterson Street
Launceston 7250

123 York Street
Launceston 7250

Devonport

68 & 70 North Fenton Street
Devonport 7310

Regional Services

Bicheno
Bridgewater
Burnie
Campbell Town
Cygnet
Deloraine
Dunalley
Glenorchy
Huonville
Kingston
Ravenswood
Scottsdale
Sorell
St Helens
St Marys

Mobile Services

Cape Barren Island
Circular Head
Flinders Island

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