



I ❤️  
AC  
SO

**Annual**Report FY15/16

ACSO IS A MEMBER OF



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

## IN THE SPIRIT OF RECONCILIATION...

ACSO ACKNOWLEDGES ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES AS THE TRADITIONAL OWNERS AND CUSTODIANS OF THIS COUNTRY, AND THEIR CONNECTION TO LAND, WATER AND COMMUNITY. WE PAY OUR RESPECT TO THEM, THEIR CULTURES AND CUSTOMS, AND TO ELDERS BOTH PAST AND PRESENT.

### PHOTOGRAPHY

SOPHIE DE WIT PHOTOGRAPHY

### DESIGN

MICHAEL SINDEN

### EDITORIAL

OLIVIA FITZGERALD



Australian Government

ACSO ACKNOWLEDGES THE FINANCIAL AND OTHER SUPPORT OF THE AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND VICTORIAN AND NEW SOUTH WALES STATE GOVERNMENTS.





# CONTENTS

3

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO, KARENZA LOUIS-SMITH 3

ABOUT ACSO 5

WHAT WE DO 7

SERVICE OVERVIEW 8

11

## OPERATIONS

COO, VAUGHAN WINTHER: WHY I LOVE ACSO 11

GIPPSLAND: FOOTY FIGHT AGAINST ICE 13

GRAMPIANS / GREAT SOUTH COAST: PUMPING SUCCESS 15

HUME / GOULBURN VALLEY: OUR VISION FOR AN ADDICTION RECOVERY CENTRE 17

ILLAWARRA: ACSO & ACCESS COMMUNITY GROUP MERGER 19

LODDON MALLEE: YOUTH RESIDENTIAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM 21

CENTRAL MELBOURNE: ACspresSO CAFE 23

NORTHERN MELBOURNE: NICHOLSON HOUSE 25

SOUTHERN MELBOURNE: RECONNECT 27

38

## GOVERNANCE

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR 39

THE ACSO BOARD 40

2015-2020 STRATEGIC PLAN: WHERE WE'RE AT 43

45

## PEOPLE & CULTURE

CPO, KYLA EVANS: WHY I LOVE ACSO 45

STRENGTHENING THE PEOPLE & CULTURE TEAM 47

INVESTMENT IN EXCELLENCE 49

ACSO'S FORENSIC SERVICES STANDARDS 51

OUR PEOPLE: A SNAPSHOT 52

INDUSTRY RECOGNISED WORK: 2015 STAFF AWARDS 53

CONSUMER ADVISORY GROUP 55

57

## TECHNOLOGY FOR INNOVATION

CIO, ZORAN BRZAKOVIC: WHY I CHOSE ACSO 58

59

## BUSINESS SERVICES

CFO, REMBERTO RIVERA: WHY I LOVE ACSO 59

BUSINESS SERVICES UPDATE 61

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE 2015-2016 63

*Social  
Impact*

ACSO'S PARTNERSHIP WITH  
NAB AND ARBIAS TO DELIVER  
AUSTRALIA'S FIRST SOCIAL  
IMPACT INVESTMENT

29

**CRIMINAL  
JUSTICE  
CONFERENCE  
LIFT-OUT**

DO PRISONS  
CHANGE LIVES?

31-34

2015 ACSO  
**AWARDS**

INDUSTRY RECOGNISED  
WORK, AND THE PEOPLE  
BEHIND OUR SUCCESS



53



# A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

---

## KARENZA LOUIS-SMITH

People will often ask me what do you do for a living? My answer is simple. I work with offenders, and it's the best job I have ever had. Don't get me wrong, I'm not someone who is soft on crime, I believe people who do bad things should go to jail. But I also believe passionately in ACSO's vision. A safe, inclusive community, freed of crime and prison. And I believe it's absolutely achievable.

As a mother, a safe and inclusive community is important to me. It's important to me to see my children grow up and be safe. It's important to me they don't get to experiment with drugs. It's important to me they have a safe house to come home to after they have been to school for the day. It's important to me that they have people who love them, people who believe in them. It's important to me that they have hope, dreams and a vision for their future. With all of these things, it's very likely my kids won't get into trouble and they won't end up in the criminal justice system.

The fact is the vast majority of people who enter the criminal justice system for the first time never grew up thinking I want to be a career criminal. They didn't think I want to get hooked on heroin by the time I am 20, or use ice and bash my partner and my kids by the time I am 30. They didn't grow up aspiring to be the best armed robber before they hit 40.

