



2012 ANNUAL REPORT

CREATING ANOTHER CHANCE

SUSIE . .FROM CLIENT TO PEER WORKER CREATING ANOTHER CHANCE

There is no way to avoid anyone in a compound such as Dame Phyllis Frost Centre. This is where I spent 13 solid months of my life for armed robbery.

My solicitor told me I would get an Intensive Corrections Order at the most. Little did I know that my one impulsive mistake would end up with this outcome.



Within the first week, I went into full blown psychosis while going through withdrawal of benzodiazapines. I have borderline personality disorder which is basically a non psychotic mental illness that relates to my underdeveloped coping skills and conflict handling skills which in the past would lead to impulsive self harm behaviour and several suicide attempts. At one point I thought all the prisoner's were police and the remand prisoners were special operations cops!!! I was soon admitted to the Marrmak unit, DPFC's "special needs" and psychiatric unit.

After about a month into my sentence, I started to pull myself together. I decided that I would change myself in such a way that I would never have to face those grey gates or the harsh reality of being seperated from my family again. I referred myself to as many programs as I could in order to change. I had a great psychologist who remained consistent every week that I built a great rapport with. She could recognise that I was serious about this change so she taught me a whole new set of coping skills and strategies to help me through whatever life problems I may encounter.

It took a good 6 months for the benzodiazapines to get out of my system and my judgment was now clearer. I commenced full time education whilst in DPFC and managed to complete certificates in Hospitality, Printing and Graphic Arts and Information Technology. I was then notified of programs available for post release reintegration support. I enlisted in as many programs as possible. I engaged support from the Women's Integration Support Program via VACRO and Women 4 Work program via ACSO. I can remember the first time I met Honey, my mentor from VACRO. Honey gave me a renewed sense of hope and self respect that I hadn't felt since the day I came to prison.

I was released on parole on Remembrance Day, the 11th of November. It will be 4 years next month that I have been free.

In that time I have managed to secure permanent housing. I made an agreement with my parents that I would stay with them for a maximum of 3 weeks. I moved out into shared accommodation within 2 weeks. I called my parents every day and I could clearly see that my positivity and motivation was rubbing off on them. They were laughing a lot more and we were closer than ever before.

I have managed to find a great GP. She used to work at the Melbourne Assessment Prison so she understands exactly where I am at. She is dedicated to looking after me and I am happy to give her my complete trust and honesty. I have also managed to find a fantastic psychologist. She was recommended by my Community Corrections Officer. She comes to my house for sessions as it is the most comfortable environment for me to talk about my issues. She has also taught me some great tactics for dealing with conflict and difficult situations that may arise.

My father passed away the week my parole finished. He had a heart attack while I was out mowing the lawns. Just a day prior to that, he was joking on the phone singing to me "Im free as a bird, I roam from tree to tree!" I really believe he wanted to see me through this time. My mother died 9 months later of cancer. She had been my father's carer for over 10 years. I believe she died of a broken heart but I got to nurse her and know and understand her better.

"Both my parents said to me on numerous occasions "Stick around with ACSO and you could end up working there!!" They were surely right! I wish they got to share that moment."

I first engaged with ACSO in 2008. After about 6 months as an outreach client, I attended an initial focus group on the concept of a Consumer Advisory Group. I started doing a little bit of "audio transposing typing" for ACSO and this gave me a sense of confidence. Whenever ACSO asked for my help, I said "Yes." Over the next 2 years my confidence started to build as ACSO started asking me to have an input on different aspects of services to clients. As a natural progression from the focus groups, the Consumer Advisory Group was formed.

I was offered employment with ACSO as a trainee "Social Educator" in Rehabilitation and Recovery Services which provided me the opportunity to commence Certificate IV in Community Services Work. I started in the Life Skills Program following my experience with the Consumer Advisory Group. As the Life Skills Program grew, so did I. I have been able to contribute to the design and facilitation of weekly groups covering topics such as cooking, shopping and budgeting with a focus on building client skill sets and giving clients the right tools to get ahead in life. All of the Life Skills Programs are created with consultation with the clients. We regularly ask the clients what they would like to learn, so it's actually their ideas that we try to make happen!! This has also included art sessions and the 2012 Art Show, the 'All About Me' Self Esteem program. The Art Show was an amazing success and all of ACSO, from client to CEO assisted to make the Art Show a success.

I am involved with our Peer Mentor Group focusing on transitional support to people moving out of our houses. This is an opportunity to assist clients to get into training, employment and acquire basic living and social skills. I was also invited to be involved in a committee to develop the last two strategic plans for ACSO. I interviewed clients, assisted with focus groups to find out what they liked and did not like about ACSO. ACSO has always had a strong commitment to fine-tuning the processes and information provided to the clients.

I love working at ACSO. To me, this is my passion, not my job!! From the moment I was a client here, I saw the passion in the staff and realised that ACSO was different to other organisations. They have given me a second chance! Not only am I now off Centrelink benefits, I'm now studying and can give an insight into "What it's like from a client perspective" and use that in a positive light. Thanks ACSO, for "creating another chance" for me!!!

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WHO WE ARE

Established in 1983, ACSO has become one of Victoria's leading community support organisations providing a range of services, programs and supports for people who are in contact or who are at risk of coming into contact with the criminal justice system.

Our commitment to our vision and values has seen ACSO become the "provider of choice" in the delivery of forensic services and programs for people who are highly disadvantaged.

We have earned a reputation for assisting some of the most disenfranchised members of our community; those not generally welcomed or able to be supported by other services due to their behaviour, presenting issues or offending history. We offer innovative service delivery within a diverse range of programs throughout the metropolitan area and regional Victoria.

These services are planned on an individual basis and in collaboration with each client to ensure that their needs are met. We strive to achieve our purpose of making a difference, enabling our clients to "create another chance".

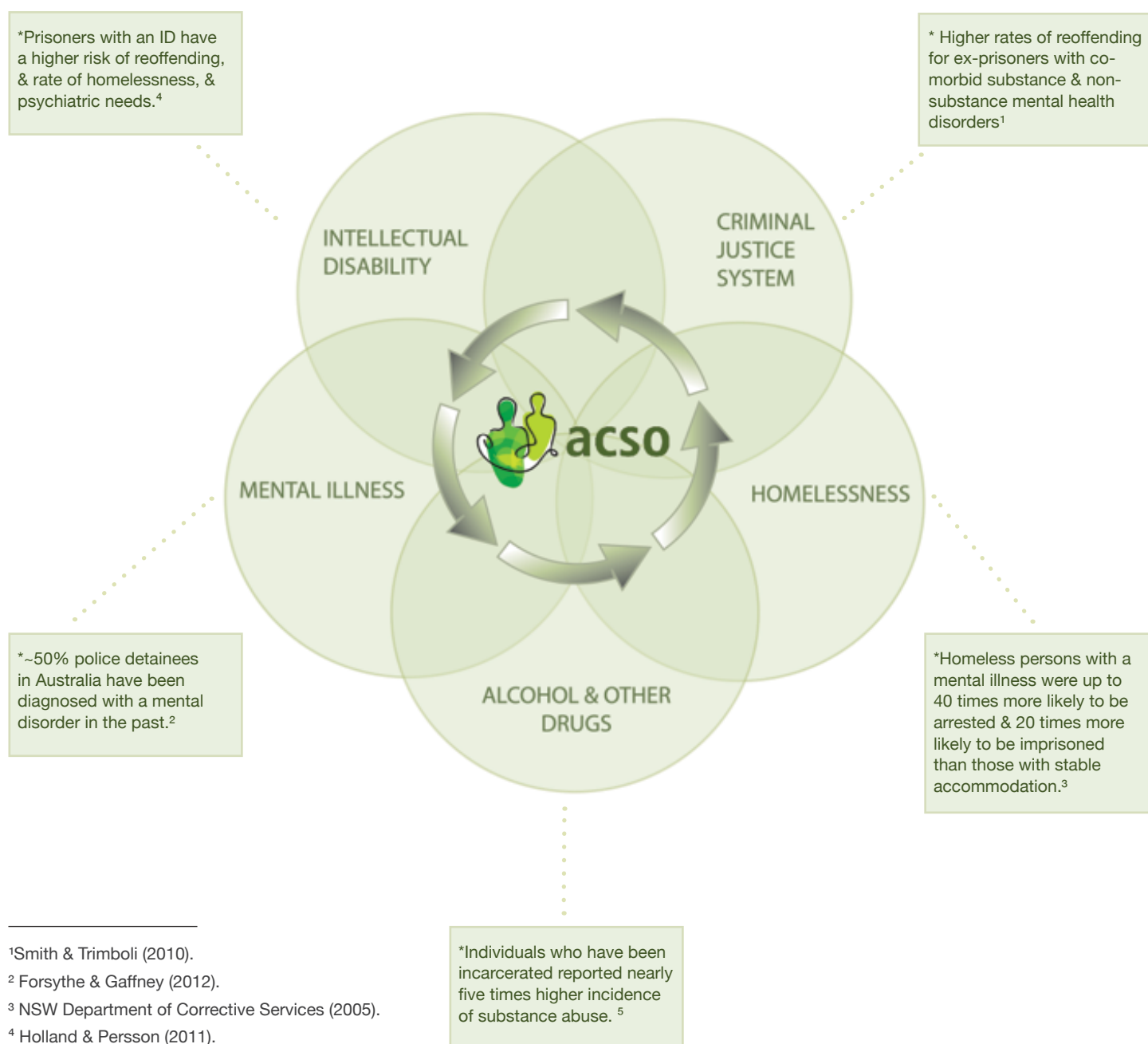
Today our staff deliver more than 20 programs to approximately 20,000 people each year.



THE NEED FOR OUR WORK

The rate of imprisonment in Victoria has grown to a high of 108 people per 100,000 people being incarcerated. Today we are seeing new records set with the numbers of people who are being sentenced to prison. The numbers of people on community based orders also continues to grow.

ACSO works with a client group who have multiple needs in addition to their offending history. This means services are often provided in a complex environment to clients who present with very complex situations. Our approach unashamedly addresses all of the complex needs an individual faces, each cannot be addressed in isolation as our model of care below illustrates.



¹Smith & Trimboli (2010).

² Forsythe & Gaffney (2012).

³ NSW Department of Corrective Services (2005).

⁴ Holland & Persson (2011).

⁵ABS (Cited in AIC,2009).

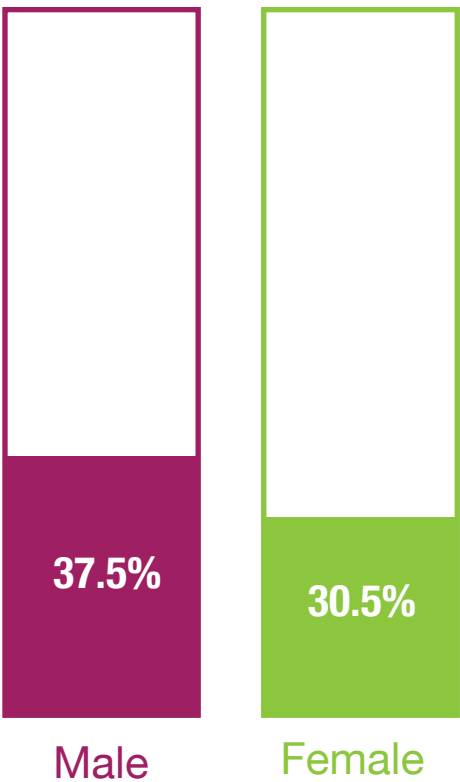
OFFENDERS WITH A MENTAL ILLNESS

Around a third of Victorian prisoners present with psychiatric risk factors while in custody and generally rates of diagnosed mental illness are substantially higher for prison populations than for the general community. Mental illness in the prisoner population is also associated with high rates of problematic substance use.

The combination of an offending history, mental illness and substance use can lead to complex legal, health and social consequences particularly as prisoners move through the transition back into the community upon their release.

VICTORIAN PRISONERS PRESENTING WITH PSYCHIATRIC RISK, DAILY AVERAGE 2009-10

Source: Vic Ombudsman 2011



“Substance abuse treatment providers are often unsure of how to treat this population, as standard approaches may not be appropriate or effective.”

(Slayter, 2009:27)

OFFENDERS WITH ID

Internationally, it is reported that people with an ID are over-represented in the criminal justice system (Hayes et al 2007; Herrington 2009). Victorian correctional data, the result of Corrections Victoria’s own research conducted over the past few years, into the demographics of the Victorian offender population supports these findings. This research, presented in the Corrections Victoria (CV) Disability Framework 2010-2012, Committing to the Challenges (2009) has also revealed the significant presence of co-morbidities, in particular mental health and substance abuse in addition to cognitive impairment.

A confounding issue is the capacity of ID symptoms to mask potential substance abuse problems, making identification difficult, by both ID professionals, and those in the drug treatment sector. Yet, once identified, practitioners are often unclear about best next steps, since standard approaches to the range of treatment types may not be appropriate or effective.

OFFENDERS WITH DRUG AND ALCOHOL ADDICTIONS

“Within 24 months of their release from prison, 65% had re-offended, and their rate of reoffending was related to their mental health and substance disorder/s.”

Nadine Smith and Lily Trimboli May 2010

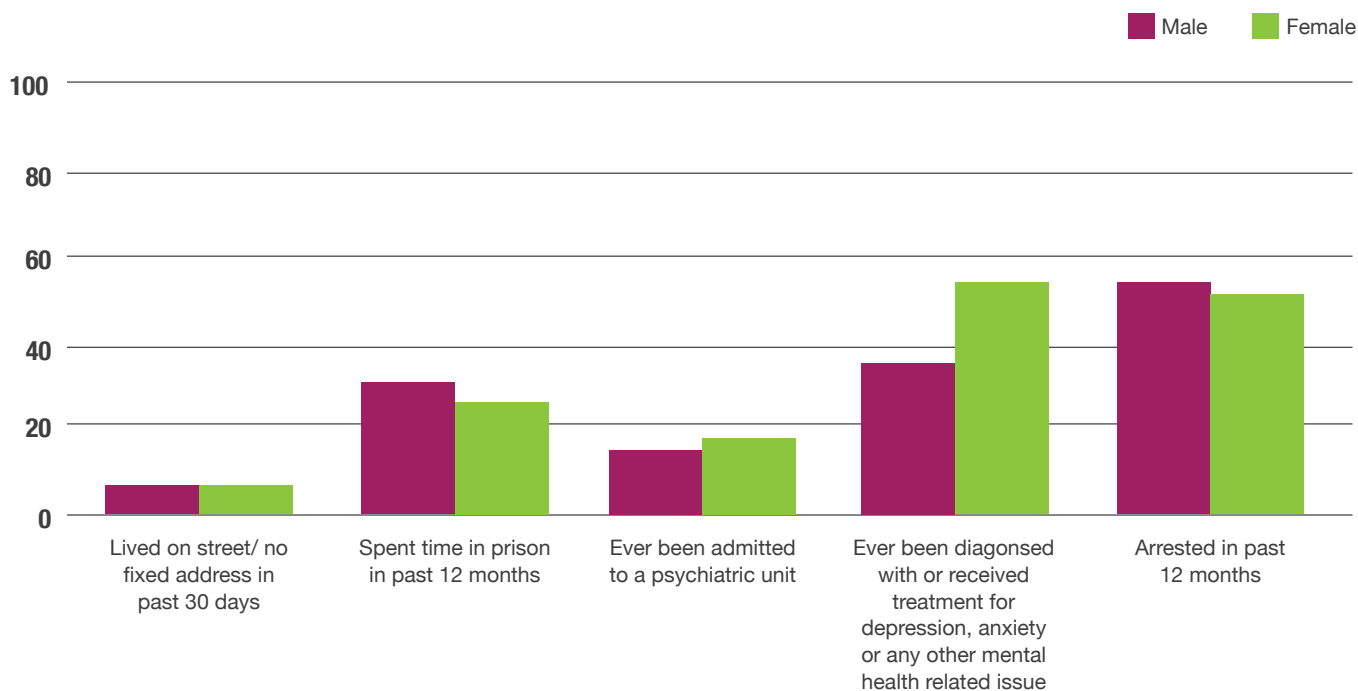
While the relationships between problematic substance use, mental health conditions, and offending are complex it is known that:

- People who have some mental health conditions are more likely to have a criminal history;
- Offenders (particularly those who are incarcerated) have substantially higher rates of mental illness and problematic substance use than the general population, and
- Offending rates are the highest for those people who have co-occurring mental health conditions and problematic substance use (Ogloff et al., 2004; Smith and Trimboli, 2010).



OFFENDERS WHO ARE HOMELESS

Adult police detainees by previous experience of homelessness, arrest, imprisonment and mental illness shows whilst 5% were homeless within 30 days of arrest, the same population also presented with a history of previous incarceration and mental health issues.



THE CHALLENGE OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Over time, the response to offender management has moved focus from the medical model of rehabilitation to that of reintegration, denoting psychosocial transition from offender to law abiding citizen.

