

ANNUAL REPORT

— 18/19



The Artwork

The lines represent corporate structure and the circles represent Aboriginal culture, people gathering, family helping and just a place to meet. The lines intersect with and continue out beyond the circles. Together, they form a unique and vibrant pattern.

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About the Artist

“I am an Aboriginal artist from the Daly River. I grew up in Melbourne and became a ward of the State at the age of 10. I am a Forgotten Australian. I was an addict for many years. I have been homeless, spent time in prison and was a victim of domestic violence and have survived it all. I have found great strength and courage and have a passion for life.”

Who We Are

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“Over our 35-year history, ACSO has been that community organisation that ‘dared to tread’ where others would not. We always took on the problem and the case that was considered too difficult and made positive impacts.”

– March 2019 CEO Update to employees

ACSO has grown to become one of Australia's leading forensic community support organisations. Formerly a Fitzroy drop-in centre established in 1983 by Stan McCormack. The Australian Community Support Organisation (ACSO) has been brave, committed and driven to lead change and respond to emerging community issues which impact us all.

At ACSO, we provide a comprehensive range of services designed for individuals at all points of the criminal justice continuum; including those at risk of coming into contact with the system.

All services are individualised and planned in collaboration to ensure they meet the needs and goals each client wants to achieve.

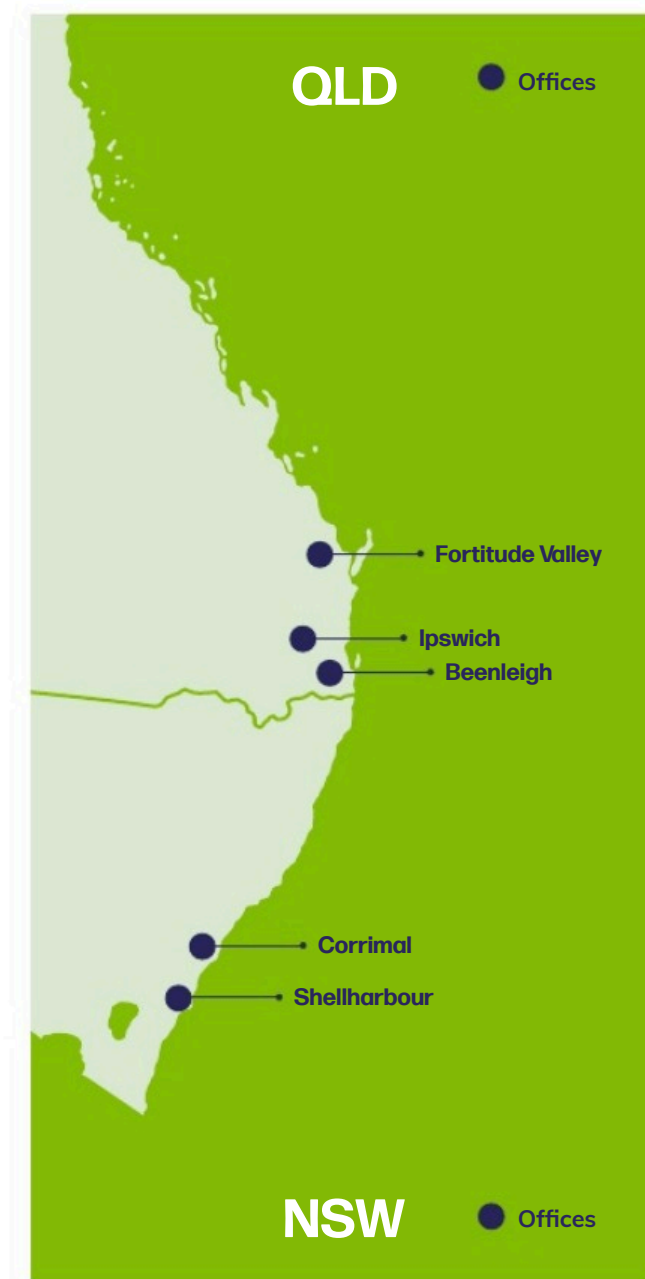
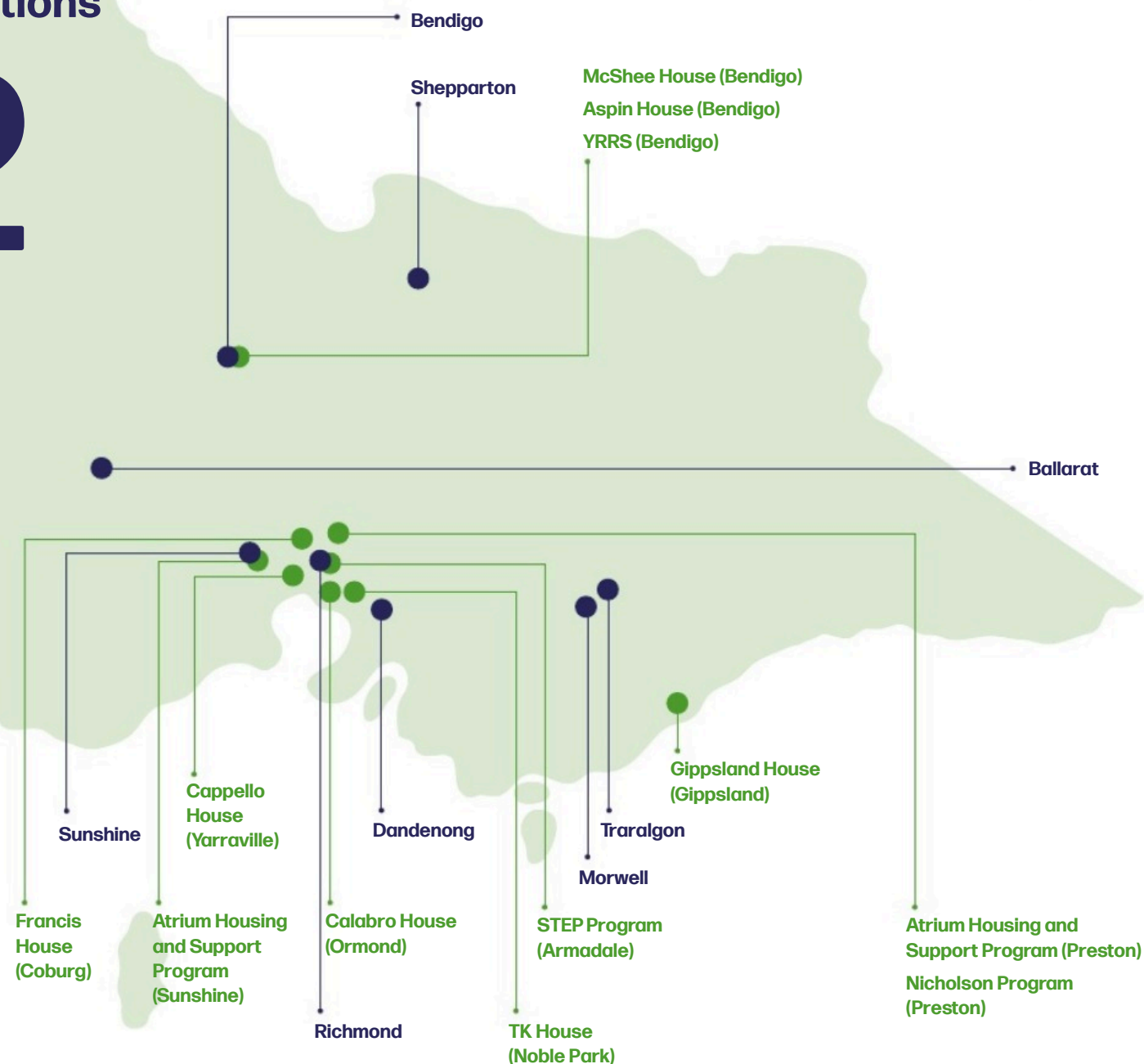
Acknowledgement

ACSO proudly acknowledges Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and their rich culture and pays respect to their Elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia's first peoples and as the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land and water on which we rely.

We recognise and value the ongoing contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities to Australian life and how this enriches us. We embrace the spirit of reconciliation, working towards equality of outcomes and ensuring an equal voice.

Map of Locations

2



Chair and CEO Message

3



Chair
and CEO
Message

Welcome to ACSO's Annual Report for 2018-19

The past year at ACSO can best be described as an environment of change, challenge and opportunity.