In March, 2016, the average daily number of full-time prisoners in Australia was 37,996; that's an increase of 7% from the previous year. The average daily number of persons serving community-based corrections orders (non-custodial orders) increased to 63,035 persons, an increase of 15%. Almost 90% are male and 28% are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, compared to approximately 2% of the total Australian population aged 18 years and over (Source: ABS Corrective Services Australia). Low levels of Education. Unemployment. Homelessness. Intellectual disability. Mental Illness. Drug use. This is the profile of an Australian prisoner today.

In the most recent study of mental health in prisoners, The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare found that nearly one third of prison entrants reported that they had mental health issues (a rate 2.5 times higher than the general population) which affected their participation in education or employment. Almost one-third (30%) reported a long-term health condition or disability that limited their daily activities and/or affected their participation in education or employment. While most people who use illicit drugs do not commit serious crime, a large proportion of people are in prison for drug-related offending. The report found that around one third of Australia's prisoners had not completed Year 10 and almost one half (48%) of entrants were unemployed immediately prior to prison. In addition, one quarter (25%) of prison entrants reported being homeless in the 4 weeks immediately prior to imprisonment.

At ACSO it is our job to help people stop re-offending and divert people from committing crime. We know what works. ACSO is rapidly becoming the Australian leader in helping people with difficult problems working to make our community safer by reducing crime. We work with people at risk of getting into trouble with the law, and we also help people move from prison or court, and support them in the community to help them rebuild their lives and stop them from re-offending.

The chair of our board often says that we are like the "fence at the top of the cliff", working with people at risk of getting into trouble to divert them from crime. And we are also like "the ambulance at the bottom of the cliff", helping people move from prison or court, and supporting them in the community to stop them from re-offending.

No other organisation is like us, no one else covers the whole spectrum from prevention and diversion to rehabilitation of people in the criminal justice system, and our holistic approach and "wrap around" service model is a critical part of our success that creates better outcomes for clients and the community. There are three major themes that are important to us and that distinguish what we do and how we do it.

Everything we do at ACSO helps to keep the community safer because we effectively divert people from crime. We aspire to create a safe and inclusive community freed of crime and prison, and our goal is simple: to give people opportunities to rebuild their lives and reintegrate successfully back into society.

We don't condone crime, we believe that people who do bad things should go to jail, but we will work with people who want to change their lives and stay out of prison and the criminal justice system. Fundamental to our work is the belief that everyone deserves another chance. Working with us is often harder than prison and we are not a soft option. We work hard to motivate people who are engaged with us and remind them of the alternative if they don't engage with our services when the Court or Parole Board has mandated them. We have an obligation to keep them and the community safe by ensuring they abide by these conditions, and we make this clear.

Because of our experience in rehabilitation we know we could do more. We have in the past few years expanded to do more preventative work with people at risk of being on the wrong side of the law, and there are opportunities for us to do more work in this area.

At ACSO we have a unique view of the criminal justice system and see that we can offer more to improve the system overall. Our staff are inspired to help change people's lives and we contribute to building a safe community for everyone to live in.



This is our 2015/16  
annual report. I hope you  
enjoy reading it.

K.



# WE ARE ABOUT ENDING THE CYCLE OF CRIME

## OUR VISION

A SAFE AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY,  
FREED OF CRIME AND PRISONS.

## OUR ETHOS

"CREATE ANOTHER CHANCE"

## OUR MISSION

WE HELP PEOPLE TRANSITION FROM  
PRISON, ASSIST THEM IN THE  
COMMUNITY, STOP THEM FROM  
RE-OFFENDING AND INTERVENE TO  
DIVERT OTHERS FROM COMMITTING

---

Our mission is to influence change in the lives of people who have found themselves on the wrong side of the law; people with chronic addiction, mental illness and intellectual disability – people who in so many ways are often victims themselves.

Fundamental to our work is the belief that everyone deserves another chance and our values and the behaviours that underpin this are at the core of everything we do.

---

## OUR CORE VALUES

### PASSION

Our heart and passion is at the core of everything we do.

### BELIEF IN HUMANITY

We believe that everyone deserves another chance and is entitled to opportunities which can help them to change their lives and realise their potential.

### INTEGRITY

We are genuine in our relationships with clients and each other, always true to ourselves and courageous in our approach.

### PIONEERING SPIRIT

We are willing to explore and develop new and innovative solutions and take on the challenges that confront us.

## OUR OPERATIONAL GOALS

### RECOVER

We promote, support and believe in the values of hope and recovery in all of our work.