Reintegration is concerned with factors such as poverty, education, family and community support, and accommodation, to assist the individual to be a productive member of the community. However sentencing legislation does not explicitly mention reintegration as a goal of sentencing for adult offenders, therefore correctional policies and

programs “are not able to cite legislative direction and support”.

Victorian research into levels of community views about the reintegration of offenders indicated a low level of overall support. ¹ Asked to prioritise a list of seven sentencing goals, participants clearly deemed that community safety and deterrence from offending were a higher priority than those of offender rehabilitation or reintegration. “...the social aspects of reintegrative efforts mean that they rely on the community in ways that other correctional imperatives do not.”²

These findings present a challenge for ACSO, cementing our need to demonstrate to the community that our reintegrative programs have great potential to reduce reoffending and thus increase community safety, to garnish their policy support and preparedness to play a role in reintegration efforts.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR SENTENCING GOAL

	Sentencing goal	Priority (1-7)
HIGHEST ↑ ↓ LOWEST	To make the community safer	1
	To deter the offender from committing further crimes	2

	To rehabilitate offenders	6
	To help offenders live productive lives after they have served their sentence	7

¹ Hardcastle, L., Bartholomew, T., & Graffam, J. (2011). “Legislative and Community Support for Offender Reintegration in Victoria.” Deakin Law Review, 16 (1):111-132.

² Ibid. p128.







Michael Wright
Chairperson

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

As I look back on my 6 years as Chairman of ACSO, I would mark 2011-12 as probably my most important year. It was the first full year of consolidation following a major leadership change and it was accompanied by dramatic changes in both our funding environment and our service structure – with employment services struggling and key contracts under review. It is a credit to the Management team and my Council colleagues that ACSO ended a difficult year in such a positive position.

July 2011 saw the launch of our new strategic plan at Pentridge Prison, (the birthplace of the vision that became ACSO) after an extensive consultation process involving key staff, ACSO clients and our valued external stakeholders. The first annual review of our work highlights the great progress ACSO has made towards its 4 strategic goals, including redeveloping our service delivery model and organisational structure, improving our organisational systems and enhancing ACSO's contribution to our external environment. I would again like to acknowledge the teamwork between Management and Council that led this process.

In acknowledging the progress achieved during 2011-12, I also want to acknowledge the important baton change that occurred in the year. After 20 years service to ACSO, our Patron, The Hon. Alastair Nicholson decided it was time to move on – although for Alastair this was not to retirement, but to direct his enormous energy and strong moral compass to other projects. Alastair, initially as our first Chair and later as our Patron, along with our founding CEO, Tony Calabrò, worked extremely hard to establish ACSO in its current position of influence.

It is a credit to the reputation of ACSO and the quality of the work it does, that The Hon. Sally Brown AM agreed to accept the Council's nomination to take over from Alastair as the Patron of ACSO. Sally had been a member of the ACSO Council since 2004 and is an eminent member of our community. As Justice of Family Court Australia and former Chief Magistrate of Victoria, Sally's passion for ACSO and making a difference in the community is a great asset to us in her new role as Patron.

In our governance responsibilities, I am pleased that the Council and its standing subcommittees continued their positive contribution to the operations of ACSO. I want to thank the committee 'chairs' for their leadership and strategic advice; Mr Tony Cant (Audit and Risk), Ms Ersilia Barbone (Governance and Strategic Positioning) and Ms Kathleen Barker (Quality and Safety: Service Delivery). I also acknowledge the long term commitment of Ms Christine Cappello whose contribution to ACSO matches that of Alastair and Sr Clare and who continues to fulfil the role as Council Secretary.

Most importantly, ACSO's work continues because of the dedication of our staff to our client group and its ethos - create another chance. The Council views their dedication as an inspiration for its work and thanks them.



Karenza Louis-Smith
CEO

A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

I was thrilled to be appointed the new CEO for ACSO in April 2011 and I am filled with a tremendous sense of pride at what ACSO has achieved in this short period of time. I am inspired by our Council, their passion for ACSO and their commitment to governance and the strategic vision. The goal they have set us to become the leading voice in forensic criminal justice in Victoria and into other jurisdictions in Australia is an exciting challenge for our leadership and for our work.

ACSO is a bold and courageous organisation, engaging with some of the most difficult people who are transitioning from prison back into the community, along with people with complex and multiple issues who are either in or are at risk of entering the criminal justice system. Our purpose is simply to create another chance, to rehabilitate people, to reintegrate people and to promote lasting recovery. We want to see people given opportunities to re-build their lives, be given every opportunity to become engaged members of the community and in doing so, to no longer offend. It's our goal to reduce recidivism, and in doing so, build safer more inclusive communities.

We have focused our energies on achieving our strategic goals. We have created a new structure at ACSO and a new service delivery model that ensures clients get the full benefits of all areas of our expertise. Our new model of delivery has three streams of services. Our Housing Services stream which includes our forensic disability houses. Our Complex Care team supports all of the clients who are living in the community and our Clinical Services team who provide the State wide COATS program which includes assessment and brokering treatment for all offenders with a substance use issue. Demand for our services continue to increase with over 22,000 referrals into ACSO programs during the year. During this time ACSO opened new hub locations in Bendigo and Cranbourne as we continue to de-centralise our services out of Melbourne.

ACSO is an employer of choice and as such are able to attract and retain talented staff across all areas of our operations and business services. I particularly want to recognise the incredible work of Vaughan Winther (Deputy CEO) and Remberto Rivera (GM Business Services) whose contribution to ACSO's development and growth in the past 12 months has been invaluable. As you read our annual report, you will see the outcome of our work and impact of our staff. Our staff are the heartbeat of ACSO, and without their talent, innovation and hard work, our clients would not have been given the life changing opportunities that have transformed their lives and their futures.

In 2013 we celebrate 30 years of ACSO's work. Initially a small organisation providing a halfway house for male offenders exiting prison; ACSO has grown organically by pioneering interventions and support programs and responding to emerging community problems. As an organisation ACSO has been passionate, brave and committed to drive change. These fundamental principles are the cornerstone on which our new strategic plan has been built, and are central to the style by which I lead ACSO into the future.

I end this report by acknowledging how much I am moved by our clients; whose courage and determination see them make some quite incredible life changes. Their hard work and resilience shines through in often the toughest and hardest of circumstances. I know I speak for the entire ACSO team when I say they are quite simply our inspiration.



WHAT WE STAND FOR



SHAUN . . SHINES FOR HIS CLIENTS



Frankie, Manager Disability Justice recounted the last outreach worker recognition tea for the North & Western Region . . . “we were having an afternoon tea to thank people directly involved in working with our clients and six staff individually nominated Shaun Dibbin to be thanked. Following are some of the testimonials from our staff”

“I think Shaun Dibbin from ACSO deserves one (a thank you). . He has displayed very impressive client centred work with a number of our very difficult clients, really patient and builds great rapport with them. At case conferences he speaks about the clients with a level of professionalism and confidence seldom heard from other services.”

“I would like to nominate Shaun Dibbin, (GAP Outreach program) ACSO. Shaun has been phenomenal in assisting my client, (who advised us has completed his first ever parole today) – Shaun’s flexible approach, knowledge of services and manner with clients is amazing and I believe a significant contributing factor to my clients success.”

Shaun Dibbin’s passion and dedication to impact change in the lives of his clients shines through to not only his team at ACSO but all his stakeholders including the DHS.

Shaun commenced employment with ACSO in 2006 and currently works within General and Forensic Disability Outreach, Complex Care stream. Prior to that, Shaun worked in the housing program, predominantly at Southern House and in the Sex Offender Support Program (SOSP) and the Extended Supervision Order Program (ESOP).

Shaun is one of our many outreach workers who partner with multiple stakeholders including the DHS, courts and treatment agencies to deliver opportunities for change to some of the most disadvantaged in the community, people who have few support structures, scant resources and limited opportunity to succeed.

BEV . .PASSION FOR THE SECTOR



Bev Fox is simply a legend in the service. When you think of people who have dedicated their lives to working with offenders, Bev is one of those first names that come to your lips. When I joined ACSO, Peter, a CAG member couldn't wait to tell me "Bev is an amazing lady... she has saved my life".... I have heard those words, and other amazing testimonials about Bev from so many people.

After working for ACSO for 14 and ½ yrs, retirement happened at the age of 75. Bev had devoted her time to ACSO clients through a range of programs and supported many staff along the way.

Bev came to ACSO at age 60 as a qualified nurse and with a strong and long background in welfare. Before she joined us she worked in the alcohol and other drugs field, in Mental Health at the Forensic Psychiatric Unit at Pentridge and then at the Melbourne Assessment Prison before commencing at ACSO in 1998. Bev started at ACSO doing intake and assessment for the COATS program and has worked for a number of programs at ACSO over the years including the POST sex offender program and Specialist Mental Health Services.

Bev has been the primary housing Support Worker for the CASST program since its inception in 2007. CASST provides assistance to find suitable accommodation for people who are on short sentences prior to release from prison, as well as those who are in remand or in crisis in the community. Bev was simply incredible when it came to sourcing accommodation and brokerage for clients with serious mental illness who have had contact with the criminal justice system. She never took "no" for an answer, and would always manage to get the resources she needed to help someone coming out of prison get housed.

Her work speaks volumes about the person she is. Caring, compassionate but she wouldn't take any nonsense either! Bev has been a wonderful asset to ACSO and our vision to create another chance for people. Her expertise, wealth of knowledge and partnerships will be a great loss to the sector, to the clients and to all of us at ACSO but a gain to the dancing world as she retires and spends time doing other things that she loves!

CHRIS . . MAKING A DIFFERENCE . . 30 YEARS



Nearly 30 years ago Chris Cappello left her safe and secure job working in the commercial sector where she got a decent pay packet each week to go and work for an organisation that had no funding, for a job with no pay and to work with a former prisoner who had done time for armed robbery. What they achieved is an incredible legacy in the formation ACSO that today continues their original work right across Victoria.

When Chris made this (some might say crazy) decision her own personal life was in turmoil. Her husband had recently died in a skiing tragedy and Chris had been through several years where anxiety and depression threatened to tear her apart. One morning, Chris work up and knew she had to make a change, so she sold her house and downsized, and had a few dollars left over to go on a holiday. It was a chance meeting with Stan McCormack (a recently released Pentridge prisoner) that would change Chris's life, and start an organisation that I am proud to be the CEO of today.

Stan had a vision that Chris was soon to share, and that was everyone who got out of jail should be afforded the chance to get their lives back on track. His vision included a "halfway house" that you could go and live in when you got out. He had found the house, but had no manager for the property and no funding to pay the rent or any staff! Chris was offered the manager's job without any pay, without any job security and she said yes, resigned from her paid job and started the following week, using her holiday savings to live on. Chris has often told me she "just had a feeling this was what she was meant to do with her life". I agree!

So Chris ran the Epistle centre (as ACSO was first called) a 13 bed facility for men exiting prison. By providing accommodation immediately following release, support could be planned rather than crisis orientated. At the beginning they were all clients from prisons and they faced a myriad of issues, intellectual disability, psychiatric clients, Armed robbers, murderers, sex offenders, all were welcome and all came and stayed following Chris's rules. Her rules were simple, "no drugs or grog plus you have to be on the cooking and cleaning roster and pay your rent on time"! Chris had the vision that people needed to build their own life skills and self efficacy in order to be able to function outside of prison and outside of the house. She was also of the strong belief that people needed to be given the opportunity to take responsibility for their own actions. If people broke the rules, they were out.

"I would see people who hadn't made connections with anyone, chronic bridge burners, they have estranged families... the only networks they have are drug dealers or people they met in prison; they were being exploited by other elements in the criminal system. So for them to go into a building and basically be forced to get on with each other was an amazing thing to watch and we would see people come in, have a quick look at some of the other boys and they wouldn't come out of their room much for the first three or four days. Eventually they would come out of their little cave. We had a communal lounge room and that was the candle to these moths. That drew them out of the shadows and they would actually start to sit near each other and share movies. Then, you'd get a bit of a social thing going on which they probably hadn't had for many, many, years, if ever" **Former staff member**

Chris was right. These opportunities help people build resilience, help them create another chance for themselves and help them move forward drawing on their own resources and capabilities. It's easy to get out of prison once your time is over; the staying out is the very hard part (to give you an idea of how hard, recidivism today is close to 40%). Having simple things like a safe home (with no drugs and alcohol) being part of a community and feeling worthwhile are all critical "goods" that we all need to achieve in our lives.

As one former client said in an evaluation of the program in 2010 *"The whole thing was positive. You felt comfortable. It was easy living conditions and if you needed help it was there. Chris would always come in and say, you don't need us, you can do things on your own, and I would smile and say yes well, I will start doing them She just convinced me I could do everything myself and I did."*

Over the past 30 years ACSO has grown from a very small house, with bits of money here and there to becoming one of Victoria's leading community service organisations, supporting close to 20,000 offenders each year, today turning over more than \$20m and employing close to 200 staff. What stands out most of all about Chris, is she is a quiet achiever, she never puts herself front and centre, her ethos and work has always been about empowering offenders to take life changing opportunities, helping them stay out of prison, and build new and meaningful participation in their community.

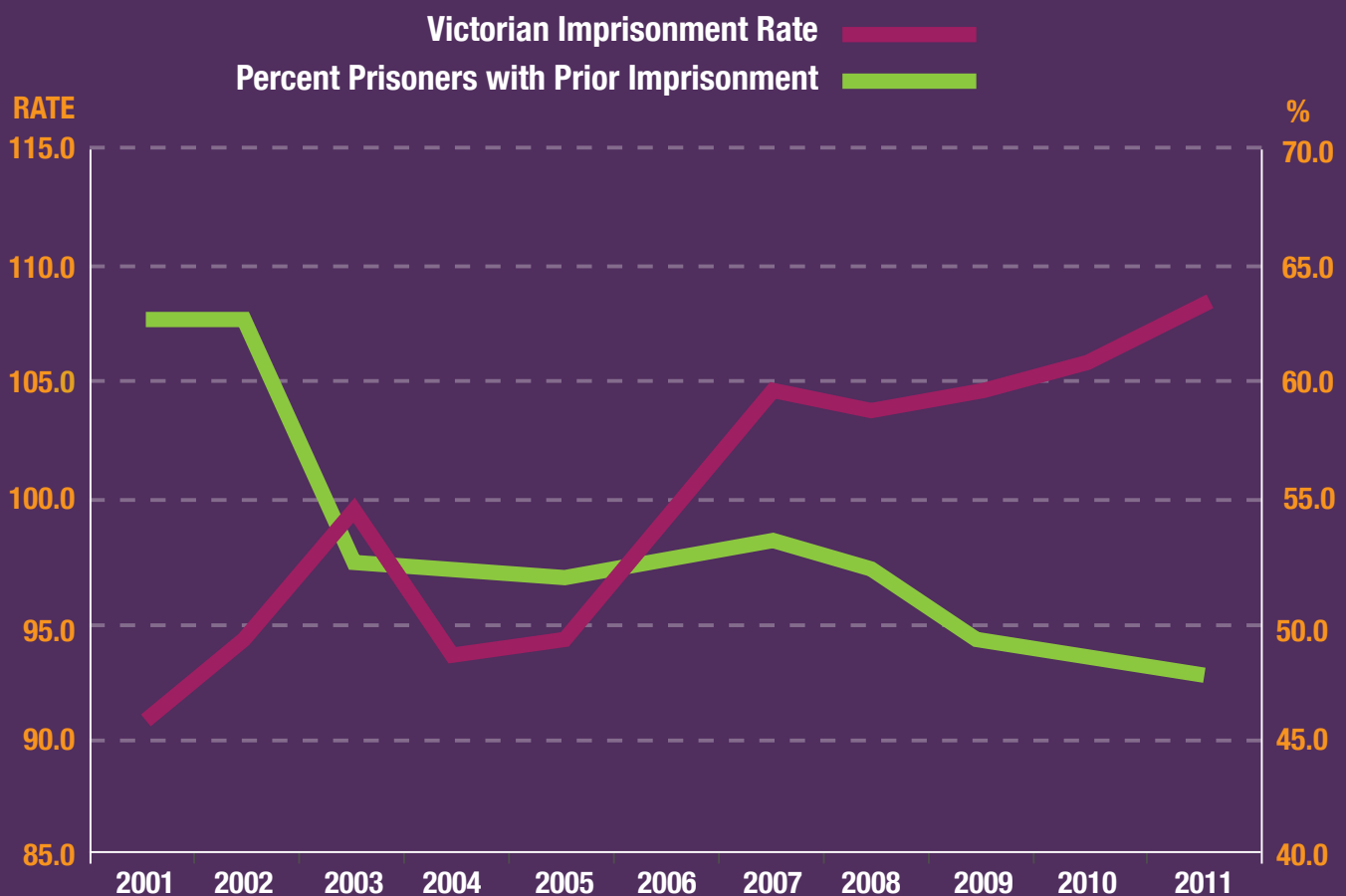
Chris's passion for consumers still shines through and she now runs the ACSO Consumer Advisory Group – where consumers play an active role in helping review programs and services as well as making a strong contribution to policy and research at ACSO.