The Current Justice Environment

Our fundamental objective to stop people from entering the criminal justice system is more relevant in 2019 than at any time in the past decade.

A safer community is not one with a growing prison population.

In 1910, Winston Churchill developed an agenda for criminal justice reform, stating "the first real principle which should guide anyone trying to establish a good system of prisons should be to prevent as many people as possible getting there at all." It's crucial to acknowledge that ninety-nine per cent of prisoners return to the community at some point.

With the current 'tough on crime' rhetoric in Australia, our state and territory governments continue to increase their prison populations. This has seen a particularly concerning rise in pre-trial detention or remand- the highest increase in medium and maximum-security prison places are now for people who are not yet found guilty. This surge is unprecedented, unsustainable and is a driving force for our Board and employees to create solutions to divert people with complex needs away from the criminal justice system.

Prisons are places which deprive liberties and where survival becomes paramount. Prisons do not facilitate personal or cultural safety, nor are they places where people can heal from past trauma or learn personal accountability to modify behaviour and live a crime-free life.

Over the past two years, ACSO has been privy to global conversations which have confirmed that other countries are struggling with the same problem – most people exit prison in worse condition than when they entered.

After twenty years of mass incarceration in the USA, there has been a bipartisan shift in policy thinking on dealing with crime and imprisonment. States such as New Jersey, New York and Texas have wound back their expenditure on prisons. Instead, they have transferred a proportion of this funding to treatment services for substance abuse, mental illness, increased social housing, specialist education and employment services for people at-risk of entering the criminal justice system. This resembles an obvious and logical place to start in Australia.

We commend the Victorian Government's recent decision to focus on a new Crime Prevention



Chair
and CEO
Message

Agenda that will explore strategies to identify and respond to vulnerable, at-risk cohorts. We urge the community, along with elected representatives of government, to invest more in treating the causes of crime rather than expecting corrections administrations to assert control and take responsibility for outcomes which they do not influence at all – the actions of others.

Pushing forward, ACSO will become more intentional and focused on advocating and creating service models that divert people away from the criminal justice system before they become entrenched in it.

Introducing our 2020-2023 Strategic Plan

To solidify all which we have learnt over the past years, we have re-set our strategic direction.

We are excited to announce our new Vision has been created by our passionate employees, led by our recently formed employee Strategic Advisory Committee.

Our Vision is for a community where everyone has the opportunity to thrive, and prison truly is the last resort.

Our new Strategic Plan honours our 30+ year history and our Vision is underpinned by our

Purpose to strengthen the wellbeing of communities by advocating for and delivering services which divert people away from the criminal justice system. We will use data, the voice of our clients, knowledge from Australia and from around the world to advocate for more community rehabilitation options rather than expenditure on new prisons. This approach will open new opportunities for ACSO to work earlier in the criminal justice continuum, rather than wait for people to be sentenced and likely exited in worse condition than when they entered. After consolidating our systems and corporate structures over the past two years, we are ready to realise further growth in Victoria and other states and territories in Australia.

On behalf of the Board, executive team and ACSO employees, we're proud to share our 2018-2019 Annual Report with you.

Warm Regards,

Karen Corry
ACSO Chair

Vaughan Winther
ACSO CEO

Board of Directors



Ms Karen Corry

Chair of the Board and Chair of the Strategic Input and Positioning Committee



Ms Kathleen Barker

Deputy Chair and Chair of the Quality, Safety and Service Delivery Committee



Ms Janine Holloway

Chair of the Finance Risk and Audit Committee



The Honourable Sally Brown AM

Patron of ACSO



The Honourable Paul Coghlan AO



Dr Danny Sullivan



Ms Jane Hall



Dr Mark Rallings



Ms Judy Finn



Mr Andrew Chadwick

Our Year in Review

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Our 2018-2019 year in review

Firstly, we would like to acknowledge and thank our outgoing Chair, Stewart Leslie who served ACSO for nearly a decade. During his time as Chair, Stewart led ACSO to develop strong foundations which provided a platform for our ongoing growth. From all at ACSO, we would like to thank Stewart for his years of service, and we warmly welcome our passionate new Board Chair, Karen Corry.