### REHABILITATE

We develop rehabilitation programs that divert people from committing crime or re-offending by helping them address and change problem behaviour.

### REINTEGRATE

We reintegrate people from prison back into the community, housing them and assisting them to successfully re-enter the workforce.



“AS A COMMUNITY BENEFIT ORGANISATION, OUR VISION,  
MISSION AND VALUES GUIDE OUR ABILITY TO CREATE THE  
**FUTURE WE WANT FOR OUR COMMUNITY**”



# WHAT WE *do*

ACSO started as a drop-in centre over **30 years** ago and has grown to become a leading provider of community support services responding to unemployment, mental illness, disability, homelessness, substance use and offending behaviour across metropolitan and regional Victoria.

Three decades on, our purpose remains unchanged; to create a safe and inclusive community for everyone. Our growth is testament to our ethos, **'create another chance'** and how we go about doing it portrays our values.

We provide a **"wrap around"** service delivery model that integrates prevention, early intervention, diversion through to reintegration programs to achieve better outcomes for our clients and the communities we serve.

“ OUR GOAL IS TO  
**'BREAK THE CYCLE OF CRIME'**  
BY INCREASING SOCIAL  
INCLUSION AND ECONOMIC  
PARTICIPATION FOR ALL  
AUSTRALIANS. ”

## *How* WE GO ABOUT DOING IT

### PASSION

Our heart and passion is at the core of everything we do.

- I AM ENTHUSIASTIC, ENERGETIC AND ENGAGED
- I WILL NOT QUIT
- I WILL MAKE A POSITIVE DIFFERENCE
- I FOCUS ON SOLUTIONS NOT PROBLEMS

### BELIEF IN HUMANITY

We believe that everyone deserves another chance and is entitled to opportunities which can help them to change their lives and realise their potential.

- I ACCEPT PEOPLE FOR WHO THEY ARE
- I CHOOSE TO SEE THE GOOD IN PEOPLE
- I SUPPORT PEOPLE'S POTENTIAL TO ACHIEVE THEIR OWN GOALS
- I EMBRACE DIVERSITY AND DIFFERENCE

### INTEGRITY

We are genuine in our relationships with clients and each other, always true to ourselves and courageous in our approach.

- I WILL BE CONSISTENT IN WHAT I SAY AND DO
- I AM ETHICAL AND HONOURABLE
- I TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR MY ACTIONS
- I CHOOSE RIGHT OVER EASY

### PIONEERING SPIRIT

We are willing to explore and develop new and innovative solutions and take on the challenges that confront us.

- I AM RESILIENT AND OVERCOME OBSTACLES
- I WILL STEP UP TO NEW CHALLENGES
- I EMBRACE NEW OPPORTUNITY
- I RECOGNISE GAPS AND FIND SOLUTIONS





# OVERVIEW OF OUR SERVICES

## **DRUG AND ALCOHOL INTAKE, ASSESSMENT AND REFERRAL SERVICES:**

Intake, Assessment and Referral Services for drug treatment across regional Victoria

A range of diversion and early intervention programs for people whose drug use sees them getting into trouble with the police

## **COMMUNITY BASED MENTAL HEALTH INTAKE AND REFERRAL SERVICE:**

Intake and Referral Service for community based mental health programs across regional Victoria

## **FORENSIC DRUG TREATMENT SERVICES:**

Victoria's only specialist drug and alcohol assessment, treatment planning and purchase of drug treatment service for people in the criminal justice system, incorporating:

The Community Offenders' Advice and Treatment Service (COATS); and  
Responsive Assessment, Planning, Intervention and Diversion Service (RAPIDS).

## **CASE COORDINATION AND OUTREACH SERVICES:**

Disability outreach services for clients with intellectual disabilities and/or cognitive impairments;  
Post release support for men and women exiting prison;  
NDIS programs for clients with intellectual disabilities and/or cognitive impairments

## **RESIDENTIAL SERVICES:**

10 residential programs across Victoria providing short, medium and long term community based residential services.