Chris is an inspiration for our Council, Executive and Leadership team. She has definitely brought to life the purpose of this organisation, and in the process, she has not only touched lives, she has transformed them too.

THE IMPACT OF OUR WORK

WE ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Despite high recidivism rates, the proportion of prisoners who have been imprisoned prior to this sentence has reduced, and is now below 50%. **These figures indicate that Victoria is achieving positive outcomes with programs designed to intervene in the cycle of reoffending and ultimately re-incarceration.**



Source: Aust Bureau of Statistics

SNAPSHOT OF CLIENTS ON ENTRY TO OUR SERVICES

- Approximately 95% of our clients have a history of imprisonment or community based court orders
- Approximately 80% of our clients present with serious substance abuse issues and almost 90% also have a mental health condition
- Approximately 55% of our clients present with cognitive impairments which include; learning disabilities and Acquired Brain Injuries
- Approximately 60% of our clients are homeless or at risk of homelessness upon entry into our programs
- We assisted 80 sex offenders to transition back into the community from prisons and Corella Place
- A number of our services provide support to CALD and Indigenous communities with over 150 Indigenous clients supported in the past year

SNAPSHOT OF ACSO'S OUTCOMES ON EXIT FROM OUR SERVICES

- On average over 85% of clients in our services completed their court and/or parole orders successfully whilst in receipt of ACSO programs
- Significant improvements of 80% or more have been made by clients across all ACSO programs in the areas of mental health, substance use and positive relationships with family, friends and employers
- The recidivism rate for our clients was less than 12% in our supported housing programs and 15% in our case co-ordination and outreach services (Compared to a Victorian state average of almost 40%)







OUR STRATEGIC GOALS AND PROGRESS

“

“ACSO will do these activities in a way that SHAPES its future not reacts to opportunities or trends. In doing so, ACSO will take CONTROL of its future by working with its STRENGTHS - We will be bold and think big.”

ACSO Council 2012 strategic planning day

”

Our current strategic plan can
be found on the ACSO website
through the following link:
http://bit.ly/ACSO_Strategic_Plan

ACSO 2011 - 2014 STRATEGIC PLAN

GOAL

ACSO Improves Client Access, Engagement and Outcomes By Identifying and Meeting Unmet Needs

“Our new strategic direction will strengthen existing services as we evaluate current programs and embed an organisation wide Client Participation and Feedback Strategy. We will use this evidence to review, adapt and change our current programs to increase positive client outcomes.”

ACSO Builds An Integrated Service Delivery Model Through Evaluation and Innovative Program Solutions

“Our focus will be on increasing the capacity of ACSO’s services and creating integration and shared knowledge across the organisation.”

ACSO Increases Effectiveness And Capability Through Workforce Development And Organisational Excellence

“We are committed to building individual staff and ACSO wide capability by attracting, engaging and retaining a professional and skilled workforce.”

ACSO Advocates For Improved Policy and Service Solutions for Disenfranchised and Vulnerable Members Of Our Community

“To be a voice for the disenfranchised and vulnerable we must build on our recognised profile in the community services sector and take a leadership role in both public debate and discussion.”

ADDITIONS TO THE STRATEGY

- ACSO will position itself as the leading forensic specialist in Victoria
 - ACSO will increase its presence in and breadth around Victoria
 - ACSO will expand its (forensic) client group to include:
 - Women
 - Youth
 - Aged
 - New arrivals
 - ACSO will consider partnerships (across all stakeholders, including private companies)
-
- ACSO will position itself as the leading forensic specialist in Australia over the next decade
 - ACSO will pursue opportunities to expand into other states as opportunities arise – leading evidence based best practice across multiple jurisdictions
-
- ACSO will continue to improve its internal systems and structures creating a strong platform for interstate growth
 - ACSO will explore opportunities for back of house platform development / sharing / mergers / acquisitions with like-minded organisations
-
- ACSO will build strong clear messages that advocate for our client group in all of our communications

PROGRESS AGAINST OUR PLAN

- Significant investment in a new CMS system “Penelope” across all of ACSO services, enabling a standardised data set of outcomes to be collected
- New community hub models established in Bendigo and Cranbourne
- Consumer advisory group expanded, peer educators employed to lead consumer participation
- RAPIDS – same day COATS assessment and bridging support for highest risk clients at court funded and pilot launched as part of sentencing reform

- New organisational structure implemented and operational that supports the “one ACSO” service delivery model
- New service delivery model launched, ensuring the full suite of services available to ACSO clients are wrapped around them
- Improved efficiency and client satisfaction post implementation of the new SDM evidenced in evaluation across all services
- ACSO wide evaluation developed and part of the new CMS

- Improved staff engagement and satisfaction measured through the annual staff survey
- Restructure diverts greater resources at a senior management level across HR Finance and Information, Communication and Technology at ACSO with Council approved strategy and plans to build a stronger systems platform. Key milestones achieved
- ACSO’s carbon emissions reduced
- 4th cycle of Quality Accreditation achieved

- Increased membership on a number of key government policy forums and committees at a senior level
- Increased presentations of ACSO work at national conferences
- Launch of the RAPIDS pilot – ACSO working closely with government to develop service responses for ‘hard to reach and engage clients – providing flexible and innovative solutions
- Improved stakeholder relationships and satisfaction with ACSO





GOVERNANCE

ACSO is an association incorporated under the *Associations Incorporation Act 1981 (Vic)*. The Constitution of the association provides for the election of a Council by the members and that the affairs of the association are managed by the Council. Council members have been elected or appointed in accordance with the Constitution.

Being a not for profit association with public benevolent purposes the members of the Council do not receive remuneration. The Council meets in the months of February, April, June, August, October and November. The Annual General Meeting of the Association is held in November. Additionally 12 subcommittee meetings are held across different portfolios each year, looking specifically at:

1. Audit and Risk
2. Governance and Strategic Positioning
3. Quality and Safety (Service Delivery)

The ACSO Council is strengthened with members having expertise in key areas necessary to its role and work.

The Council and its committees will seek advice from independent experts whenever it is considered appropriate. The day-to-day responsibilities for the operation of the association are delegated to the Chief Executive Officer who is supported by the Deputy CEO and General Manager Business Services, who together make up the executive. Program activities and business services functions are lead by senior managers who are responsible to the executive.

THE ACSO COUNCIL



Our Patron, The Hon. Sally Brown AM

Joined ACSO Council in 2004
Sally was formerly Justice of Family Court Australia and former Chief Magistrate. She accepted the role of Patron at the 2011 Nov AGM



Patron in Residence, Sister Clare McShee AM FMDM

Sister Clare joined the ACSO Council in 1986 and retired in June 2008 when she was appointed Patron in residence in recognition of her pioneering work at ACSO, in particular her work with sex offenders



Council Chair: Mr Michael Wright

Joined ACSO Council in 2004
Managing Director Miller Consulting Group
CEO, Victorian Cancer Agency
Chairman Advisory Committee, McCaughey Centre, University of Melbourne
Council Member, HomeGround
Member of the Governance and Strategic Positioning Subcommittee



Deputy Chair: Mr Stewart Leslie

Joined ACSO Council in 2009
Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants Australia
Former Partner of KPMG
Authority member of the Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority (VIC)
Council member of the Women's Hospital
Chair, Portfolio Audit Committee at Department of Education & Early Childhood Development (VIC)
Member of the Audit and Risk Subcommittee



Chair: Governance and Strategic Positioning Subcommittee Ms Ersilia Barbone

Joined ACSO Council in 1996
Partner, White Cleland



Chair: Quality and Safety Subcommittee (Service Delivery) Ms Kathleen Barker

Joined ACSO Council in 2009
Owner, Andeol Consulting
Former Executive Manager, Transport Accident Commission



**Chair: Audit and Risk
Subcommittee Mr Tony Cant**

Joined ACSO Council in 1997
Director of Romanis Cant
Chartered Accountants
Member of the Institute of
Chartered Accountants
Member of the Insolvency
Practitioners Association of
Australia



**Council Secretary: Ms
Christine Cappello**

Joined ACSO Council in 1983
Foundation staff member



Dr Leigh Gassner

Joined ACSO Council in 2007
Partner at Reos Partners
Council Member White Ribbon
Foundation
Former Assistant Commissioner
of Victoria Police
Member of the Audit and Risk
Subcommittee



Dr Bill Glaser

Joined ACSO Council in 2009
Forensic Psychiatrist
Member, Forensic Leave Panel
(Vic)
Visiting Fellow, Dept. of
Criminology, Melbourne Uni
Member of the Quality and
Safety (Service Delivery)
Subcommittee



Mr Stephen Atkinson

Joined ACSO Council in 2009
Partner at REOS Partners
Managing Director at Atkinson
Consulting
Member of the Governance
and Strategic Positioning
Subcommittee

The origins of ACSO's Council are unique and reflect the organisation's long term work with ex-prisoners and those people involved in the Victorian criminal justice system. ACSO has maintained a strong affiliation with members of the Judiciary, often described as the 'heart and soul' of the Council.

MEMBERS OF THE JUDICIARY WHO SIT ON THE ACSO COUNCIL



The Hon. Justice Paul Coghlan

Joined ACSO Council in 2008

Justice of the Supreme Court of Victoria

Former Director of Public Prosecutions



The Hon. Ian Gray

Joined ACSO Council in 2008

Chief Magistrate, Magistrates' Court Victoria

Member of the Quality and Safety

(Service Delivery) Subcommittee



His Honour Judge David Parsons

Joined ACSO Council in 2007

Judge of the County Court of Victoria

Director of the Koorie Heritage Trust

Director of the Melbourne Community Foundation

Member of the Sir Doug Nicholls Fellowship for
emerging Aboriginal leaders

Member of the Quality and Safety

(Service Delivery) Subcommittee

Ex-officio Subcommittee members

Andrew Chadwick, BHP Billiton. Audit and Risk Subcommittee

Dr David Rose, Academic, Department of Social Work, Melbourne University.

Governance and Strategic Positioning Subcommittee

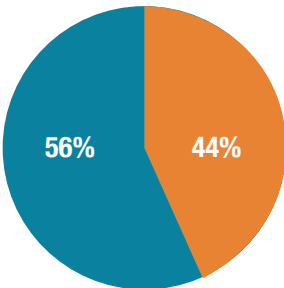
COUNCIL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

The Governance and Strategic Positioning Subcommittee is responsible for working with Council members to self evaluate performance over the 12 months. This process focuses the Council on the key areas of governance, addressing areas of success, and identifying areas for further growth and development across the organisation.

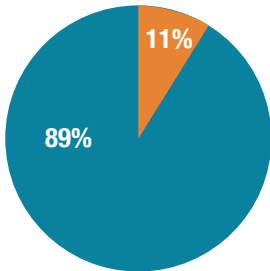
“.....highly effective and committed Council in debating the big picture”

■ All of the Time ■ Most of the Time ■ Hardly Ever

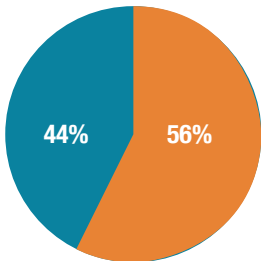
Strategy: All Council members have a clear understanding of the organisation’s core business, its strategic direction and the financial and human resources necessary to meet its objectives.



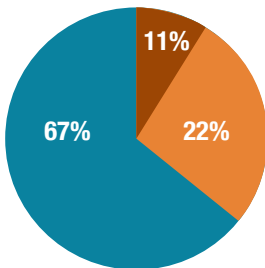
Managing internal Council relationships: Council members make decisions objectively and collaboratively in the best interests of the organisation and feel collectively responsible for achieving organisational success.



Council members’ own skills: Council members recognise the role which they and each of their colleagues is expected to play and have the appropriate skills and experience for that role.



Risk and control frameworks: The Council’s approach to reviewing risk in the organisation is open and questioning, and looks to learning points from events, rather than blame.



“.....there is still some work to be done in the risk and controls area, starting with the definition of ACSO’s risk appetite”

OUR LEADERSHIP

The ACSO executive provides overall leadership of ACSO's operations and back of house services.



Vaughan Winther, Karenza Louis-Smith and Remberto Rivera

Karenza Louis-Smith

CEO

- Bachelor (Honors) Youth and Community Work, University of Bradford UK
- Member of the Women's Correctional Services Advisory Committee

For over 20 years Karenza has led services delivering innovative interventions to support complex clients both in the UK and Australia. She has extensive expertise in working in both forensic justice and drug treatment and is a passionate advocate for the sector.

Karenza has designed and led numerous award winning programs, including both National and Victorian Crime and Violence prevention awards for her work in drug treatment, along with numerous awards for education and employment programs for highly disadvantaged people in the community. Most recently as part of the Stepping up consortium, she won the 2009 Not for Profit Network National Partnership of the Year award, and was a runner up in the 2010 Safer Communities' award for their work in the Victorian Justice system. Under her leadership ACSO's work has also been recognised with a 2012 Victorian Crime and Violence Prevention award for pioneering work with offenders with an Intellectual disability.

Vaughan Winther

Deputy Chief Executive Officer

- Bachelor of Social Work

Vaughan is our Deputy Chief Executive Officer and provides visionary leadership for ACSO's client services. Vaughan has a Bachelor of Social Work and 18 years of experience focused within the criminal justice system, with previous employment at the Department of Human Services - Youth Justice and Jesuit Social Services - Brosnan Youth Services. Vaughan's expertise and responsibilities include; developing our service improvement culture, enhancing client outcomes through innovative and evidence based best practice and ensuring the organisation has a robust and integrated risk management and clinical governance framework. Vaughan manages all of ACSO's client services.

Remberto Rivera

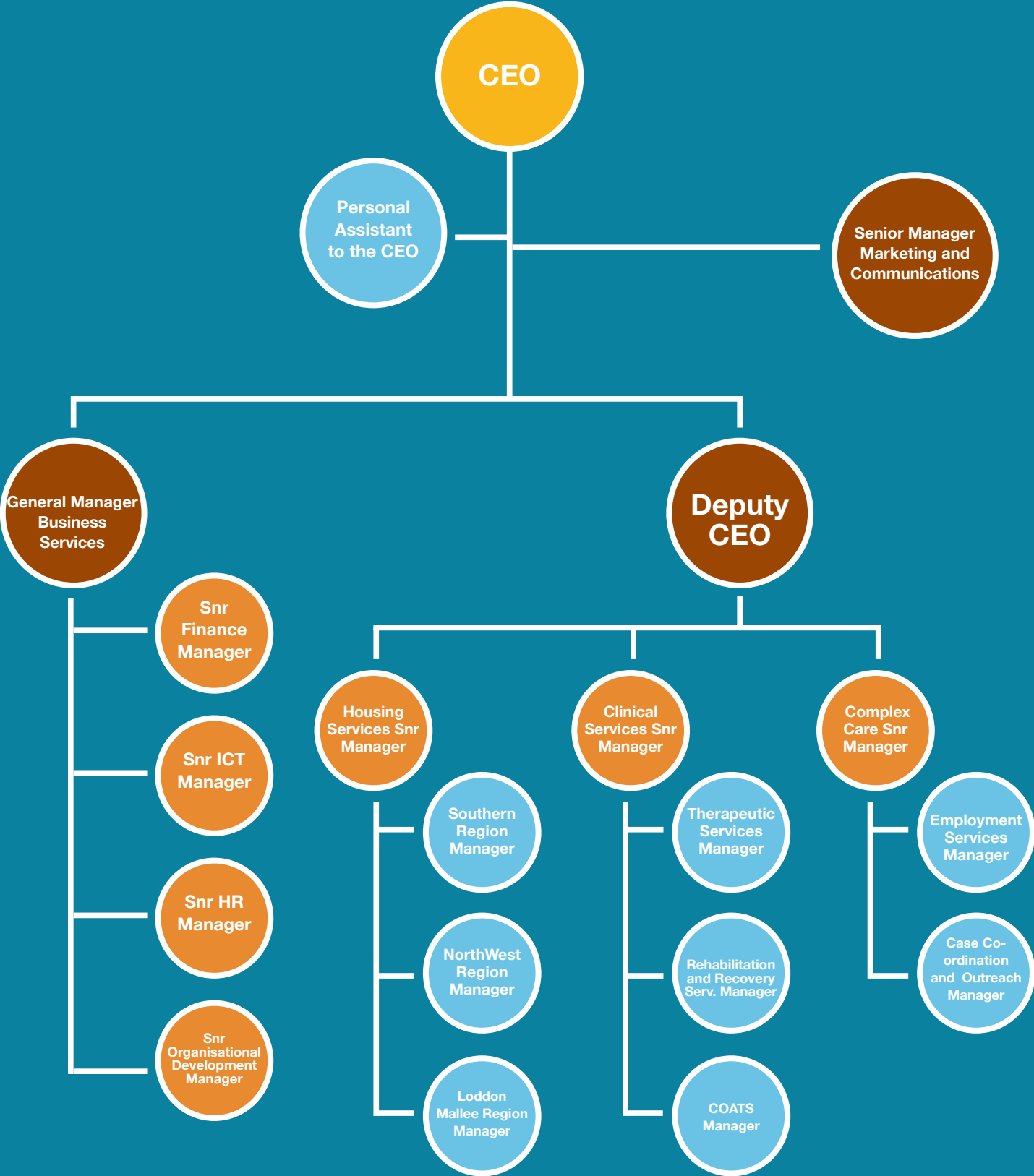
General Manager, Business Services

- Masters in Business Administration
- Certified Practicing Accountant

Remberto joined ACSO in May 2011. He has worked in the non-for-profit sector for more than 23 years, managing business operations for: The Salvation Army (Aged Care), Connections UnitingCare, and Bairnsdale Regional Health. Remberto has a BEcon, PostGradDip Bus.(Accounting), Post Graduate Diploma in Aged Care Management, an MBA and is a fully qualified CPA. Aside from his professional qualifications, Remberto has a special interest in NFP Governance and has served as a Council Member for various organisations' and is currently the Treasurer of Neami National, an Australia-wide mental health service provider. Remberto manages ACSO's Business Services.