Over the past year, ACSO has invested further in promoting excellence in our services. We have continued to implement improved health and safety practices, further developed our OSCA case management system and grown our

repository of data. Our focus on quality data and research, together with our strong partnership with Swinburne University's Centre for Forensic Behavioural Science, will allow us to enhance the forensic practice skills of our employees to improve outcomes for our clients.

Expanding our impact

It has been another growth year for ACSO, expanding our rehabilitation services across the spectrum of diverting people from committing a crime or re-offending through to reintegrating people from prison back into the community.

"OnTRACC did deliver a reduced return to custody rate for high-risk and medium-to-high-risk parolees. However, this was at a lower rate than was required in the funding contract. This in no way reflects on the quality of work done by the OnTRACC team – their practice was exemplary."

– January 2019 CEO Update to employees

Programs launched



ReStart
Reintegration
Support Program



STEP Forensic
Disability
Residential
Program



Atrium Housing
and Support
Program

Programs extended and expanded



Community Support
Program (CSP)
expanded, which will
see the program double
in size over the next
four years



Family and Carer
Support Program
contract renewed
and expanded



Mental Health
Community Support
Service Intake
Program extended



Disability
Residential
Services contract
extended



Transition to
Work contract
extended

Services ceasing 2018-19

We would like to acknowledge our incredible New South Wales and Victorian employees who worked for our programs; OnTRACC, Initial Transition Support, Specialist Accommodation Placement Advocate (SAPA) and Jobs Victoria Employment Network. Partner contracts, key performance indicators and pilot programs come with complexity and risk, challenges and learning, and our past learnings will be used to inform future success. ACSO would like to extend our gratitude for your dedication and impact on our organisation and to our community.

Thank you to our ACSO team

The Board would like to thank our dedicated employees and leadership teams for a phenomenal year. For the next chapter of ACSO, we ask our employees to continue to show their passion and dedication to changing the lives of some of the most vulnerable people in our communities.

Our Programs

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“Our programs provide local alternatives and prevention for people at risk of entering the criminal justice system and ACSO is committed to sustain and enhance them for the future.”

– September 2018 CEO Update to employees



Consumer Advisory Group

Established in 2012, the Consumer Advisory Group (CAG) is a team of current and ex-consumers (clients) of ACSO services. Our CAG offers invaluable insight which ensures our services are beneficial to those who will be accessing them.

Location: Richmond | Regional Victoria



Community Re-Entry Services Team

Provides helpful information, referrals, accommodation and other key services to support clients to successfully re-enter into the community.

Location: Beenleigh | Ipswich | Fortitude Valley



Reconnect

Provides voluntary outreach assistance for clients reintegrating into the community.

Location: Gippsland | Bendigo | Shepparton | Dandenong | Gippsland



Supported Accommodation Assistance Program

Provides accommodation and support services to clients experiencing homelessness or crisis.

Location: Sunshine



Clinical Services

Work with residential services to provide Behavioural Practitioner Support and Problematic Sexualised Behaviour Service.

Location: Richmond



Community Support Program

Offers tailored rehabilitation to high-risk offenders on post-sentence orders living in the community.

Location: Dandenong | Ballarat | Sunshine



Responsive Assessment Planning, Intervention and Diversion Service

RAPIDS provides same-day AOD assessment and a responsive link between Victorian Courts, Corrections and the AOD sector for people with a higher level of need and complexity.

Location: Richmond | State-wide Victoria



Forensic Assessment and Counselling Team

FACT provides AOD assessment and counselling for people on the Court Integrated Support Program (CISP) bail.

Location: Richmond | Sunshine | Dandenong



Client Services Unit

Provides referral and brokerage services for COATS and the broader Forensic AOD Treatment Sector, processing up to 12,000 referrals each year.

Location: Richmond



Specialist Forensic Disability Accommodation

Offers 24/7 support and accommodation to clients with a disability to develop their life skills.

Location: McShee House (Long Gully, Bendigo) | Aspin House (Golden Square, Bendigo) | Gippsland House (Gippsland) | Cappello House (Yarraville) | Francis House (Coburg) | Nicholson Program (Preston) | Calabro House (Ormond) | TK House (Noble Park)



Community Offenders Advice And Treatment Service

COATS delivers specialist forensic alcohol and other drug (AOD) assessments, treatment planning and brokerage.