## **EMPLOYMENT SERVICES:**

ACSO is a member of the Coact Consortium;  
Assistance to unemployed including people with disabilities, the homeless and ex-offenders into training and stable employment;  
Disability Employment Services (DES) and Work; Experience Programs (Work for the Dole); and  
Specialist programs supporting people who are homeless to get a job and stable accommodation in partnership with leading Australian businesses

## **REHABILITATION AND RECOVERY SERVICES:**

Individually tailored residential therapeutic programs;  
Tailored day programs promoting community connectedness for clients, including peer support and consumer advocacy programs;  
Behavioural Intervention Management for clients subject to restrictive correctional and/or Compulsory Treatment Orders; and  
VicRoads Safe Driving Program provider



# A SNAPSHOT OF OUR CLIENTS

FOR 2015-16



OVER **30,000**  
ACTIVE CLIENTS

**90%**  
CAME TO ACSO FOR DRUG  
AND ALCOHOL SUPPORT

**75%**  
ARE FORENSIC CLIENTS  
WHO ARE EITHER IN A  
FORENSIC PROGRAM OR  
FROM CORRECTIONS

**74% MALE**  
**26% FEMALE**





# OUR COMMITMENT...

## ...TO REDUCING RECIDIVISM BY 10%

Almost **50%** of people who go to prison will go back within **2 years**.

At ACSO, **we plan to change this**. It's our aim through our in-prison and post-release programs to reduce overcrowded prisons, stop people from returning to jail and help them get their lives back on track.

"DOING THIS IN VICTORIA, NEW SOUTH WALES AND NOW SOUTH EAST QUEENSLAND (BOTH IN PRISON AND THROUGH THE GATE), WE HAVE WORKED WITH OVER **3,200** PEOPLE THIS YEAR"

---

## ...TO DIVERTING PEOPLE FROM A LIFE OF CRIME

ACSO is committed to reducing recidivism so people don't begin offending and end up in custody. **It's not just people in prison**, we work with people on court and Community Corrections Orders or those who have offended, to **help them stay out of jail** and get their lives back on track.

"WE DO THIS IN VICTORIA AND NEW SOUTH WALES AND THIS YEAR, WE WORKED WITH OVER **15,600** PEOPLE"

---

## ...TO EARLY INTERVENTION

It's simply not enough to work with people only once they have offended. **We work with people who have complex risks and needs**. Disengaged youth, people with drug and alcohol issues, mental health issues and intellectual disabilities are all over-represented in the forensic population.

"THIS YEAR WE WORKED WITH OVER **8,000** PEOPLE TO GET THEM INTO SUPPORTS AND MAKE CHANGES BEFORE THEIR LIVES GET OUT OF CONTROL"

# OPERATIONS

I love being at ACSO. We have a bold vision that's more than just words on paper – we're really making it happen. This is a really exciting time. The last five years have been a time of tremendous change and in a way, it's like a new beginning for ACSO. The Board made a clear strategic decision to develop a national footprint of services for people in the justice system. I feel honoured to have been given the opportunity to be the architect, to not only design what this will look like, but to drive the process and oversee it. This is an incredibly exciting thing to do in the not-for-profit sector.

I started my career as a residential support worker and moved to juvenile justice as a case worker. The opportunity I have now at ACSO is the culmination of a fantastic career journey. To make a difference in the community, to influence and be able to change the lives of young people who are caught up in the criminal justice system is incredibly rewarding. If I can do this with ACSO across Australia that would be a fantastic legacy. If I stop to consider where I've come from: Sunshine Youth Justice Court (in Victoria) and now 20 years later I'm leading ACSO's work and designing services to keep people out of the justice system, not just in Victoria, but Australia wide.

The opportunity to think and act innovatively is something I love about ACSO. The ability to put this innovation and blue sky ideas into practice, and make ideas happen, is immensely satisfying. I love that we can be proud of this. ACSO is on the cutting edge of engaging with, and managing, the reform environment. We're putting ourselves out there with creative solutions rather than defend a 30 year history. We're presenting the future for the next 30 years of services that will support and change the lives of people at risk of coming into contact with the criminal justice system.

Another part of why I love my job at ACSO is that I get to be a social worker; I get to design services; I get to manage and lead service delivery, quality, client outcomes. Another aspect involves being a practitioner; another, a business leader. Being involved in reforming and developing technology solutions to deliver more efficient services is satisfying work. To be involved in leading new ways of securing funding and partaking in commercial negotiations around social impact investing is very challenging but it's also an environment that's really worth testing and exploring. It brings a new way of partnering with government and the community. It's a new edge, a new factor in which we can design and secure new services. That's really exciting work.

I feel so lucky I'm able to balance acknowledging my roots and the passion I have for the work. Every day I remember the young people I worked with in the early 1990s in Sunshine: the outreach and street work I did. Having cups of coffee and playing table tennis are important ways to build relationships, but they're also so much more important than that. Those memories are an important part of my history and to this day, inform my thinking. I love ACSO because what we do is challenge the status quo.