OUR LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE



INVESTMENT IN EXCELLENCE



Leadership begins with knowing ourselves and recognising our potential, understanding our preferences and styles and the way in which this impacts on all aspects of our lives; particularly the way in which we lead and work with others. Gayle Hardie - Founder.



ACSO focused time and resources over the last 12 months taking 25 leaders from across all areas of our work and business services through an intensive leadership development program lead by the innovative Global Leadership Foundation. The Global Leadership Foundation currently works with Councils and Senior Management Teams in some of Australia's leading organisations in a range of specialist areas, including strategic planning & development, emotional intelligence in leadership, transformational change in individuals and organisations, strengthening collaboration, transformational leadership and executive mentoring & coaching.

The Global Leadership Foundation worked with ACSO's leadership team to acknowledge and explore their own authenticity as well as understand and appreciate the differences of others. The leadership program focused on:

- Building the capability to lead others, including an awareness of leadership style preferences and their impact on others; developing the skills and capability to facilitate and work with a variety of groups, and
- Increasing the capability to achieve outstanding results across all areas of our work





OUR PROGRAMS

OUR SERVICE DELIVERY OBJECTIVES

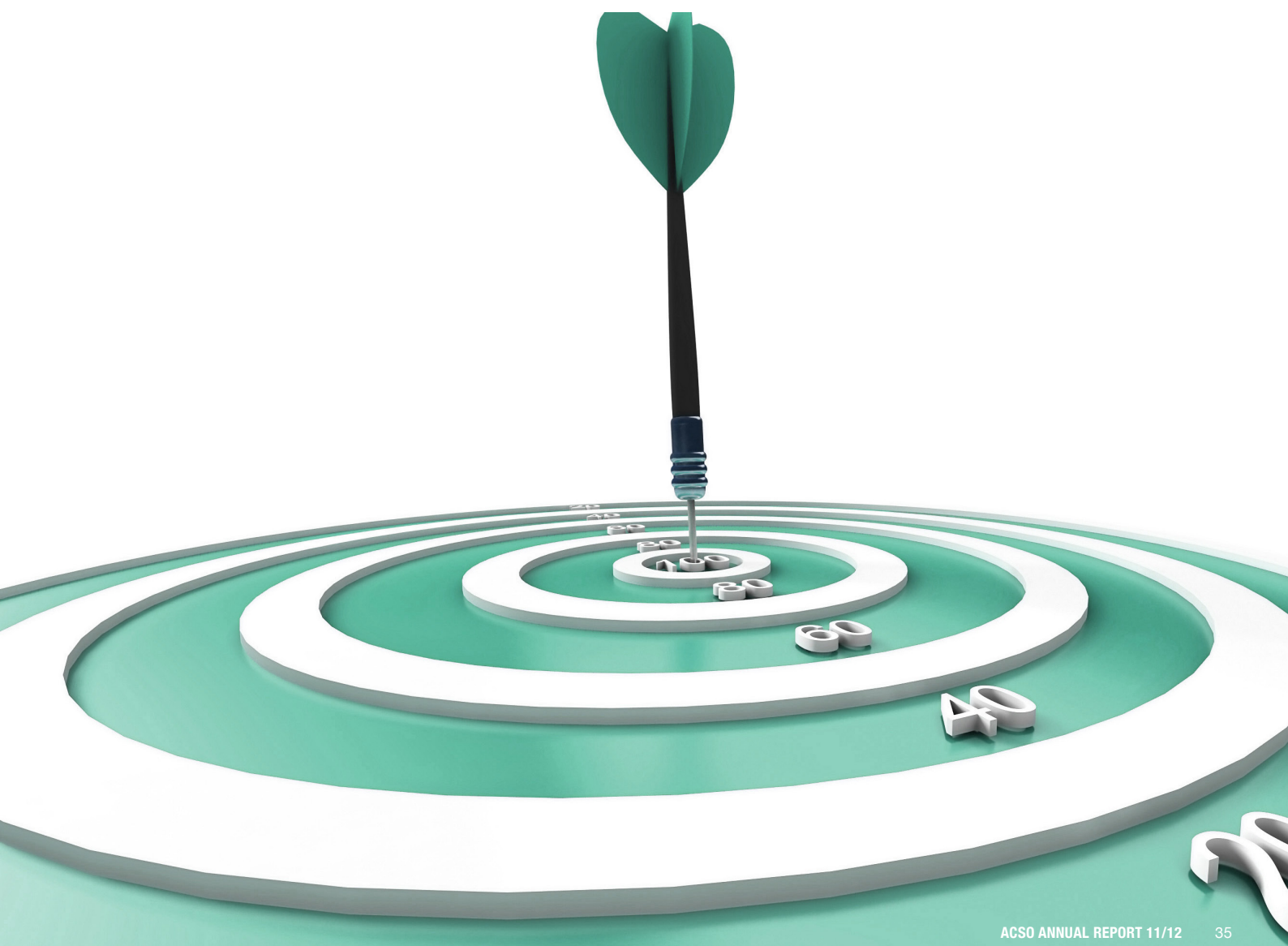
A leader in this sector, ACSO is committed to innovation and collaboration with our partners to create another chance for people who are offending or at risk of coming into contact with the criminal justice system. Our core work is focused on:

Prevention: We will support our clients in the community in whatever ways needed to help them not offend or reoffend. It is our vision to see recidivism at 0%.

Treatment: We tailor a range of individualised clinical treatment programs that address behaviours of concern. These include interventions for mental illness, substance abuse and sex offending. Our model of care is embedded in the concept of recovery, that everyone is able to live a fulfilled and meaningful life.

Reintegration: In all of our work, we strive to improve health, social and economic outcomes for our clients as they reintegrate back into the community. We know that housing our people and helping them find work is the key to helping them build better lives.

Advocacy: ACSO will continue to be a voice for our client group. We will work with government and the community to inform policy and create programs that address these groups' complex needs and ultimately stops offending behaviours.



ACSO's operations encompass:

- Case co-ordination, crisis assistance, housing placements and intensive outreach support for people involved in the criminal justice system.
- Residential, outreach and therapeutic support for people with an intellectual disability and mental illness.
- Employment support and job placement for people experiencing significant disadvantage.
- Alcohol and Other Drug assessments for people involved in the criminal justice system.

ACSO's core business is to reach those individuals that community and families are unable or unwilling to assist. Our core focus is on those at risk of being, or currently trapped in the criminal justice system. We understand and know how to mitigate the community risk inherent in working with men and women who have a history of offending behaviour including; serious sexual offences, violent and other major crime, crimes associated with serious and chronic mental illnesses and offending related to alcohol and substance misuse.

ACSO'S NEW STRUCTURE

In 2011, ACSO implemented a new organisational structure and service delivery model that has enhanced our delivery of integrated services within three divisions; Housing Services, Clinical Services and Community Based Complex Care. This structure has made ACSO more adaptable, responsive and able to deliver 'wrap around' services to our clients. A key outcome of the restructure is a focus on risk management for all operational leaders and staff. This involves regular review of our systems and practices that impact on staff safety, client safety and community safety.



KEY HIGHLIGHTS FOR 2011/12

Opening of the Cranbourne Hub

In response to our Strategic Objective to provide 'local, place based services', we opened a new office in central Cranbourne providing support services in the Southern Metropolitan Region. A number of our outreach, clinical and housing staff are based at the Hub.

Co-location with Department of Justice Southern Metropolitan Region

ACSO was invited to share office space with Corrections Victoria at the new Government Services Office building in Dandenong. Our COATS and Link Out staff provide secondary consultation and have access to interview rooms and meeting facilities.



Implementation of the RAPIDS Program

As part of the sentencing reforms in 2011, ACSO was invited to submit a business proposal for a 'same day AOD assessment and bridging support' service as an extension of the COATS program. RAPIDS provides intensive assistance to clients who are assessed as high risk of drug use and offending and are referred by the courts.

Partnership with VincentCare and Anglicare – HomeConnect Hub

ACSO was invited to be part of VincentCare's successful submission for the Victorian Homeless Innovation Action Project. As part of the model, ACSO has a pre-employment worker based at VincentCare's Glenroy. This is an important strategic relationship for ACSO as we plan towards providing locally based services in Melbourne's North West Metropolitan Region.

Partnership with HomeGround - Elizabeth St Common Ground Project

ACSO has an MOU with HomeGround to provide specialised assessment and transition services to residents with an offending history. We have also re-located our Job Services Australia Specialist Homeless Service to 656 Elizabeth St, adjacent to Common Ground. ACSO will work with HomeGround to co-ordinate specialist employment support services for people with significant non-vocational barriers to employment.



Partnership with Yarra Community Housing (YCH) - Yarra Space Project

ACSO is an YCH member organisation and shares a strong commitment to highly disadvantaged single people. ACSO and YCH have an agreement to deliver housing and support services to six people with an intellectual disability who live in YCH owned apartments in Collingwood.



“A DAY IN THE LIFE OF ACSO’S AUTHORISED PROGRAM’S OFFICER (APO)”

A core part of ACSO's service model is our professional capacity to work with some of the most dangerous offenders in the community. ACSO's work in clinical assessment and treatment is highly regarded by Corrections Victoria and Department of Human Services and it has been noted that “ACSO's Authorised Program Officer is the “busiest in the State”.

The Authorised Programs Office (APO) is specifically involved in authorising chemical restraint and compulsory treatment orders as set out in section 139 of the *Disability Act 2006*.

There are 12 individuals within residential services throughout ACSO, who are presently prescribed chemical restraint by a treating medical practitioner. There are also 4 individuals who are subject to Supervised Treatment Orders, as defined under the Disability Act.

*Nathan is a client who has had a long association with ACSO. He has a reported history of sexual offences towards children dating back to 1986. He was referred to ACSO in 2010, after serving a 6 year sentence for sexual assault. When considering applying for a Supervised Treatment Order (STO), ACSO'S APO needs to ensure that the person satisfies the criteria under section 191(6) of the 2006 Disability Act, whereby they reside in accommodation that is approved as a disability residential service by the Secretary of DHS and that all other least restrictive alternatives have been exhausted.

In applying for an STO for Nathan, the APO and ACSO carefully considered his human rights implications, as well as the impact it would have on our ability to provide a supportive, wrap around service to him in the community. It had been noted in a number of psychological risk assessments that Nathan responded well to support and structure and that most of his adult offending had occurred once his legal orders had expired.

During his pre-release planning, Nathan was made aware that the APO in ACSO would be applying for a Supervised Treatment Order through the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT). Nathan's pre-release planning involved a range of ACSO services, including Housing, Therapeutic Services, Residential and Outreach Support, as well as external professionals including Disability Services case-management, his Psychologist and the Office of Senior Practitioner.

As Nathan was not residing in the service at the time that the application was made, ACSO was required to apply for an Interim order on his release date to enable our residential staff to provide supervision and support to Nathan in the community. If this had not taken place, ACSO would have been deemed to be 'detaining' Nathan, and as such would not be satisfying its requirements under the Disability Act.

The day after he had moved in to his residence, Nathan was required to attend VCAT for his STO application hearing. Nathan asked his legal representative to challenge the validity of the STO application and he stated on a number of occasions that he wanted to be given a chance to prove himself. The VCAT member acknowledged Nathan's motivation to lead a law abiding lifestyle but agreed with the Office of the Senior Practitioner's recommendations with regards to Nathan meeting the criteria for a Supervised Treatment Order.

Despite the fact he had opted to serve his parole in prison, Nathan was wary of the level of restriction and supervision upon his return to the community. In the first 3 months, Nathan chose to challenge his order by leaving his residence without the support and supervision of staff in the community. Given the perceived risks to the community, particularly persons under 16, Disability Services requested additional staffing resources for his monitoring in the community.

A crisis meeting was held with Nathan, and he was given the opportunity to provide feedback on how ACSO, Disability Services and his care team could work collaboratively to see him move towards a less restrictive and intrusive regime in the community.

Since 2010, Nathan has had his STO reviewed on an annual basis. He has continued to have increased independent community based access for functional based activities such as conducting his personal shopping, attending medical and counselling appointments, meetings with his care team and participating in age appropriate recreational activities-e.g. RSL dinners and trivia nights. His participation with and connectedness to his community has increased through his ongoing commitment to working towards his identified life goals - one of which is to remain offence free.

Whilst Nathan maintains that he would like to live independently in the community, he has identified that the STO framework has enabled him to make a successful transition into the community. Despite his initial wariness, he stated in his latest VCAT review (2012) that he would like to have this framework in place for at least another 12 months.



*Nathan is not his real name.

ACSO's Francis House program (A residence where "Nathan" and other clients on an STO reside)
Federal Government 2012 Crime and Violence prevention award
State and Territory winner



HOUSING SERVICES





HOUSING SERVICES

GUY COOPER – SENIOR MANAGER

- Bachelor of Arts Social Science Justice Studies
- Advanced Diploma in Business Management
- Advanced Diploma Disability Studies

Guy is responsible for our seven residential houses that provide high quality & specialist support to people with an intellectual disability. Guy has 17 years experience within the forensic disability field, and was instrumental in the development and implementation of various disability programs and major events such as the ACSO Art Show, the ACSO Forensic Disability Conference & the Disability Program Quality Framework.

The creation of ACSO's Housing Services in 2011 is acknowledgement that safe and affordable accommodation is an essential need for ACSO's clients. Whilst the current core activity is the operation of seven DHS Disability funded residential houses, in future ACSO's Housing Services will expand to create a range of supported accommodation options for ACSO clients across Victoria.

Our next housing development opportunity will be the Nicholson House Project; a purpose built eight bed facility with an innovative approach that integrates intensive residential support, therapeutic interventions and the development of vocational and work skills. Planning and designs for Nicholson House are presently underway, with construction due to commence early in 2013.

Highlights

- The ACSO Intake Panel (a continuous quality improvement initiative) was trialled to determine suitability and eligibility of all referrals that are submitted for residential houses. The purpose was to improve the assessment and transition of new clients into our housing services.
- Housing Services has worked with Clinical Services in delivering four Disability Justice Forums on behalf of the Department of Human Services. The forums are intended for Disability Services case-managers who work with criminal justice clients.
- Gippsland DHS Disability has invited ACSO to provide Housing Services in East Gippsland, which will be an expansion. Services will commence in 2013.
- The metropolitan Housing Services clients have been involved in forming a gardening working group. Presently, gardening and home improvements are underway across all the metropolitan residential houses.
- ACSO received funding from the DHS as part of the Supported Accommodation Innovation Fund to operate a new eight bed forensic disability house in 2013 which will also operate a catering social enterprise enabling our residents to gain skills, work experience and qualifications in catering, hospitality and retail as they transition from our care and into a fulfilling life in the community.



HOUSING SERVICES – NORTH WEST METROPOLITAN REGION

STAN PAPPOS

- Masters of Law, Specialist Certificate in Criminology (Forensic Disability)
- Bachelor of Arts/Police Studies

Stan has worked in the Forensic Disabilities sector for over nine years and has held a variety of roles, including direct support work and coordination of outreach services and management of housing services in the North West Metropolitan Region. Stan currently holds the position of Housing Services Manager in the North West Region and is responsible for managing ACSO's forensic disability residential services and Coordinating ACSO's specialist homeless services, which assist persons exiting from prison, who are at risk of further contact with the criminal justice system.

The current portfolio in the North West Metropolitan Region consists of Francis House and Western House.