Location: Victoria Statewide



Transition To Work

Provides a 12-month program for young people to build confidence and find pathways into employment and education.

Location: Corrimal | Shellharbour



Youth Residential Service

Offers accommodation and supports young people to develop skills to improve daily living, employment, education, secure long-term housing and develop supportive social connections.

Location: Bendigo



Forensic Disability Outreach Case Work

Provides intensive support focused on motivation and behavioural change.

Location: Richmond | Sunshine | Dandenong



Voluntary AOD Intake

Provides extensive services to community members requiring alcohol treatment and support.

Location: Regional Victoria



Family And Carer Program

Provides support to families and carers of people who are misusing substances.

Location: Traralgon



McCormack Housing

Offers accommodation to post-release clients who face obstacles in obtaining secure, stable transitional accommodation.

Location: Sunshine | Traralgon | Richmond



STEP Residential Program

Focuses on living skills, education and employment opportunities, pro-social activities, networks and family connections, improving health and wellbeing.

Location: Armadale



Mental Health Community Support Services Intake

Assists vulnerable community members to apply, transition and navigate the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

Location: Richmond | Traralgon | Shepparton | Bendigo | Ballarat | Warrnambool



ACspresSO

ACSO's social enterprise café empowers at-risk community members to gain hospitality skills.

Location: Richmond



Atrium Housing and Support Program

Provides short-term housing and intensive drug and alcohol treatment to clients who would ordinarily be unlikely to receive bail.

Location: Preston | Sunshine

ACSO's Impact Along the Justice Continuum 2018-19

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General Community

Vulnerable and at risk community members



128

at risk young people supported into employment or education



16

young people provided with accommodation and support for their mental health



486

people diverted into mental health supports



4828

intake assessments for people with mental health or alcohol and other drug concerns (AOD), linking people to support services – 4021 brief interventions provided directly



273

hours of therapeutic interventions to address high risk sexualised behaviours

40%

of people entering prison report having a diagnosed of mental health condition

1 in 3

people detained by police indicated that illicit drug use contributed to their offending

Contact with the justice system



Brokered treatment for

1644

people diverted from immediate charge with a drug caution at court with 85% completion of treatment – 211 treatment episodes provided directly



690

specialist forensic pre-sentence AOD assessments completed and the majority provided treatment

In the justice system



8861

specialist forensic AOD assessments

were provided, 2332 of those were to people in custody



8345

people were provided pre-release support in custody in Queensland and Victoria



3474

people were provided post release support in New South Wales and Victoria

Post justice system



38

people were provided work experience and traineeships through ACSPreSO's programs



9

residential locations providing specialised forensic disability accommodation



103

people on supervision orders provided intensive support

75%

of people detained by police tested positive for at least one type of drug

Almost half

of people in Australian prisons are on remand

Australia's prison population has increased

40%

in the past five years

Upon release, more than half of people expect to be

homeless

2/3

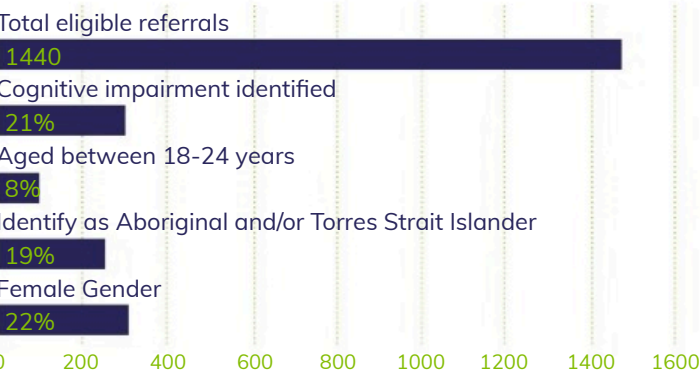
of reincarcerated people are unemployed at the time they commit an offence

Program
Spotlight

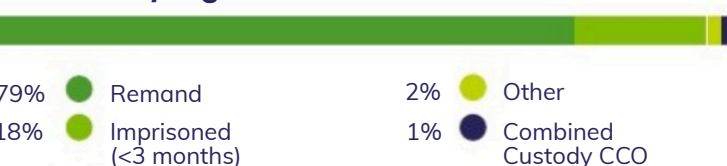
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734 Existing clients 1498 Referrals received

Referrals breakdown



Referrals by Legal Status



ReStart

Our Restart program aims to address one of the most despairing realities of the Criminal Justice System.