# VAUGHAN WINTHER

CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER







# FOOTY FIGHT AGAINST ICE

THE LOCAL FOOTY TEAM IS THE HEART OF A COUNTRY TOWN. PUMPING VITALITY, IT INFUSES LOCALS WITH A SENSE OF COMMUNITY AND BELONGING. IT IS THE ESSENCE OF A TOWN: PROVIDING SUPPORT, FRIENDSHIP, CAMARADERIE. IN TIMES OF CRISIS THE LOCAL FOOTY TEAM IS THERE: AS A RALLYING FORCE, A NETWORK, A DISTRACTION FROM EVERYDAY PROBLEMS WHEN THEY WIN ON A SATURDAY AFTERNOON.

Except there's a new crisis and it's bigger than just one club or one town. The use of 'party drugs' is reportedly a serious concern at some football and netball clubs in Gippsland; social dabbling spirals into life altering addiction. Crystal methamphetamine, or ice, is gaining a strong foothold in local communities throughout rural Victoria. Described as instantly addictive, it's threatening the lives of Gippslanders. Indiscriminate and insidious, ice permeates local communities leaving broken people and families in its wake. Footy's Fight Against Ice is an initiative developed by AFL Gippsland in collaboration with ACSO, Victoria Police and Gippsport to develop and deliver a grassroots education program. Aimed at 18-25 year old footballers and netballers, the program has been designed to highlight the dangers and risks associated with the drug, to educate clubs and local communities about adopting illegal drugs policies, and increasing awareness of successful locally based responses. Funding from the State Government was utilised to engage guest speakers. Former Collingwood AFL player, Gavin Crosisca, was nominated the project ambassador and spoke at many of the local club sessions. Gavin spoke candidly about his 28 year-long drug addiction, citing its beginnings when he began using as a coping mechanism after his mother's death; the impact it had on his life and that of those around him; the shame and embarrassment he felt. The other guest speaker was Rebecca Slaven. Bass Coast youth citizen of the year, Rebecca was addicted to drugs and alcohol at 17. Rebecca volunteered her story, emphasising it was the support and love from her family that got her through; that nobody ever gave up on her. This love and support were the only things that kept her from committing suicide.

Support and interest from local clubs was encouraging. From Koo Wee Rup to Sale, Phillip Island to Glengarry, 18 local football/netball clubs submitted expressions of interest to participate. Over 2000 people attended these sessions. Audiences were diverse: age ranged from 10 to 75. Information hit home; the sincere, forthright and educational nature of the sessions engaged the audiences and fostered much conversation.

ACSO staff provided advice and answered questions raised by the information delivered by Victoria Police and by the guest speakers' stories. We discussed where and how to get assistance for drug and alcohol and mental health issues. Our presenters spoke about ACSO's Family Education and Information Group sessions; the positive feedback and successful outcomes reported by its participants. ACSO's Regional Manager - Gippsland, Ms Jenny Svoboda explains, "It was great contributing to the prevention aspect; targeting potential users and their support networks. Some of ACSO's staff presented at clubs at which they are members and it was fantastic to be a part of something so important within our community, with people we know, almost in our own backyards."

Ms Chelsea Caple, AFL's Football Development Manager for Gippsland, emceed the sessions. She describes the feeling and atmosphere generated, "It was amazing to see the community responses. Victoria Police customised presentations for each of the participating locations. There were stories from people who had been in rehab; the guest speakers were so powerful; audience members were in tears. New levels of awareness; understanding; compassion were reached."





## WHY I LOVE ACSO

I love the passion generated by, and within, ACSO. The team in Gippsland is fabulous. They're committed, engaged, and work really hard for positive client outcomes. I love the community feel. Even though ACSO is a big organisation, it feels grassroots. I value the autonomy given to us, which I feel complements the support we receive from senior management. I feel really strongly aligned with ACSO's values and vision. Overall, it's the passion though, I love the passion our staff has for our clients. There's a really strong emphasis on wanting to be part of the solution, to improve the situation for our clients. That's what I love.

## WHAT I'M MOST PROUD OF

ACSO Gippsland is collaborating with Victoria Police and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to deliver a Pre-Charge Diversion Pilot. The aim of this project is to divert first-time offenders, whose violent offending behavior is driven by their ice use, into a drug treatment program. The pilot will be conducted throughout the Latrobe Valley (Moe, Morwell, Churchill and Traralgon police stations) with consideration to the remainder of Gippsland at a later date. I'm really proud of this initiative and I think it will assist with reducing the number of people who re-offend while on bail or awaiting court. It provides offenders "another chance" at getting help with their AOD use and an opportunity to change their life and make better choices.