Francis and Western Houses

Francis and Western Houses have encountered an unprecedented demand for services, with more than 20 completed referrals received and over 40 enquiries encountered from a broad range of services. Since July 1st 2011, Francis House has provided support and services to 12 residents.

Supported Living Accommodation Program (SLAP)

Currently supporting six clients who live in apartments provided by Yarra Community Housing as well as supporting clients who reside in other social and public housing properties and providing opportunities for community development and integration for other YCH.

Crisis Assistance Support for a Successful Transition (CASST)

The program provides short term support to find accommodation for people on remand or seeking bail and then to link into support and services in the community. We continued to meet the 216 episodes of support per year.

Highlights

- Francis House program was recently acknowledged for its innovative work and successful outcomes with disability clients on Supervised Treatment Orders by receiving a national award from the Federal Government – Australian Crime and Violence Prevention Award.
- Supervised Treatment Orders have been revoked by VCAT for two clients, thus providing them with opportunities to participate in the community without requiring formal supervision.
- In the 2011/2012 financial year, 80% of clients exiting Francis House successfully transitioned into independent living arrangements in the community.



HOUSING SERVICES – SOUTHERN METROPOLITAN REGION

MATTHEW FERGUSON

- Advanced Dip- Disability, Advanced Dip Management
- Advanced Dip Counselling/Psychotherapy

Matt recently joined ACSO after 18 years in government (DHS). He has worked within the disability sector in a range of roles and the past nine years in the position of Advanced Behaviour Practitioner with the Behaviour Intervention Service (BIS) in the Gippsland region. Matt's work is guided by a strong sense of social justice and strengths based practice and supporting clients through a person centred lens.

The current portfolio in the Southern Metropolitan Region consists of Southern House, Armadale House – a specialist dual disability facility and T.K House.

Highlights

- Transitioning of 50% of clients from Southern House to semi-independent accommodation.
- At least 50% of clients across all three Southern housing services have readily engaged with the after-hours social skills programs and after hours events with some attending that have previously refused to participate.



HOUSING SERVICES – LODDON MALLEE REGION

BELINDA MALONEY

- Bachelor Applied Science (Intellectual disability Studies)
- Graduate Diploma (Psychological Studies)

Belinda has worked in the forensic disability and alcohol and other drug sectors since 1996. Currently she is responsible for management of forensic disability residential & outreach and day program services located in Bendigo and the Loddon region.

The current portfolio in the Loddon Mallee Region consists of Aspin House and Gully House.

Highlights

- Establishment of the Day Program shed incorporating gym equipment and recreational activities.
- Aspin House has successfully planned the exit of 50% of residents into independent community living.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF ANGELA'S OUTREACH

RECIPIENT OF ACSO'S GENERAL AND FORENSIC DISABILITY, COMPLEX CARE SERVICE.



"Creating another chance for our clients is what underpins the work we do. We work collaboratively using the expertise and resources available across Complex Care to provide a wrap around service that ensures are clients needs are met and that they have the best possible opportunity of improving their quality of life and making a positive contribution to society. " Jen, Angela's support worker

The day started early. Angela was collected from her home in Springvale by her outreach worker and driven to meet her psychologist. There was excitement in the air as ACSO's 2011 Art Show opening night was later that evening. At the end of the appointment Angela showed her psychologist pictures of the paintings she had created in ACSO's art group and she received great feedback.

We then drove to ACSO's office in Richmond where we met with Angela's employment consultant and received some great news about an upcoming course. A booking was made for Angela to meet with the Diversity at Work consultant and apply for the course to further her office skills. Angela loves typing so she was enthusiastic about the course.

We then dropped in on "The Pantry", ACSO's free grocery store and Angela was able to fill 5 shopping bags full of dry and frozen goods, dairy, fresh fruit and veggies. Angela seemed excited to be able to contribute and assist her father who is her primary carer with the shopping. It was wonderful to see Angela take ownership over some of the household duties.

We then ventured next door to ACSO's free wardrobe, "Pass it On" and enjoyed finding an outfit for Angela to wear to the opening of the Art Show later in the evening. During the day Angela was proud to tell people that she was exhibiting a painting that night and was excited to have a reason to change her look from her comfortable baggy tracksuit. Angela was encouraged to try clothing on and found some wonderful plus sized outfits. It was uplifting to see the change in Angela's self esteem and we took a photo as she looked so lovely in her new clothes. Angela left Pass It On with two new tops, two leather jackets, a scarf, some great comfortable boots, a bag and two pairs of work pants.

Later that evening Angela glowed at the Art Show. She received many compliments on her outfit and looked proud and happy to be exhibiting her artwork. And to top off her day, she sold her painting: "pink van with clouds".





COMPLEX CARE





COMPLEX CARE ANNIE TRAINOR – SENIOR MANAGER

- Graduate Diploma in Addiction Studies
- Annie's experience spans 26 years in drug and alcohol and transitional services

Annie has worked at ACSO since 1997 in a variety of roles leading Justice Transitional Programs. Annie's current role is responsible for the operational management of the range of services that make up the Complex Care Stream including, ACSO's outreach and employment programs, General and Forensic Disability Services, Link Out and Specialist Mental Health.

The division of Complex Care was created to build and deliver innovative community based interventions across Victoria. The four programs that make up ACSO's Complex Care Stream include our Employment Services (funded by DEEWR), General and Forensic Disability Outreach (funded by DHS), Link Out (funded by the DoJ) and Specialist Mental Health (funded through PDRSS).

Creating another chance for our clients is what underpins the work we do. We work collaboratively using the expertise and resources available across Complex Care and in conjunction with Clinical and Housing Services to provide a wrap around service that ensures our clients needs are met and that they have the best possible opportunity of improving their quality of life and making a positive contribution to society.

A great example of this is depicted in a short film/DVD we made reflecting a day in the life of a Complex Care client utilising the many services available within Complex Care and ACSO.

Highlights

- ACSO launched its new Link Out Service during the year covering Gippsland and the Southern Suburbs of Melbourne. Working with offenders in Fulham Prison, our team supports prisoners before they are released into the community and then provides intensive support from their date of release to help them reintegrate back into society.
- ACSO's Council made the decision to join Job Futures in 2012, a national network of local employment services providers, delivering employment services across Australia. This membership has seen ACSO's employment programs expand to include a new specialist service for ex-offenders (who also have an intellectual disability, mental health or drug and alcohol issue) get skills and support to enter the workforce as part of their reintegration into the community. ACSO will be expanding its programs across the North West of Melbourne as well as in the Inner City.



CASE COORDINATION AND OUTREACH SERVICES

TIM GILES

• Bachelor of Social Work

During his university degree, Tim completed a work placement at VACRO where he received his first taste of working with this client group.

Upon completing his university degree, Tim worked at ACSO as a case manager on the Link Out program for 2 years before coordinating the program for a further 12 months whilst developing into a new generation of leader at ACSO. In his recent appointment as Case Coordination Manager, Tim is responsible for overseeing the operations of Complex Care's Case Co-ordination and Outreach Services

ACSO's approach to our clients is to provide individualised case planning that reflects their needs, goals and their capabilities. Additionally we also need to manage a number of risks regarding the safety of our staff, the community and our clients. The continual increase in complex referrals to our services reflects positively on our staff and the effective work being undertaken in the community.

The Complex Care team has responded to an increasing number of complex referrals and last year provided outreach support to 180+ clients with varying degrees of complexity and funding.

Highlights

- Our pre and post release Link Out program team continues to forge a strong mutually beneficial partnership with HomeGround ensuring better accommodation outcomes for our clients being released from Fulham prison and those wanting to reside in the Southern region. Last year, this program has provided safe and affordable housing for 40% of our clients.
- Our Specialist Mental Health Team connects with offenders with a mental illness. We participate in the Yarra Mental Health Alliance, actively advocating on behalf of our clients. The CATCH program located at the Neighbourhood Justice Centre, has proven to be a very effective form of court based mental health outreach with potential adoption into other jurisdictions.
- Complex Care have also established an Afterhours Social Event held on a monthly basis which provides an opportunity for clients and staff to get together in a more fun focussed environment. These events are a great social outlet for our clients and they are well supported by our Consumer Advisory Group (CAG).



EMPLOYMENT SERVICES RUTH FERRARI

Ruth brings nine years of experience in the employment services industry as a Job Network and Disability Employment specialist including skills in compliance and statistical management. Ruth has worked with CVGT and Max Employment leading high performing employment programs. Ruth leads ACSO's employment contracts in partnership with Job Futures including our social enterprise and work experience projects (WEX).

ACSO is a Job Services Australia (JSA) and Disability Employment Services (DES) provider within the North West Metropolitan and Inner East Regions. ACSO is also one of only five Specialist Homeless JSA providers in Australia. In 2012, ACSO joined the Job Futures Consortium (a national membership organisation of not for profit employment providers). By 'novating' our employment contracts to Job Futures, ACSO has increased its capacity to specifically target highly disadvantaged job seekers with an offending history and who present with a range of complex needs.

Highlights

- In 2012, we developed a suite of WEX programs funded via Work for the Dole. These programs provide material aid in the form of food from The Pantry and clothing from Pass it on to any ACSO clients requiring this type of material aid. The recent relocation of our Richmond team to the Regent St building, next door to ACSO's head office has made access to these programs easy and convenient whilst providing an immediate response to basic needs.



- Employment Services team supported in excess of 700 job seekers within our employment contracts. We have been successful in placing a total of 466 ACSO clients in jobs.

RAPIDS: A RESPONSE FOR THOSE MOST AT RISK OF HARM

GETTING IMMEDIATE ACCESS TO DRUG AND ALCOHOL ASSESSMENT AND TREATMENT

The RAPIDS team demonstrate excellent collaboration with multiple stakeholders as they work to develop a client centred plan that addresses substance use and offending behaviour. The focus is on immediate and short to medium goals for the client to mitigate the risk to themselves and the community.

Its 1.30pm and a call comes from the Melbourne Magistrates' Court to the ACSO drug and alcohol team. "James" is a 39 year old man who has been struggling with his heroin use since the age of 18. He has attempted counselling, withdrawal and rehabilitation many times and has never been able to stick it out to complete any of his past treatment attempts.

Due to widespread program promotion by the RAPIDS coordinator, James' legal aid solicitor was familiar with the program and wanted to support James in accessing treatment and breaking the cycle of homelessness, drug use and crime that James was in. James was facing charges related to his drug use including possession and theft. He was also being case managed for a co- occurring mental health issues through the ARC (Assessment and Referral Court) whose sitting Magistrate was also aware of the program. The ARC Court Magistrate Mr Harding agreed to a referral to the RAPIDS program simply because waiting five days to access help and support would not be beneficial for James. The RAPIDS coordinator Kenneth and a RAPIDS clinician attended the court later that same day to assess James for immediate access to drug and alcohol treatment.

The RAPIDS team worked with James, the ARC Magistrate, the ARC case manager, Community Corrections, and AOD Treatment providers to formulate the best outcome for James. The team discussed with James his past treatment attempts and current goals and decided on a treatment plan of residential withdrawal, pharmacotherapy and residential rehabilitation.

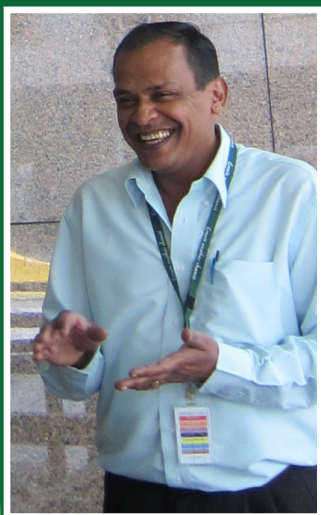
Based on the assessment the client services team connected with one of ACSO's 105 drug treatment partner agencies ReGen (Formerly Moreland Hall) The team arranged for withdrawal at ReGen to commence within two days, at which time James was placed on Opioid Replacement Therapy.

James also connected with intensive bridging support with ACSO, which was daily contact prior to his withdrawal to address treatment readiness and relapse prevention. James was successful in fully completing his withdrawal program, and willingly he attended additional counselling supported brokered by the RAPIDS team, also at ReGen.

James never missed any of his appointments and was readmitted to withdrawal so he could go directly into long term residential rehabilitation with the goal to become drug free. Most importantly, James' risk taking behaviours began to reduce and he has not reoffended.

James is still in the program today, is not using drugs and is working towards building a new way of living for himself.

CREATING
ANOTHER
CHANCE





CLINICAL SERVICES





CLINICAL SERVICES

AMANDA BLADEN – SENIOR MANAGER

• Bachelor in Occupational Therapy

Amanda joined ACSO in October 2011 and leads our new Clinical Services division. Amanda has had extensive clinical and management experience, having worked within mental health settings and the hospital system. Roles have included OT Manager; Chief OT in Mental Health and Senior Occupational Therapist with the State-wide Forensic Health Service. Additionally Amanda has a Masters in Business Management - Organisational Development.

ACSO's Clinical Services was created to provide therapeutic assessment and treatment interventions and build an organisational clinical governance framework to guide the direct practice for ACSO staff. As one of the new operational divisions, Clinical Services provides secondary consultations, assessments and therapeutic treatment for ACSO clients engaged with Housing Services and Complex Care.

A key challenge that ACSO is facing is the steady increase in referrals into the COATS program over the past few years. Since 2005, referrals into COATS for an assessment had increased by 62% to the end of the 2011/12 financial period. Given the impact of the Victorian Government sentencing reforms, we anticipate this increase will continue. Of these referrals we are finding an increasing number presenting with a wide range of complex needs, presenting ACSO with the challenge to not only assess an increasing number of clients, but to ensure as many as possible enter the treatment system and achieve significant treatment goals.

Highlights

- ACSO worked with the Department of Health and the Department of Justice to create a new stream of support in the COATS program for people at court who present with a high risk of harm to self, others or the community as a result of their drug and or alcohol use. This expansion has seen the creation of a new Responsive Assessment Planning Intervention and Diversion Service (RAPIDS) response team, who attend court the same day a referral is made to us, assess the person and provide support and a rapid pathway into community based drug treatment. This expansion has meant that those most at risk are getting access to critical support and immediate treatment.
- ACSO received new funding from the Federal Government's Substance Misuse Scheme this year to enable us to provide better pathways into mental health programs for offenders with a substance use problem who also present with a mental health issue. Over the next 3 years, ACSO will be focusing its energy and resources to up skill our staff, develop a range of new assessment tools to develop new pathways into treatment with the mental health sector.



COMMUNITY OFFENDER ADVICE TREATMENT SERVICE (COATS) HEATHER CARMICHAEL

• Combined Bachelor of Arts and Social Work

Heather has a background in the Alcohol and Other Drug field working in a range of settings including forensic and community counselling and assessment, residential withdrawal, supported accommodation and prison programs. She has also worked at the University of Melbourne, and most recently in Forensic Mental Health. Heather also has experience in project management, policy work, quality and workforce development. She has recently commenced with ACSO in the role of COATS Manager.

The Community Offenders Advice and Treatment Service (COATS) is a government funded health program. The COATS program includes the COATS AOD Assessment services, Responsive Assessment Planning Intervention and Diversion Service (RAPIDS), Client Services Unit (CSU) and Developing, Understanding, Expertise, Treatment and Systems in Dual Diagnosis (DUETS).

The Community Offenders Advice and Treatment Service (COATS)

We assess and purchase treatment for people who have been before the criminal justice system and have an alcohol or other drug problem. We have metropolitan and regional offices and provide services that cover the state of Victoria.

Responsive Assessment Planning Intervention and Diversion Service (RAPIDS)

RAPIDS provides an instant link between all Victorian courts and the AOD treatment sector for the highest risk forensic clients, and facilitates a seamless, supported transition from ACSO's initial assessment and bridging support to brokered treatment with other providers. This proved to be an innovative solution to the identified issue that some clients who failed to attend assessment appointments were a significant risk to themselves or the community.

Highlights

- Number of referrals into COATS / RAPIDS: 21,105.
- Number of completed assessments: 14, 589.
- Number completed treatments 17,373 (A person can complete more than 1 treatment episode).
- 141 clients have been assessed by RAPIDS in less than 10 months and 98% of these have been brokered to, and commenced AOD treatment.



REHABILITATION AND RECOVERY SERVICES

LEE-ARNA HOWLE

Lee-Arna has worked across Housing and Clinical services with ACSO since 2010. She has held roles as the Southern Region Housing Manager looking after Dual Disability Services and has recently commenced her new role in Clinical Services as the Recovery & Rehabilitation Manager supporting the Restore Family Support Program, Clinical Nurse, and the ACSO Life Skills Program. Lee-Arna is a qualified Occupational Therapist and has experience working in community based settings for adults with an intellectual disability and mental illness for over six years in New South Wales and Victoria.