Once someone has served a prison sentence, no matter how short, they become more likely to return to custody.

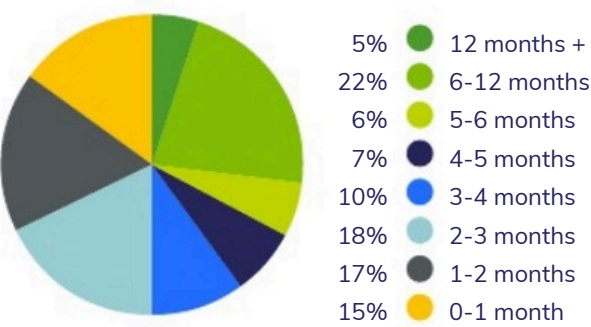
Our ReStart program was established in September 2018 and aims to address the diverse and complex needs of people on a short sentence, three months or less, or on remand. ReStart

provides pre-release support and intensive outreach support and sustainable links to support successful reintegration.

Restart provides support to people from eight Victorian Prisons. The priority cohorts include women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, cognitive impairment and young people.

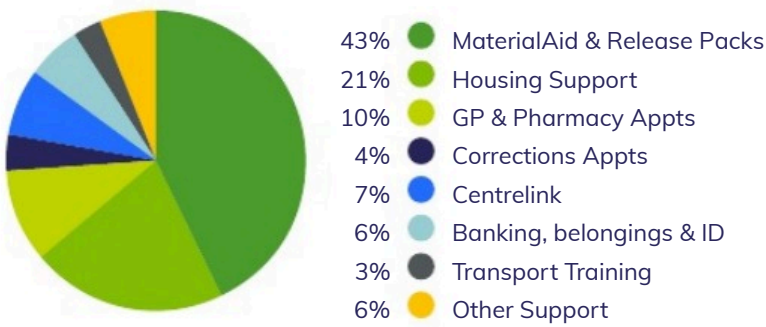
Time in custody

as at 30 June 2019



Breakdown of immediate post-release support

provided in the first 48hours following release



Accepted Referrals by Location



Samantha* is the mother and primary support to three school-aged children. She represents the growing number of women caught up in the criminal justice system, who are being held on lengthy remand—in Samantha’s case, almost four months—awaiting sentencing while their children are in the care of others.

Samantha’s chief offences, aggravated burglary and drug offences are further exacerbated by a history of trauma-related anxiety and depression. She has a long history of attending rehabilitation programs without success but is on the methadone program in the hope that she can address her substance use and prove she is fit to care for her kids.

While Samantha was on remand, ReStart was there for her and set up referrals and brokerage for her to attend a 6-week rehabilitation program on her release. ReStart liaised with Samantha’s pharmacist to arrange appropriate pharmacotherapy to ensure Samantha would be successfully enrolled in the program.

ReStart supported Samantha at her court hearing and provided transport and other support as she attended the rehabilitation program. With this

support, Samantha was able to desist from using illicit substances and started addressing her other key concerns; housing and restoring her connection with her children.

Through the ReStart program, Samantha secured suitable housing for her family. With housing secured, substance abuse treatment in progress, and evidence of improved connections with her local community, Samantha was able to demonstrate her fitness to parent, resulting in her children’s emergency placement being revoked by the Department of Health and Human Services.

Samantha has now regained custody of her three children and continues to meet with her ReStart worker. In addition to abstaining from substances, Samantha reports improvement in mental health and self-resilience since her release from remand.

The first of its kind

Atrium Housing and Support Program (Atrium) is an innovative new pilot program delivered in partnership with Caraniche and Melbourne City Mission (MCM) and funded by Corrections Victoria.

In Victoria, the primary reason someone remains on remand is due to a lack of appropriate housing and often a dependence on substances. Atrium supports these people to access short-term transitional housing and services that are relevant to their offending and short-term needs.

Launched in 2019, Atrium is the first of its kind in Victoria. Atrium has been created at a time when Victoria's remand prison population increased by 19% in the last five years. This rise of unsentenced prisoners comes at a high social cost to the individuals, their families, our communities and a substantial economic price to the State.