## WHAT WE DO

We provide intensive case management support for people on release from prison who are returning to Gippsland to live. Our staff support people to get their lives back on track and to remain safely in the community.

We provide COATS, Victoria's specialist intake, assessment and referral service for offenders who have an assess and treat for drugs or alcohol condition as part of their order or parole. We provide the intake assessment and referral service into drug treatment programs for anyone living within the region who is experiencing issues with their drug or alcohol use.

We provide the intake and referral service into community based mental health services for anyone living within the region who is experiencing mental health concerns.

We operate a five bed specialist supported disability residential program for people who need extra support to live safely and independently in the community.

**JENNY SVOBODA**  
GIPPSLAND REGIONAL MANAGER







## WHY I LOVE ACSO

I love ACSO's pioneering spirit, and that we lead by example. We're not afraid to tackle the bigger issues others often shy away from; we're open to change and challenges, and are at the forefront of these. I appreciate the building up of leadership roles and the financial investment in this, particularly with respect to emotionally healthy leadership. I value the development of successive and future planning. Previous organisations for which I've worked have not invested as much in future leadership. I like the commitment to growth; to communicating what we do throughout the country. I love that ACSO has regionalised and is now covering all of Victoria; there are limited resources and access to services for rural and remote Victoria, however ACSO is striving to work with local organisations to improve access.

## WHAT I'M MOST PROUD OF

The coffee club was an idea hatched from collaboration between our mental health Peer Workers and ACSO's crisis support team. Running two hour sessions on a fortnightly basis, the coffee club is intended as a social support group that is only open to clients involved with ACSO's drug and alcohol, and mental health services and who are on waitlists to attend treatment. The club does not provide therapeutic or clinical support but is a space where people can support each other in a safe and reassuring environment. During the third session, a client felt comfortable enough to bring in his guitar and play a song set for the group, sending music throughout the hub. I'm really pleased to report the coffee club was so successful it will soon be implemented in Bendigo and Traralgon.

## WHAT WE DO

We provide COATS, Victoria's specialist intake, assessment and referral service for offenders who have an assess and treat for drugs or alcohol condition as part of their order or parole.

We provide the intake assessment and referral service into drug treatment programs for anyone living within the region who is experiencing issues with their drug or alcohol use.

We provide the intake and referral service into community based mental health services for anyone living within the region who is experiencing mental health concerns.

Our RTO (registered training organisation) ACCESS TRAINING delivers specialist training programs for people who have found mainstream education to be difficult; intervening early helping them to get a level of education that can transform their futures.

**NIKKI DENKER**  
GRAMPIANS REGIONAL MANAGER  
(AND GREAT SOUTH COAST REGION)

# Pumping success

The period of time spent on a waiting list for drug and alcohol or mental health treatment can be difficult and the temptation to relapse to drug use, strong. Sometimes treatment isn't immediately available. Staff at the Ballarat hub designed the PUMP program (Participate, Understand, Motivate, Persevere) to make this wait less stressful and difficult.

Our lives can unravel almost before our eyes. Chris was employed, owned his home and his partner was expecting their first child. The relationship broke down, suddenly and irrevocably, when Chris discovered the baby wasn't his. Turning to alcohol and cannabis to cope and get through the day; one day Chris was involved in a minor car accident. The subsequent breath test gave a positive result and Chris lost his drivers licence. Life began to spiral out of control when he lost his job and Chris became more dependent on alcohol and cannabis. Depression set in.

His GP referred him for a drug and alcohol assessment and Chris contacted ACSO. The assessor encouraged him to attend the PUMP program. Despite being anxious, nervous and somewhat reluctant, Chris attended his first PUMP session. Upon arrival and finding the atmosphere relaxed and informal, Chris felt comfortable enough to tell the fellow participants his story. Chris found his PUMP experience non-judgemental and full of empathy and valued the coping strategies he was taught. Chris feels optimistic about the future and with support, he believes he will gain full control of his alcohol use. He further stated that the social interaction and support he received at PUMP sessions was a significant factor in reducing his depression and anxiety.

Staff at the Ballarat hub identified the waiting period between referral and treatment as being incredibly difficult and the time when people will often lapse back to drug and alcohol use.