Restore - Research and evaluation findings

Restore has been funded as a pilot program through the Lord Mayor's Charitable Fund. The piloted program demonstrated that there is:

- Value in providing a truly integrated model of family inclusive support across the lifespan (birth to death) fostering opportunities for true partnerships with other agencies.
- Ongoing need for facilitating access to specialist individual and group support, fostering development of coping skills, whilst offering peer support for those caring for someone with a mental illness, AOD and contact with criminal justice.
- Need for linkage/care co-ordination model with secondary consult/sector support for agencies supporting these families and carers.
- Value in taking the best of what works, offer an outreach model for 'hard to reach' carers, coupled with online/social media for those not yet ready to engage with services.

Highlights

- Design and delivery of a variety of programs including All About Me, Healthy Appetites, Peer Mentoring, Gardening Crew, Bendigo 'Ed's Shed' and car wash club, Art Sessions and Holiday and Adventure Therapy.
- Delivery of afterhours social nights for clients in consultation with consumers.
- ACSO Art Show: Themed celebration of recovery and change which was a rare opportunity to celebrate success and showcase talent in a group constantly reminded of their failings.



THERAPEUTIC SERVICES CHELSEA TROUTMAN

- Bachelor in Psychology
- MA Psychology
- Spec. Certificate in Forensic Disability

Chelsea Troutman has worked within a clinical capacity with complex individuals who engage in severe behaviours of concern for over eight years, both in Australia and America. She is currently working as the Clinical Manager which includes overseeing the Problematic Sexual Behaviour Service and the development and implementation of practice principles within the forensic disability programs.

Our Clinical Practitioners work across ACSO's services to provide secondary consultation, advice and training related to our clients' care. Therapeutic services also oversee the restrictive practices within ACSO and the Problematic Sexual Behaviour Service.

Restrictive practices within ACSO

Restrictive practices as identified within the *Disability Act 2006* undertaken by ACSO are limited to Chemical Restraint and Detention. Restrictive intervention is used to responsibly restrict the rights or freedom of movement of a person with a disability. Under the Act, restrictive practices in relation to an adult with an intellectual or cognitive disability whose behaviour either causes, or is at risk of causing serious physical harm to the adult or others. Before a restrictive practice can be used, a service provider must meet a number of requirements.

Problematic Sexual Behaviour Service (PSBS)

The Problematic Sexual Behaviour Service (PSBS) is funded by the Disability Services (DS) branch of the Department of Human Services (DHS). The focus of the service is on early intervention (prevention) work with clients at risk of committing sexual offences. The program was established to work with persons over 12 years of age who have an intellectual disability and are at risk of committing or have committed sex offences. The program aims to meet the gap between services currently available that specialise in human relations interventions but do not address dangerous or potentially dangerous sexual behaviours, and the DHS operated Disability Forensic Assessment and Treatment Service (DFATS).

Presently:

- 12 individuals in receipt of residential services through ACSO, who are presently prescribed chemical restraint by a treating medical practitioner.
- Four individuals in our residential services, who are subject to Supervised Treatment Orders, as defined under the Disability Act.
- In the 2011/2012 financial year, ACSO assisted three clients to apply to VCAT for the revocation of their STO's.



ACSO

JOIN US IN CELEBRATING 30 YEARS

3
IN 2



TURNS

0

OF CREATING ANOTHER CHANCE

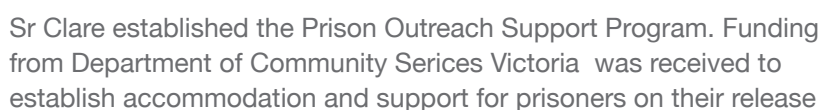
2013



Last year alone over 10,000 men, women and their families, each with numerous layers of complexity, came through our specialist services for support.

● **Epistle Centre Established.**

Following his release Stan continued to edit the magazine. He found he was being contacted by other ex-prisoners and gradually a support network was developed by Stan, with assistance from several volunteers. It was recognised that to be effective in meeting the needs of people just released from prison, funding would be required and a more formal structure with input from people working in the criminal justice system would be necessary to provide support and advice. Judge Alastair Nicholson was approached and he was happy to put his name to the organisation. Thus, the agency was formed and given the name 'Epistle' from the magazine as it was well recognised amongst prisoners in Victoria.



1987

- Epistle Centre received Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) funding.
- McCormack House established.
- Full time administrator employed.

In 1987 it received its first substantial government funding in the form of SAAP (Supported Accommodation Assistance Program) funding to set up a halfway house.

McCormack House was opened by the Attorney General Jim Kennan as a 13 bed supported accommodation for many groups of prisoner including clients with psychiatric and intellectual disabilities.

Funding allowed employment of staff.

Full time administrator Antony Calabrò was appointed in May of 1987 to manage the service, later to become the Executive Director.



1989

- Disability Program established.

Justice Nicholson approached the Minister for Community Services, Peter Spyker and we were given funding to set up a dedicated house for clients with an intellectual disability who had come into contact with the criminal justice system.



1990

- Head Office moved from Napier street to Cardigan Street, Carlton.

EPISTLE POST RELEASE SERVICE

CHANGE OF ADDRESS AND TELEPHONE NUMBER

As from 25th January, 1990 the new address and telephone number for the Epistle Post Release Service will be:

65 CARDIGAN STREET,
CARLTON. VIC. 3053.

P.O. BOX 308,
CARLTON SOUTH. VIC. 3053.

TELEPHONE: (03) 349 1200

1992

- First outreach service established.
- Forensic Mental Health Program established.

Epistle Centre set up its first outreach service.



1993

- Disability Employment Program established.
- Head Office moved to Lygon Street, Carlton.

We received funding from the Department of Health and Family Services and the Disability Employment Program was established. The Program took referrals from the Disability and Mental Health Programs.

1995

- Head Office moved to Spencer Street, West Melb.

Due to increasing staff numbers and the closure of Pentridge Prison, a more central location was needed. Administration offices moved to Spencer Street. We now had a staff of 15 employees and our budget was \$1-1.2 million.



1996

- Name Changed to VOSA (The Victorian Offender Support Agency).

In 1996 we changed our name from the Epistle Centre to Victorian Offender Support Agency (VOSA). Council agreed that our name should clearly reflect our activities and our core client group.



1997

- Community Offenders Advice and Treatment Service (COATS) established.
- Employment Directions Australia (EDA) established.

Number of Employees: 2 Number of Programs: 1 Number of Serviced Clients: 30

As part of the reforms associated with the Victorian Premiers Drug Advisory Council (Pennington Review), the Community Offender Advice and Treatment Service (COATS) was established. The DHS informed us we were successful for the COATS tender because of our history in dealing with difficult people, our links to the judiciary and that we were seen as independent because we had never been involved or operated as a treatment agency. Employment Directions was established through funding via the Federal Government Job Networks contracts.

New program supporting sex offenders was established operated by Sr Clare.



2000

- Renamed Australian Community Support Organisation (ACSO).
- Expansion of EDA to Tasmania and NSW.

The change in name to ACSO recognised that we now extended beyond providing support to ex-prisoners to those to be generally disadvantaged or at risk of entering the criminal justice system.

We were also granted funding by the Federal government for employment placements which resulted in us operating in 15 sites in Victoria, New South Wales and Tasmania.



2001

- Bridging the Gap Program established.
- Gained QIC accreditation.
- Dual Disability House opened.

The Department of Justice funded ACSO to deliver three programs. The first was Bridging the Gap in 2001 which provided support for persons with major alcohol and drug issues and assessed as being at risk of self-harm or reoffending.

Whilst a number of further Disability Residential houses were opened during the year, the highlight was the opening of a Dual Disability House in the Southern Metropolitan Region, funded by both Disability and Mental Health Services.



2003

- 1st ACSO Art Show.

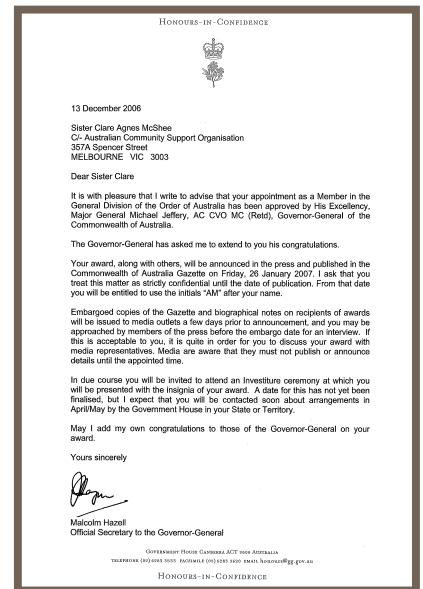


2004

- Celebrated 20th Anniversary.
- Program Restructure.
- Sex Offender Transitional Outreach Program established.

2006

- Developed new constitution.
- Electronic archiving and file management system for over 40,000 clients.
- Sr Clare appointed as a Member in the General Division of the Order of Australia.



2007

- COATS celebrated 10 years.

2008

- ACSO moved to Hoddle St, Richmond.
- Scanners R Us established.
- Link Out launched.
- Konnect (Koori Transitional Support) established.
- Sr Clare Retired.

The move to Hoddle street created the social enterprise Scanners R Us. Instead of moving and storing over a quarter of a million paper files, they are converted to electronic format by ACSO's Employment Program job seekers.



2009

- Selected as a specialist Job Service Australia provider
- Launched new website and logo.

ACSO was selected as one of only two specialist homeless employment service providers in Victoria. A new logo along with a new communications strategy was developed, designed to increase the profile of ACSO.



2010

- Research and Evaluation Unit established.
- CAG established.
- Restore Program.
- Antony Calabrò retired.

The Consumer Advisory Group was established to assist programs to better represent consumer groups and improve service delivery to clients.

The Restore Program, funded by the Lord Mayor's Charitable Fund offers tailored support services for families and carers of people with co-occurring mental illness and substance abuse issues who have had contact with the criminal justice system.



2011

- New CEO.
- ACSO restructure.
- 'Create Another Chance'.
- Launched 2011-2014 Strategic plan.

Three service streams were created with the new restructure: Housing Services, Community Based Complex Care Services and Clinical Services with the aim of providing a fully integrated and tight wrap around service for our clients. 'Create Another Chance' was introduced as our slogan and cemented as a work ethos.

The 2011-2014 strategic plan focuses on initiatives that shapes ACSO's future as a leader in the forensic sector.

Create another chance



2012

- Life Skills Program launched.
- RAPIDS Established.
- Job Futures contract Won.
- Nicholson house approved
- DUETS launched

RAPIDS provides an instant link between the courts and the AOD treatment sector for the highest risk forensic clients. Life Skills Program reduce the likelihood offending behaviour related to like skills deficit.

Received funding from the DHS as part of the Supported Accommodation Innovation Fund to operate a new eight bed forensic disability house in 2013.

Received new funding from the Federal Government's Substance Misuse Service Delivery Grants Fund to develop new pathways into mental health programs for offenders with a substance use problem who also present with a mental health issue.



INFLUENCING SOCIAL JUSTICE

**Strategic Goal 4:
ACSO Advocates for
Improved Policy and
Service Solutions for
Disenfranchised and
Vulnerable Members Of Our
Community**

***“To be a voice for the
disenfranchised and
vulnerable we must build on
our recognised profile in the
community services sector
and take a leadership role
in both public debate and
discussion”***

INFLUENCING SOCIAL POLICY

- Submission and contribution to the Review of the Adult Parole System, by the Sentencing Advisory Council (Vic DoJ)
- Submission and contribution to the Sex Offenders Registration Information Paper, released by the Victorian Law Reform Commission
- Submission and contribution to the National Pharmaceutical Drug Misuse Strategy developed for the Ministerial Council on Drug Strategy.
- An article published in the Council to Homeless Persons' July 2011 issue of Parity, "Prisoners, Centrelink and Homelessness"
- Submission to the Department of Health Psychiatric Disability Rehabilitation and Support Services Reform Framework Consultation Paper
- Submission on the Whole-of-government Victorian alcohol and drug strategy developed for the Victorian Department of Health
- Submission to the Law Reform Committee regarding 'Access to and Interaction with the Justice System by People with an Intellectual disability, their Families and Carers'

EXTERNAL COMMITTEES AND BOARDS - BRINGING A FORENSIC FLAVOUR



Karenza Louis-Smith

Current Member

The Women's Correctional Services Advisory Committee

The WCSAC was established by the Minister for Corrections in 2003 to provide an external source of expert advice on the delivery of correctional services to women.

Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment Reform: Forensic Services Advisory Group

The Advisory Group provided advice on how the alcohol and drug treatment reform program can be successfully implemented. They identified issues, opportunities and obstacles to be considered in the implementation of key reform proposals and assisted the Health Department in problem solving issues that arose.



Remberto Rivera

Current Member and Treasurer

Neami National

Bringing a forensic voice to the board of leading not for profit mental health organisation NEAMI.



Tony Phillips

Current Member and Treasurer

Friends of Suai

Friends of Suai aims to connect the City of Port Phillip with the 20,000 citizens of Suai Province, Timor Leste by helping and learning from their experiences and strengths.



Rick Noble

Current Chair of the Board

Phunktional Ltd

A vibrant, innovative and cutting edge community arts company creating art with and for communities across Australia addressing issues including offending, substance, mental health.



Sarah Spencer

Current Member

Georgina Martina Inc,

Specialist refuges providing crisis and medium term accommodation as well as culturally sensitive support to women and children escaping domestic/family violence.

Evaluation Consultant

Office of the Child Safety Commissioner: Community Integration Program Advisory Group

The CIP was established to connect young people living in residential care with their local community.

Evaluation expert

McAuley Community Services for Women: McAuley Works Program expert advisory group

The expert advisory committee was established to oversee the DEEWR funded employment program designed to assist women who have experienced family violence, periods of homelessness or mental health issues into the workforce.



Stan Pappos

Current Member

Victorian Coalition ABI Service Providers

VCASP- Criminal Justice Network

This Network provides a venue for discussion and consultation across the disability and justice sectors about ways to improve the service system specific to acquired brain injury in a variety of key areas.



Guy Cooper

Current Member

Criminal Justice Reference Group

The reference group is auspiced by DHS and focuses on policy development and reform in the forensic disability sector.



Guy Cooper and Stan Pappos

Current Member (Guy Cooper- Chair of Committee)

ACSO Conference Committee

The ACSO conference committee comprises of internal ACSO personnel, as well as external stakeholders from DoJ, DHS, Office of Public Advocate, Legal Aid, Courts, ABI and Forensic Mental Health. The committee is involved in planning and organising the bi-annual ACSO Forensic Disabilities Conference.



Amanda Bladen

Current Member

Occupational Therapy Council of Australia

The Occupational Therapy Council of Australia oversees the National Registration and Health Practitioner regulations for Occupational Therapists in Australia.



Daria Chang

Current Member

Light of Hope Foundation

The Light of Hope Foundation is a not for profit Christian organisation based in the Philippines and Australia. They run child sponsor programs, educational, feeding and community health programs for the disadvantaged.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATION AND EVENTS

WHO

**Heather Carmichael and
Kenneth Suares**

Karenza Louis-Smith

**Karenza Louis-Smith and
Guy Cooper**

**Stan Pappos and Chelsea
Troutman**

**Chelsea Troutman, Lee-Arna
Howle and Stan Pappos**

**Emma Bell and Harry
Constantinou**

**Wendy Barnett, Emma Bell and
Stephanie Rodski**

Danielle Stone & Robb Ritchens

EVENT

Turning Point Symposium
'Systems, engagement and innovation: Developing more effective treatment and policy responses'

Sentencing Advisory Council round table to review and report on the legislative and administrative framework governing the release and management of sentenced prisoners on parole in Victoria.

Disability Services Forensic Reform Project

Reintegration Puzzle Conference, Canberra

Annual national Reintegration Puzzle Conference, convened by Deakin University.

ACSO Forensic Disabilities Conference

Bi-annual national conference, convened by ACSO.

Presentation at Fulham Correctional Centre

Reintegration Puzzle
The Reintegration Puzzle Conference brings together people working to support the reintegration of offenders into the community after release from prison. This year's conference focused on the physical, mental and social health of offenders and the impact of poor health on the reintegration of offenders after prison.

2nd Annual Correctional Health Summit

PRESENTATION

RAPIDS- Responsive Assessment Planning Intervention and Diversion Service

Sentencing reform

Provide guidance on more effective responses for people with a disability in contact with the criminal justice system who have complex needs and heightened vulnerabilities

‘Bridging the gap from a custodial setting to a community setting in the rehabilitation of offenders with an intellectual disability: A journey in culture change’

‘Bridging the gap from a custodial setting to a community setting in the rehabilitation of offenders with an intellectual disability’

Link Out- Presentation in the role of Link Out in assisting prisoners transition from prison into the community in Southern Metro and Gippsland regions

A united response to Complex Care issues. Innovative service delivery to meet with competing sector agencies *

“30 Years of Responding to Social Justice Policy”

AUDIENCE

The Victorian drug and alcohol sector

Sentencing Advisory Council

Department of Human Services

Government and non-government organisations directly involved in the community reintegration of offenders.