Access to the Atrium Housing and Support Program is available through referral by Magistrates' Court Integrated Services Program (CISP). CISP has a

dedicated case manager for the Atrium Housing and Support program, who provide case management to all program participants and acts as the key point of contact between the Court and Atrium.

"When you've seen what I've seen in life, when anyone tries to help you – you're always looking for an angle. I still can't believe Atrium's only angle is caring."

– Atrium client



Our People

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"I love working with my team, I think that we have a really great culture, and everyone is very supportive of each other."

– 2019 employee engagement survey

We're proud to have a team who continuously live our values and provide unwavering dedication to our clients, participants and community. Our people are vital to us, and the reason ACSO has been able to serve our community so brilliantly over 30 years.

Our employees



34%
male

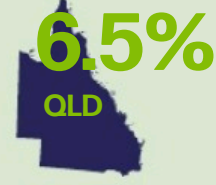


66%
female

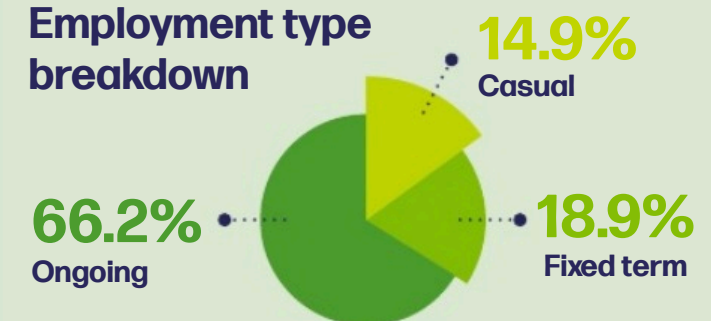
Our Board is led by a female Chair, and women hold 50% of executive leadership roles.



Employee locations



Employment type breakdown



"When I joined ACSO I requested a small place for my daily prayer. ACSO supported me by offering me to utilise any ground floor meeting rooms."

- 2019 employee engagement survey

Engagement



69% of our employees feel
engaged



91% of our employees feel people from all backgrounds have equal opportunities at ACSO



88% of our employees participated in our June 2019 Employee Engagement Survey

5% engagement increase from 2017/2018

Client feedback for employees



In May 2019, we implemented the Ratelt App, a system for our clients to provide feedback about their experience. Our ACSO-wide client experience score is 9.3/10 and our Net Promoter Score is +75



38 formally submitted
compliments from clients, clients' family members and external stakeholders

Development of our employees



3,404 episodes

of learning and development delivered in clinical and support areas (face to face and online)



New partnership with Swinburne University facilitating student placements and learning



10

frontline ACSO employees stepping into **people leadership roles**

Leadership Development Program framework designed and approved



14 student placements

35% hired

“This program has changed how I think and react to addiction. I have gained strength and knowledge. Knowledge is strength! The positive impact this group has made is commendable.”

– Ratelt App feedback

“My team leader knows I’m always looking to learn. She is always giving me opportunities to grow as an employee at ACSO and as a person. I could not thank her enough for the efforts she has gone to for me.”

– 2019 employee engagement survey

Financial Performance

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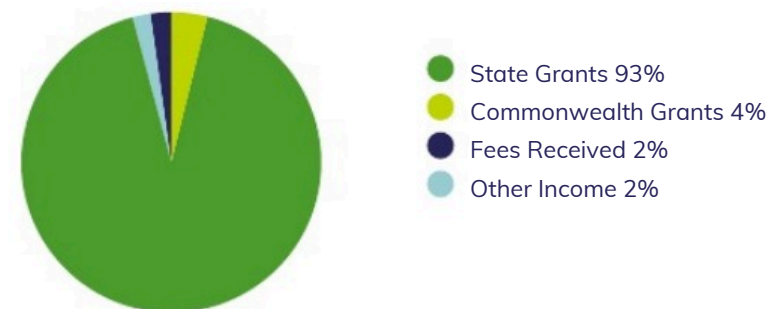
In 2019, our consolidated revenue was \$53.5 million (2018: 43.3 million); up from the previous year by almost 24%.