Working in collaboration with the ACSO Developing Understanding Expertise Treatment and Systems (DUETS) team, the Ballarat staff devised an innovative program that bridges waiting times and focuses on dual diagnosis, which is when mental illness and drug and alcohol abuse occur concurrently. This is quite common so PUMP seeks to address issues relating to both.

PUMP is a four-week program that gives people the opportunity to engage in something meaningful while they are on a waitlist for drug and alcohol, or mental health support. It provides the space for social and peer interaction. Facilitators discuss influencing factors in mental health issues and drug and alcohol use; coping strategies to assist in mental and physical health; skills development, coping skills to help in the day to day.

The first PUMP session was delivered in early 2015, where clients were receptive and staff overwhelmed by attendance levels. So much so, that additional iterations of the program were scheduled. The current program iteration has the highest number of attendees yet. The success of PUMP in Ballarat has resulted in it being rolled out to ACSO hubs across Victoria. It commenced in Horsham in May 2016, Bendigo in July 2016, and will be rolled out in Traralgon and Shepparton later in 2016. Facilitator training has been delivered to ACSO assessors and also to an external carer representative service.

PUMP has piqued the interest of others and as a result, has been delivered in collaboration and co-facilitation with other mental health and drug and alcohol providers at non-ACSO sites. Work has also begun on adapting PUMP for the Aboriginal population.

**Feedback from previous PUMP participants reinforces just how meaningful and integral the program has been:**

**"THE POSITIVE FEEDBACK FOR, AND EXPANSION OF, THE PUMP PROGRAM ARE TESTIMONY TO ITS GREAT SUCCESS. PUMP HAS PROVIDED HOPE AND A SECOND CHANCE FOR PEOPLE AT A TIME IN THEIR LIVES WHEN WITHOUT IT, THEY MAY HAVE NOT ONLY LOST THEIR FOOTING, BUT REALLY FALLEN OVER."**

*"I don't feel alone..."*

*"It was good to be with other people with similar experiences."*

*"PUMP kept me motivated to leave the house."*

*"If I didn't have PUMP, I would not have been able to cope with what I was going through."*

*"PUMP was the only thing that got me through the waiting period for mental health support."*





# STEPH RODSKI

GOULBURN VALLEY  
REGIONAL MANAGER  
(AND HUME REGION)



## WHY I LOVE ACSO

I arrived at ACSO in 2010. It was my second job in a community support organisation. Not long after I commenced here, Karenza was appointed as CEO and ACSO exploded! Karenza is vibrant, passionate, and has expanded ACSO in a way I could have only dreamt of. There have been so many physical changes at ACSO in the time since. I feel so valued, there has been investment in training, leadership development, and there are so many opportunities. There's always something new happening. I need to be challenged, I need the stimulation so it's perfect for me. I've had 7 roles at ACSO since 2010, and I'm constantly out of my comfort zone, which I love. My personal development, sense of self-worth and confidence have all been nurtured at ACSO. I've met lots of people here and they're great. Everyone's so different, but we are all united by our sense of integrity, a belief in social justice. That's the commonality.

## WHAT I'M MOST PROUD OF

ACSO has an incredible reach throughout the Hume and Goulburn Valley region. We have a hub in Shepparton and two co-locations further north, in Wodonga and Wangaratta. We travel a lot, and staff in the Hume GV region really give their time, patience and expertise to ensure people from isolated areas are able to complete assessments and receive treatment when required. Towns in the GV Hume region where ACSO has a presence include Cobram, Yarrawonga, Wodonga, Benalla, Wangaratta, Echuca, Shepparton, Seymour, Broadford, Kinglake and Mansfield. Given this geographical diversity, I'm really proud of the culture within the hub. Having staff all over the region could cause disconnection and separation. The opposite is true for ACSO. We have a team of clinicians who work across all programs and engage in emotionally healthy behaviour. They are accountable and responsible for their own actions. The rapport between different teams is strong, and strong working relationships have been forged. New people who come to work at ACSO in the Hume GV region love the vibe at the Goulburn Valley Hume hub.

## WHAT WE DO

We provide intensive case management support for people on release from prison who are returning to the region to live. Our staff support people to get their lives back on track and to remain safely in the community.

We provide COATS, Victoria's specialist intake, assessment and referral service for offenders who have an assess and treat for drugs or alcohol condition as part of their order or parole.

We provide the intake assessment and referral service into drug treatment programs for anyone living within the region who is experiencing issues with their drug or alcohol use.