Forensic disabilities sector

Presentation delivered to Registered Housing Providers

Organisations directly involved in the community reintegration of offenders.

Criminal justice/healthcare workers

6TH ACSO FORENSIC DISABILITIES CONFERENCE

In October 2011, 235 delegates from across Australia attended the 6th ACSO Forensic Disabilities Conference - “New Paradigms, Old Challenges” making this our largest bi-annual conference to date.

The Conference provided the platform for over 235 frontline staff, practitioners, professionals, consumers and policy makers to explore emerging trends, evidence based practices and research regarding the efficacy of compulsory treatment, as well as looking at alternative or complimentary options including therapeutic programs, treatment, housing and wrap around support, alongside the ongoing implications on human rights within the forensic disability arena.

“Pretty good data that confirmed that we as an industry were moving forward.”

KEY NOTE SPEAKERS INCLUDED:



Professor Susan Hayes forensic psychologist; currently holds appointments as Professor of Behavioural Sciences in Medicine at the University of Sydney and Visiting Professor at the University of Bristol, UK.



Dr William Glaser: William Glaser is a consultant psychiatrist with some thirty years of clinical and research experience in the forensic field. He has authored numerous articles in refereed journals and book chapters and has consulted for courts and other bodies in the criminal, civil, Family and Childrens' Court jurisdictions both in Victoria and interstate.



Professor John Taylor: Professor of Clinical Psychology, Northgate Hospital United Kingdom



Dr Danny Sullivan: Consultant Psychiatrist , Assistant Clinical Director, Forensicare, Adjunct Senior Lecturer, School of Psychology and Psychiatry, Monash University



Professor Bernadette McSherry: Director, Centre for the Advancement of Law and Mental Health

All presentations can be found at the ACSO conference website by following this link:

<http://www.conferenceworks.net.au/acso/>

BRIDGING THE GAP FROM A CUSTODIAL SETTING TO A COMMUNITY SETTING IN THE REHABILITATION OF OFFENDERS

Chelsea Troutman: ACSO

There is a current gap between the service model, practice and outcomes targeted within a custodial setting and a community setting for offender's with an intellectual disability. As community based intervention has been identified as a key component to an offenders rehabilitation, it should act as a bridge between a person's reintegration to the community from custody. With that said, community based services working with forensic disability require clinical direction to filter treatment approaches through the daily interactions between staff and the person, achievable outcomes, and a framework of practice that focuses on a wrap around model of support that is responsive to the person's risks, needs and self directed future goals.

Learning objectives to be targeted within the presentation:

- The principles of practice that guide intervention, interaction and program integrity within community based setting working with forensic disability.
- Identification of the risks associated with community based forensic disability services and how those risks are managed through a step down model of support. Discussion of the outcomes associated with a community based bridging service for forensic disability

Extract from 6th Forensic Disabilities Conference

***“Hearing about the worth of different disciplines
e.g. music & speech therapy was great.”***

WE THANK OUR SPONSORS



Office of the
Public Advocate



BUSINESS SERVICES

The last twelve months has seen ACSO transform from within to become a more client centred organisation, where all of our programs wrap around our clients to formulate the best outcomes for our clients. In this context Business Services has redefined itself to become a customer focused, can do unit that provides the infrastructure or platform from which our staff can confidently reach out to clients and provide the support our clients deserve.

CONSUMER ADVISORY GROUP (CAG)

The Consumer Advisory Group (CAG) is a great ACSO initiative whose objective is to involve clients in program design. The CAG is a group of current and previous ACSO service users, who meet at least monthly to provide information on program and staff development. They assist with redesigning ACSO brochures, contribute to policy submissions, produce a newsletter, and talk at inductions for new staff and Council members.

ACSO's CAG is aptly coordinated by ACSO's veteran staff member, Chris Cappello. Chris commenced at ACSO over 30 years ago, working with clients at our original transitional services. She is supported by two ex-consumers who have reached the end of their terms as CAG members, and now fulfil the project officer and administrative roles of organising this pivotal Group.

During 2011-12, CAG members have participated in ACSO's strategic plan launch, talks to external organisations, conducted focus groups with residential disability clients, presented at the Forensic Disability Conference, and facilitated the Life Skills Program.

"Being a representative of ACSO's Consumer Advisory Group has given me the opportunity to contribute my experiences and knowledge from a client's perspective. It has been my greatest achievement professionally and has been very rewarding. In just over 12 months, being a member of CAG has given me the opportunity to be involved in numerous events that I would never dreamed of taking part in. A radio interview with ACSO's CEO and also at ACSO's 6th Forensic Disabilities Conference, I gave a speech on my experiences with the criminal justice system. Being a CAG member is very fulfilling and rewarding and gives the members an integral role in assisting ACSO to better incorporate the voices of consumers into the development and delivery of programs and services."

CAG Member



OUR APPROACH TO MANAGING QUALITY AND RISK

For over a decade, ACSO has maintained accreditation against the core standards of the Quality Improvement Council, which demonstrates that we continue to meet high standards relating to:

Building quality organisations, through demonstrating excellence in governance, management systems, human and physical resources, knowledge and risk management, regulatory compliance and safety and quality integration;

Providing quality services and programs, through demonstrating excellence in assessment and planning, positive outcomes focus, cultural appropriateness, consumer rights and coordinated services;

Sustaining quality external relationships, through our service agreements, partnerships, collaboration, strategic positioning, contribution to best practice, and community and professional capacity building.

Additionally, many of ACSO's services are subject to service specific reviews. For example, our employment services provided to clients with a disability are accredited against the Disability Employment Standards and Rehabilitation and Support Services Standards, our mental health outreach program is accredited against the Psychiatric Disability Rehabilitation Service Standards, and housing support service against the Homelessness Assistance Service Standards.

ACSO has a commitment to exceed minimum external accreditation requirements, and this is demonstrated by our new internal auditing process. We have embedded continuous quality improvement into our systems, investing in several staff being trained as 'internal auditors', and forming an Internal Improvement Committee with representation across the organisation. Above and beyond any external requirements, this process has been created to ensure ACSO, on an operational level, continuously improves its quality and safety processes and systems.



RISK APPETITE STATEMENT

In achieving its strategic and operational objectives ACSO will operate within a low overall risk range. The organisation's lowest risk appetite is for staff and client health and safety, and regulatory compliance; with a marginally higher risk appetite for our strategic and operational objectives. This means that minimising risks associated with service delivery to clients, providing a safe work environment to staff and meeting regulatory compliance obligations will take priority over achieving other strategic and operational goals.

The high level of accountability evident in our organisation-wide internal auditing process is indicative of ACSO's low risk appetite. Despite working with clients that are amongst the state's most volatile, the organisation operates within a low overall risk range, especially in relation to staff and client health and safety, and regulatory compliance, described in our Risk Appetite Statement.

Consequently, ACSO has continued to invest in infrastructure to mitigate risk across all sites 24 hours a day. This includes investing in online incident reporting and risk management software, stringent risk assessment and reporting protocols whereby the Council are notified upon occurrence of serious incidents, and an organisation-wide, on call service featuring two tiers of 24/7 everyday of the year support from operational and executive management to lone housing staff.

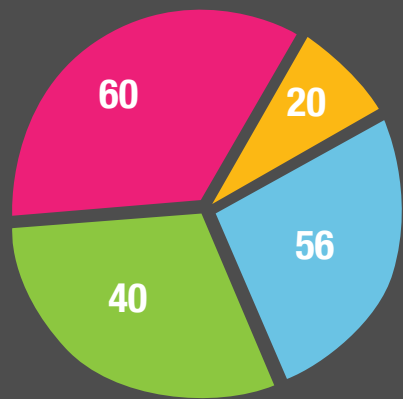


OUR PEOPLE

ACSO staff numbers during 2011-2012 are as shown in the following chart.

WHERE DO THEY WORK

- Clinical Services
- Complex Care
- Housing Services
- Business Services



TRAINING

ACSO has a strong commitment to providing its workforce with growth and development activities. Training and development has been offered specifically to at least 64 staff members throughout the year, ranging from seminars to diploma courses, with many more exposed to ACSO training through group activities as well as leadership and safety training.

Training	
Total Training Expenditure (\$)	\$87,780
Training Expenditure (\$/FTE)	\$499
Individual Training Sessions (Staff)	64
Group Training Sessions	24
Leadership Training (Staff)	15
Safety Training (Warden)	15

Based on Staffing level of 176 FTE at 30/6/2012

OH&S

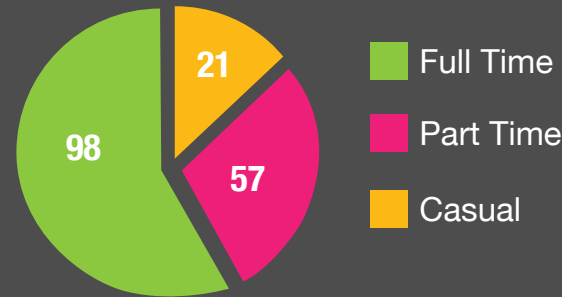
Ensuring a safe work environment for staff is a critical aspect of ACSO’s HR policy and procedures. A review of all OH&S policies has begun and will continue through the next year. This review aims to increase staff safety and awareness of risk, as well as providing systems to analyse, reduce and monitor risk.

WORK - LIFE BALANCE

As part of ACSO’s commitment to providing a flexible work environment, the following chart shows that approximately 45% of ACSO’s total headcount are employed on either as casual or part-time basis. As well as this opportunity to balance life and work, many staff, dependent on the role and circumstances, are able to take advantage of:

- Time-in-lieu for additional hours worked
- Arranging work hours to allow a rostered day off each month
- Varying start and finish times
- Varying the location of work

STAFF NUMBERS BY EMPLOYMENT TYPE



WHAT DO OUR STAFF THINK OF US

Our staff are ACSO's largest and most valuable asset; without them we could not deliver our valuable services. A staff survey, conducted in October 2011, showed that staff were generally happy with working at ACSO and feeling positive about the implementation of structural changes. Some of the survey findings include:

Successes

- More than 70% of staff were satisfied with their current roles
- Most staff received an appropriate amount of supervision
- Staff generally thought the teamwork within ACSO was positive and productive

Opportunities for Improvement

- Improved opportunity for training and promotion needs to be provided
- Communication within the organisation needs to be improved
- A greater recognition of the need for work-life balance is required

A training and development framework has been developed scheduled for rollout in 2013. Staff engagement through communication is a priority for our executive and as such we will implement both leadership and all staff "open space" forums that provide the opportunity for feedback and foster open communication on any subject matter. Internal communication is also being strengthened via the recent appointment of the Marketing and Communications Manager. As work-life balance means different things to different people, staff are encouraged to take a proactive approach to this. Equally, our commitment to work-life balance is highlighted on the previous page via a demonstrably flexible work environment.

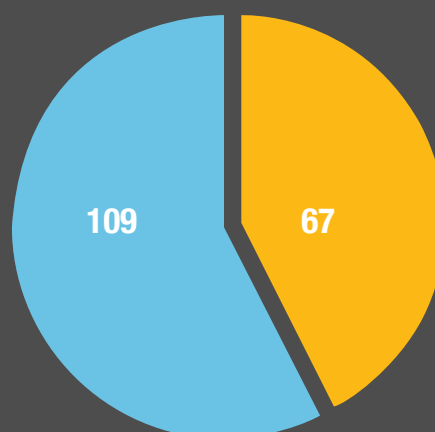
TURN OVER AND GROWTH

Turnover has been significant during this year, primarily due to a major organisational restructure and a redirection or defunding of some activities: (e.g., Link Out and Scanners R Us). This is highlighted by there having been 82 commencements and 92 departures during the year which led to an atypical overall annual turnover rate of 52.3%.

Gender	Total Headcount	Departures	Turnover %
Female	109	44	40.4
Male	67	48	71.6
Total	176	92	52.3

STAFF TOTAL BY GENDER

Female Male



DIVERSITY

Without a specific reference to a CALD policy within the recruitment process; the process has led to a wide range of CALD staff members being employed. This process has also maintained the gender ratio within the organisation at around 57% female: 43% male. Interestingly, and pleasingly, this is also reflected in the composition of the ACSO leadership group (59% female : 41% male).

OUR TECHNOLOGY IMPROVEMENT

ACSO HAS DEVELOPED AND IS IMPLEMENTING AN ICT STRATEGIC PLAN TO MEET CURRENT BUSINESS DEMANDS AND TO PREPARE FOR FUTURE REQUIREMENTS.

The most significant component of the ICT Strategic Plan is the alignment of practices to Standards. The ICT Strategic Plan has been informed by existing standards, including the ISO 38500 standard on ICT Governance and the AUSNZ AS 8018 standard on ICT Management. The procurement of an ITIL aligned service desk has been influenced by the Information Technology Infrastructure Library V3 (ITIL) and ICT position descriptions are being aligned to the Skills Framework for the Information Age V5 (SFIA). The alignment to international quality standards on ICT will not only enhance the service levels of our ICT systems and processes; but puts our agency in the path to world best practice.

A service desk has been implemented to provide transparency and accountability to service users and to provide a framework in which ICT works at the operational level. ICT is currently working through fifty improvement and remediation projects. This shows our commitment to ICT and our aspiration to make the best use of technology to enhance our services to clients and to improve our communication and relationships with all stakeholders.

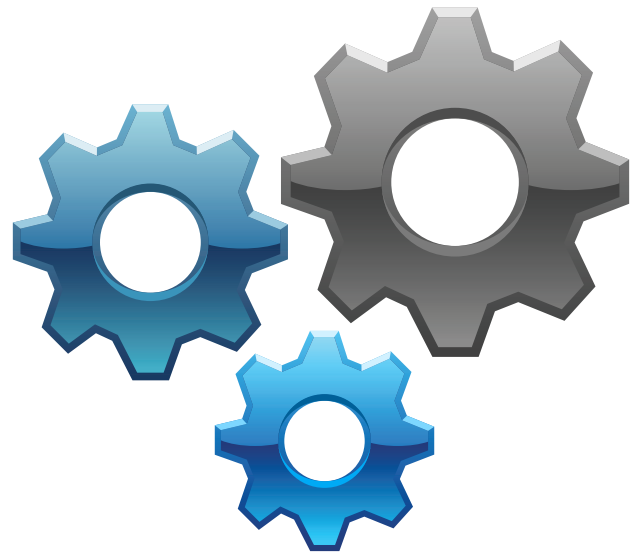
The resourcing of ICT has increased in the last year. A management level position has been created to oversee and guide continuous service improvement. A Systems Administrator role has also been developed and is dedicated to the administration and relationship building associated with the Penelope project. All ICT roles are undergoing a translation to the SFIA framework to provide a common language and understanding of the roles.

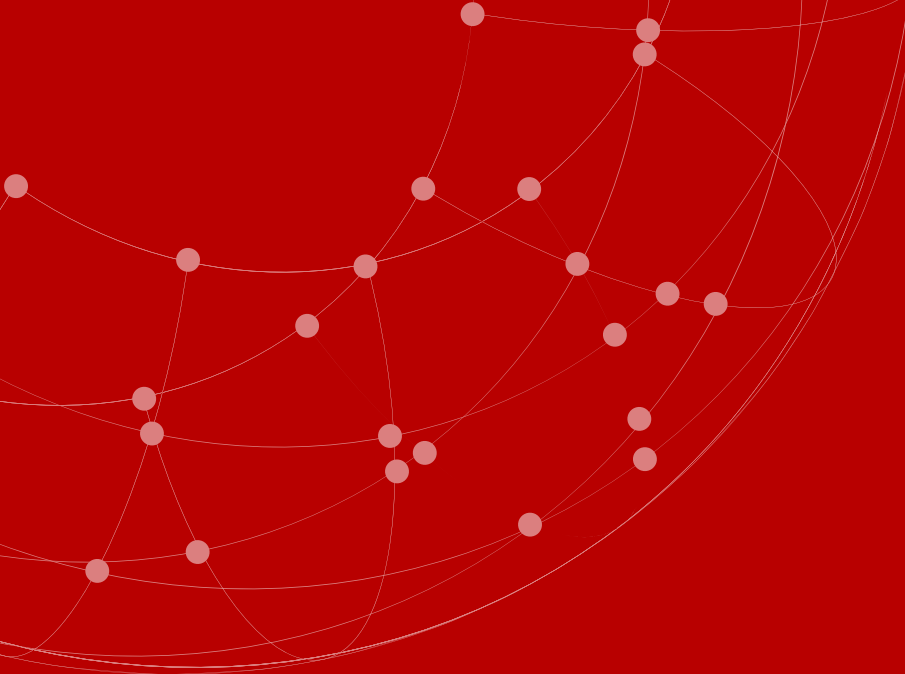


INNOVATION - PENELOPE

COATS is the largest program that ACSO operates providing Drug and Alcohol assessments and/or brokering treatment for 21,000 clients last year. This program had been coordinated through a fourteen year Client Management System (CMS) that was obsolete and in urgent need of replacement. To meet this challenge the organisation opted to go to market and after much search we settled for a web based framework system (CMS) called Penelope. The implementation of Penelope has been a managed process within three phases of development. The first phase was an agile development followed by second more detailed scoping and rollout to the entire organisation. The last planned phase is a rollout to the sector to enable direct access to clinical workflows. The latter will not only enhance communication between ACSO and all our partner agencies in the drug and alcohol sector, but will also improve our capacity to collect valuable data to evaluate all of our programs and the impact that they have in creating a safer community.