The Revenue by source chart indicates the level of funding ACSO has received from federal and state governments, along with other sources of revenue. This is representative of the fact that ACSO's work is only made possible through the wide range of partnerships. The Expenditure by purpose chart shows ACSO's focus on governance and risk management and the investment we continue to make on the safety and wellbeing of our

employees. It also highlights the risk embedded in our programs and the effort we continue to make to manage that risk.

2019 was a good year for ACSO, resulting in a net surplus of \$1.2 million (2018: 1.5 million). We continue to be an organisation that uses profit for purpose, by reinvesting into the community and our clients.

Revenue by source



Expenditure by purpose



Income & Expenditure

\$'000	2014 -15	2015 -16	2016 -17	2017 -18	2018 -19
REVENUE					
Government funding & fees	24,504	28,818	36,716	37,626	45,319
COATS brokerage	8,530	7,590	7,394	4,975	6,851
Other income	789	1,010	787	704	1,276
	33,823	37,418	44,897	43,305	53,446
EXPENDITURE					
Employee benefits	19,141	22,644	27,788	26,239	31,569
COATS brokerage	8,530	7,590	7,394	4,975	6,851
Depreciation & amortisation	974	1,192	1,341	1,257	2,265
Rental expenses	1,027	1,165	1,421	1,602	1,654
Other expenditure	4,396	5,314	7,542	7,958	10,076
	34,068	37,905	45,486	42,031	52,415
NET SURPLUS/ (LOSS) BEFORE INTEREST	(245)	(487)	(589)	1,274	1,031
Interest received	501	345	241	217	250
NET SURPLUS AFTER INTEREST	256	(142)	(348)	1,491	1,281

Assets & Liabilities

\$'000	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
CURRENT ASSETS					
Cash & cash equivalents	14,025	12,597	11,734	14,722	20,917
Trade receivables	465	397	1,986	1,509	780
Other	964	715	1,046	975	2,766
	15,454	13,709	14,766	17,206	24,463
NON CURRENT ASSETS					
Intangibles	380	503	732	1,642	709
Plant & equipment	2,714	2,194	2,175	3,113	5,123
Other	-	20	1,840	1,887	20
	3,094	2,717	4,747	6,642	5,852
	18,548	16,426	19,513	23,848	30,315
LIABILITIES					
Trade & other payables	7,736	5,270	7,911	11,261	15,950
Provisions	1,994	2,348	3,142	2,636	3,134
	9,730	7,618	11,053	13,897	19,083
NET ASSETS	8,818	8,808	8,460	9,951	11,232

ACSO's Strategic Plan outlines our priorities for the next three years and provides direction for the development of services and advocacy work we will undertake to achieve our Vision.



Our Vision

is for a community where everyone has the opportunity to thrive, and prison truly is the last resort



Our Purpose

is to strengthen the wellbeing of communities by advocating for and delivering services which divert people away from the justice system



Our Values

are passion for our work, belief in humanity, integrity in all we do and innovative spirit



Meaningful Client Experience

Our clients inform our practice and have a positive experience at ACSO.

Develop co-designed services with which clients are engaged and satisfied

Establish our practice to be inclusive, culturally appropriate and responsive to people from diverse backgrounds

Ensure our programs effect positive behaviour change and improved quality of life



Wellbeing of our People

Our people are safe, well and engaged with our One ACSO culture.

Attract and retain the best people by providing meaningful and rewarding careers

Build an engaging, inclusive and diverse One ACSO culture

Become industry leaders in the safety, care and wellbeing of our people



Influencing Change

Our research, clients and partnerships will contribute to inclusive communities and criminal justice reform.

Actively advocate for change aligned to our vision using data, expertise and client stories

Establish strategic, values aligned partnerships that support criminal justice reform and better client outcomes

Positively influence community perceptions on people with offending histories



Innovative Design

Our organisation delivers innovative services informed by evidence and enhanced by digital transformation.

Develop a body of evidence that allows us to measure key impacts in order to design new programs, influence policy and advocate for our clients

Design a suite of evidence-based programs focused on diversion and prevention of reincarceration

Introduce practice and digital innovations to enhance our services, systems and data collection



Sustainable Growth

Our systems and capabilities enable strong performance, financial strength and strategic growth.

Ensure our business functions and systems are efficient, scalable and environmentally responsible

Build sustained financial health which enables investment in people, infrastructure and innovation

Become a national provider of services aligned with our Vision