Penelope represents the biggest investment (total spend \$250,000) the organisation has ever made into information technology, and it was made because (being web based) it has allowed us to roll out portable devices (iPads) to all of our outreach workers working in the field with clients, so that they can collect and access the required data about clients wherever they are working.





FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE



FINANCIAL POSITION

ACSO's cash position remains strong, with cash and cash equivalents increasing from \$18.5 million as at 30 June 2011 to \$20.6 million as at 30 June 2012, representing a cash increase of \$2.1 million. This result, however, was in part due to increased liabilities, with income received in advance increasing by \$1.5 million.

Noncurrent assets reduced by \$400,000 due to the depreciation and amortisation applied to existing plant and equipment during the period. This was offset to a degree by the investment in the new client database system, Penelope, of \$200,000.

Liabilities for future staff benefits (provisions) decreased during the 12 month period, due to the turnover of staff. On the whole, total provisions (included property lease incentives and make good) decreased by \$14,000 to \$1.1 million in total.

Comparing current assets (excluding noncurrent assets) to liabilities (current and noncurrent), ACSO has increased net asset worth by \$1.0 million to \$5.4 million.

ACSO's retained earnings as at 30 June 2012 now stands at \$7.3 million.

Assets and Liabilities				
\$'000	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Current Assets				
Cash & cash equivalents	17,146	17,559	18,529	20,630
Trade receivables	231	1,121	1,082	1,081
Other	165	110	155	212
TOTAL	17,542	18,790	19,766	21,923
Non Current Assets				
Intangibles	138	99	75	220
Plant & Equipment	2,384	2,584	2,083	1,700
TOTAL	2,522	2,682	2,158	1,919
TOTAL ASSETS	20,065	21,472	21,924	23,843
Liabilities				
Trade & other payables	13,093	13,513	14,262	15,444
Provisions	1,479	1,452	1,106	1,092
TOTAL LIABILITIES	14,572	14,965	15,367	16,536
Net Assets	5,492	6,507	6,557	7,306

Working Capital				
\$'000	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Cash & cash equivalents	17,146	17,559	18,529	20,630
Other current assets	396	1,230	1,238	1,293
Trade & other payables	13,093	13,513	14,262	15,444
Provision & liabilities	1,479	1,452	1,106	1,092
Total Current Assets	17,542	18,790	19,766	21,923
Liabilities	14,572	14,965	15,367	16,536
Working Capital	2,970	3,825	4,399	5,387

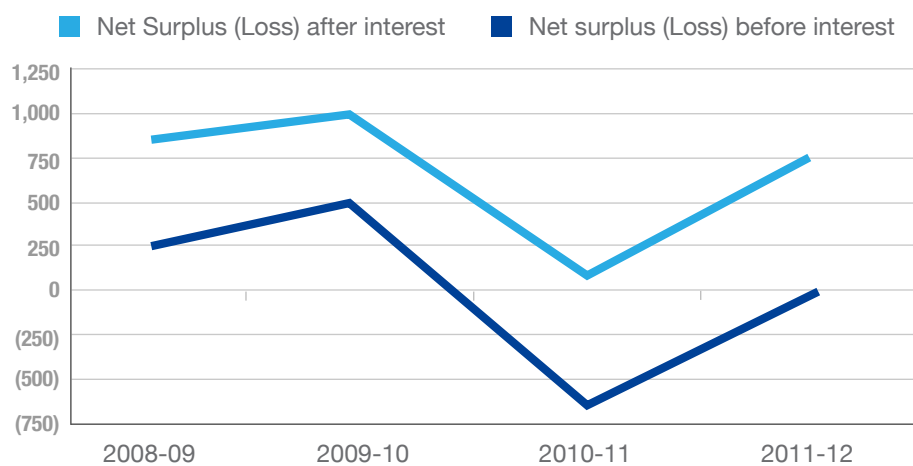
Income and Expenditure				
\$'000	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Revenue				
Government funding & fees	12,511	12,744	13,245	12,792
COATS brokerage	4,363	4,757	4,912	4,726
Other income	26	511	195	235
TOTAL	16,899	18,011	18,352	17,753
Expenditure				
Employee benefits	9,229	9,317	10,686	9,667
COATS brokerage	4,363	4,757	4,912	4,726
Depreciation & amortisation	713	824	751	709
Rental expenses	645	615	724	779
Other expenditure	1,693	1,998	1,936	1,876
TOTAL	16,643	17,511	19,009	17,756
Net surplus (Loss) before interest	256	500	(657)	(4)
Interest Received	563	515	707	753
Net surplus (Loss) after interest	819	1,015	49	749

Net Surplus (Loss) for the 2011/2012 financial year before interest received was a \$4,000 loss (2010/11 \$657,000 loss). Once interest earned of \$753,000 was included, ACSO was able to post a Net surplus of \$749,000 (2010/11 \$49,000).

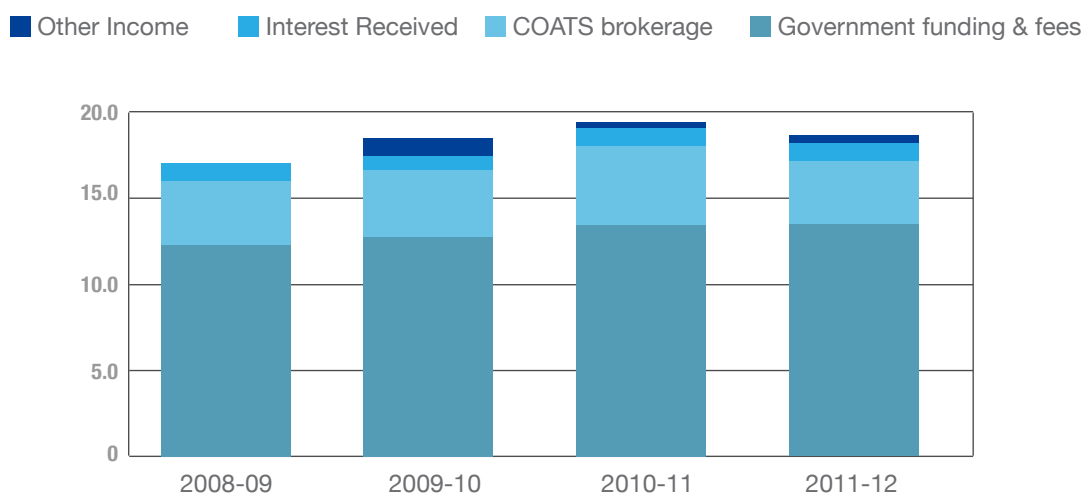
Government funding and related fees dropped from \$13.2 million in 2010/11 to \$12.8 million due to a greater than anticipated drop in Employment Services income received from DEEWR and a reduction in ACSO's Link Out program. These decreases were offset in part due to the introduction of the new RAPIDS program. COATS brokerage income decreased by just under \$200,000 to \$4.7 million for the financial year, due to changes in process introduced during the period. This decrease is not expected to continue in future periods. Interest earnings increased by \$46,000 to \$753,000 for the year as a result of increased cash holdings (see financial position). The amount of interest earned during a period is subject to the volatility of interest rates.

A decrease in employee benefits related expenditure of \$1.0 million during the financial year was due to vacancies created during the year brought about by the organisational restructure and reduction of the Link Out program.

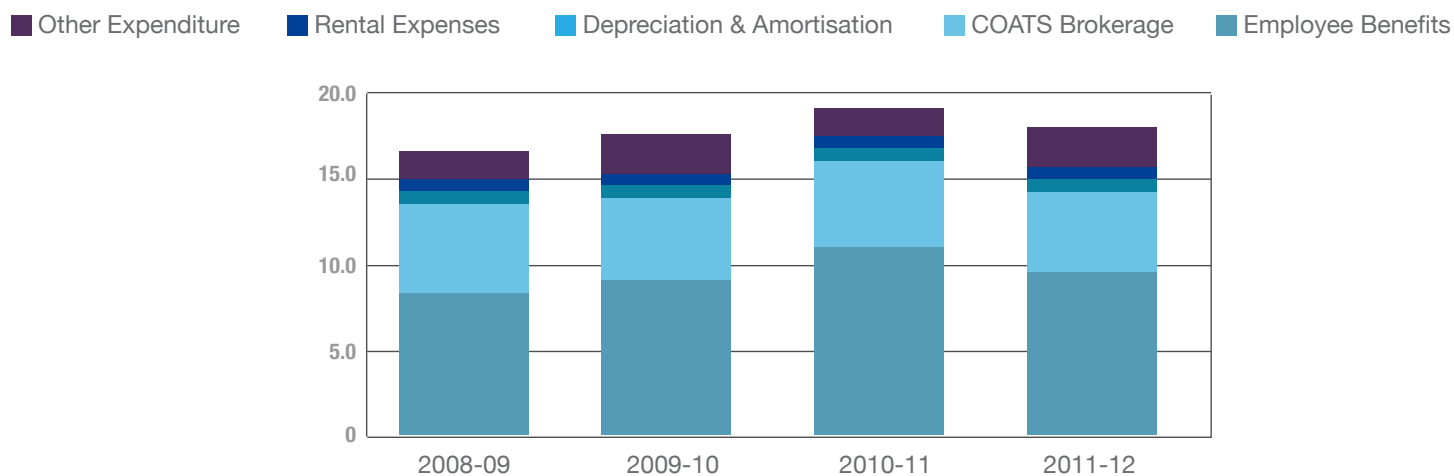
Net Surplus/ (Loss) \$'000



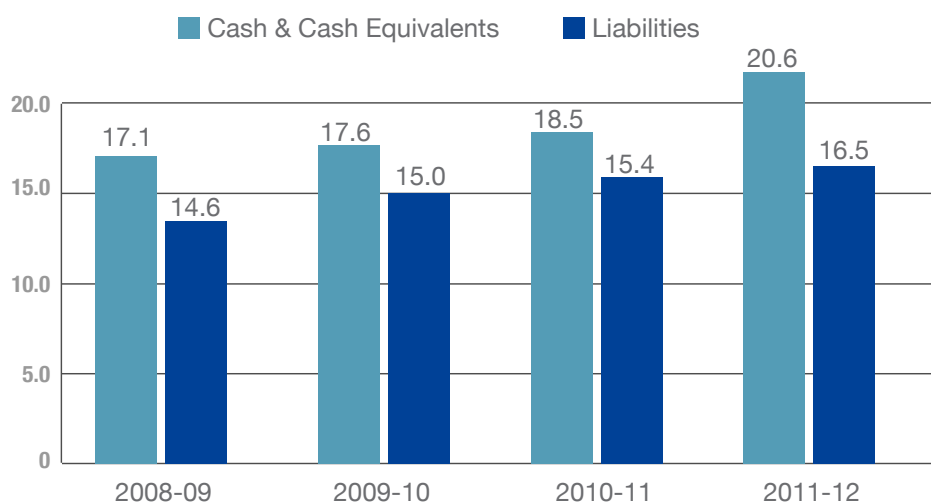
Revenue \$'m



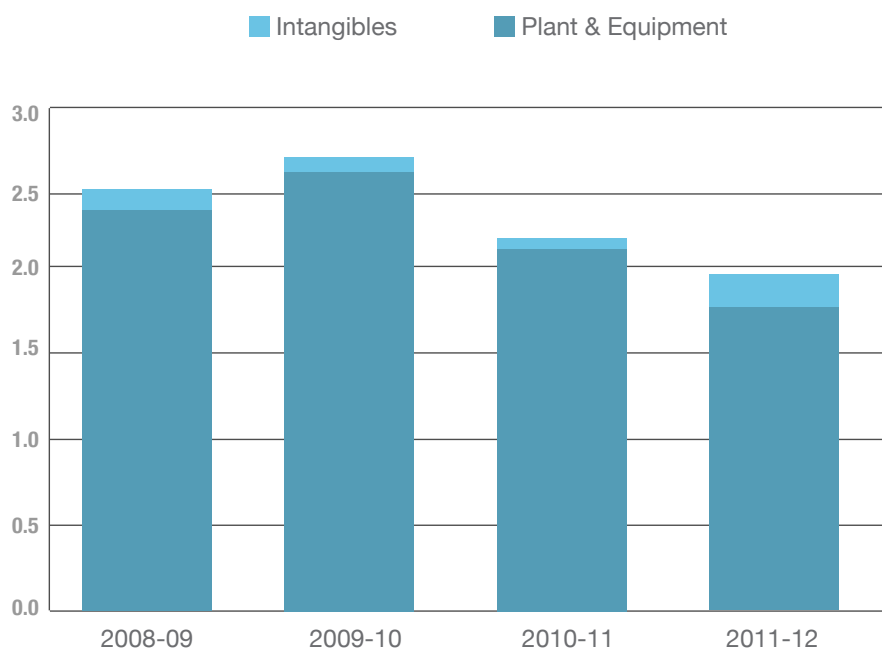
Expenditure \$'m



Cash assets to Liabilities \$'m



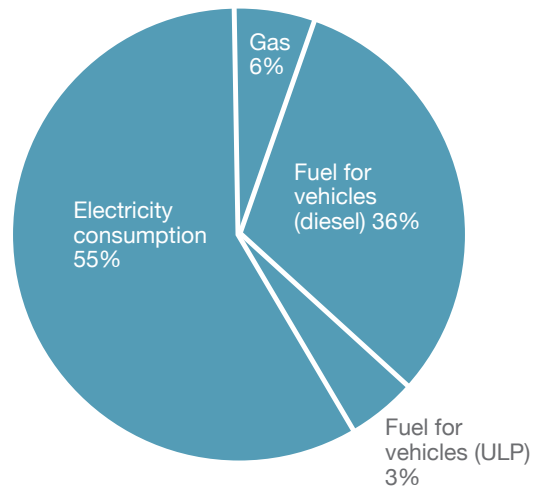
Non Current Assets (Closing Written Down Value) \$'m



COMMITMENT TO ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

ACSO as an organisation is committed to reducing its impact on the environment. This commitment has been demonstrated by its willingness to engage Energy Return (an environmental company that helps organisations meet their energy efficiency and sustainability challenges) to carry out “an Emissions Inventory” (commonly known as “Carbon Footprint”) designed to measure its carbon footprint, and the impact our operations are having on the environment. Consequently, during 2011 and 2012, ACSO worked closely with Energy Return to measure and determine our carbon footprint; and at the conclusion of this work it was determined that ACSO produces 729 tonnes of CO₂ (t CO₂-e).

ACSO's Emissions (Scope 1 & 2)



This valuable exercise showed us that our impact on the environment is due mainly to two sources: electricity consumption 55% and motor vehicles fuel consumption 39%. Having determined our pollution sources helped us to design an environmental plan that will, over time, help us to cut down our impact on the environment. Our environmental plan and targets include:

Aspect Description	Objective	Target	Target Date	Action plan, improvement, program or control	Key Performance Indicator
Use of electricity for air conditioning	Reduce electricity use	Reduce by 10%	Jul-13	Energy efficiency program	kWh
Use of electricity for computer & other office equipment	Reduce electricity use	Reduce by 10%	Jul-13	Energy efficiency program	kWh
Use of gas for heating	Reduce gas use	Reduce by 10%	Jul-13	Energy efficiency program	MJ
Reduce annual paper & printing purchases	Reduce paper use	Reduce by 10%	Jul-13	Waste minimisation program	Sheets
Increase % of recycled paper used	Increase % of recycled paper	Increase to 50%	Jul-13	Waste minimisation program	Sheets
Decrease petrol / diesel consumption	Decrease petrol / diesel consumption	Reduce by 5%	Jul-13	Driver behaviour change	Litres

FIND US



CONTACT US

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ACSO SERVICE LOCATIONS

Coburg, Armadale, Ormond, Noble Park, Yarraville, North Melbourne, Richmond, Dandenong, Ballarat, Ararat, Stawell, Horsham, Hamilton, Portland, Warrnambool, Camperdown, Colac, Daylesford, St Arnaud, Bendigo, Kerang, Swan Hill, Echuca, Kyneton, Castlemaine, Maryborough, Mildura, Robinvale, Ouyen, Wangaratta, Seymour, Shepparton, Cobram, Benalla, Wodonga, Mansfield, Warragul, Morwell, Lakes Entrance, Bairnsdale, Korumburra, Leongatha, Omeo, Mallacoota, Wonthaggi, Cowes, Foster, Yarrum, Orbost, Moe, San Remo and Geelong.