We provide the intake and referral service into community based mental health services for anyone living within the region who is experiencing mental health concerns.



# OUR VISION

for an addiction recovery centre

ACSO has planned, and is advocating strongly for a Drug and Alcohol Addiction and Recovery Centre, a proposed rehabilitation facility to be situated near Numurkah. ACSO know there are not nearly enough drug treatment options and support for people who want to stop using drugs. We also know that rates of drug use are increasing; that people are seeking counselling; but that brief intervention counselling is not completely effective.

An organisation that has worked in the drug and alcohol space for more than 20 years, ACSO is passionate about making a difference to those in regional areas who need help. Partnering with Neatline Homes and Odyssey House, we envisage a rural therapeutic setting for residential rehabilitation. Far enough from the general population to give clients privacy and not impact local residents, yet close enough to regional centres to be able to manage the facility – the selected site at Brookfield near Numurkah, ticks all the boxes. ACSO has liaised extensively with the local and wider community: establishing a local advisory group, meeting with State Government and Local Council, and holding regular town hall meetings for local residents and businesses. There has been overwhelmingly staunch local community support, and a core of locals who share ACSO's passion for bringing the recovery centre to life. Sam Dixon lives in the Goulburn Valley region. She is a vocal advocate for the centre.

## RESIDENT, **SAMANTHA DIXON**

*"Over the past 8 years my daughter had been in a violent, abusive relationship that dragged her into drugs. For years I tried to get her into a rehab centre but as the old saying goes 'You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink' and this I found to be so true. In June last year my daughter arrived on my door step. Unrecognisable, skinny, black and blue and an emotional wreck, just to look at her broke my heart. My first thought was 'shit, here we go again' but something was different. Standing before me was the shell of the beautiful baby that I once had, the beautiful woman that was my daughter no longer existed: she was broken; mentally; physically; emotionally."*

*Right from the start I knew I had to help her and come hell or high water that's exactly what I did. First I phoned the police then DHS and next the doctor. With the help of the police we got the ball rolling, putting us in touch with ACSO. Unfortunately, there was a 6 month waiting list to go to rehab. With counsellors, doctors ringing every week to let ACSO know she still wanted a bed in rehab we started detoxing. It wasn't easy on her with cold sweats, nightmares, mood changes etc. but we got there. On the 6th of March 2016 my daughter entered Odyssey House in Benalla. During weekly visits, taking her kids to see her, I noticed that my daughter was coming back. Slowly at first she began to remember little things of her past. I sat with her and we talked, she would tell me about her daily counselling: what they would have to do in group therapy, the responsibility of chores, getting up at a specific time every morning and starting the day. The people who worked there were fantastic; my daughter and I developed great respect and liking for them."*

## SHARES HER STORY:

*After her stay at Benalla she moved to Odyssey House at Lower Plenty which for me was a five hour roundtrip, just so she could see her kids and family. While all this was going on, I got involved with ACSO in Shepparton, in the fight for a centre near Wunghnu and Numurkah. I would constantly walk the streets talking to whomever I could, telling them all the good that the centre would do. I submitted letter upon letter to the local Council trying to explain to them the concerns that some people had just weren't there; that the GV ARC would have rules and regulations that residents must follow or they would have to leave, that WHY if someone worked so hard to go through detox would they risk getting thrown out after working so hard to get better?*

*I had great pleasure in walking the street with Steph (ACSO Regional Manager in GV) and the ACSO girls asking if shop owners would put up the flyer in their windows, and very surprised at some of the responses that we received, most being positive.*

*That's why I really couldn't understand after so much positivity from so many people that it was denied. ACSO saved my daughter's life as well as my own. It gave me something to do that I strongly believe in and if I can help just one person then I'm all in. Since my daughter has entered rehab I have helped a number of people going through a drug addiction or detox and if it wasn't for ACSO and their knowledge and the way they treat these people like people, I wouldn't have fought so hard.*

*This is something that I'm proud of, my daughter is a much better person, parent and individual now, she is 14 months clean and alive and as beautiful as ever, she still goes to counselling, still talks to me every day about her addiction and how it nearly killed her, but as I tell her 'what doesn't kill you makes you stronger' and in this case it's true all because of ACSO and the great work they do. Thank you to all who saved my daughter; my family; my marriage; my relationship with my daughter."*



"IT [ACG] HAD ALWAYS BEEN IN THAT SPACE, WITH MANY CLIENTS INVOLVED IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM. MERGING WITH ACSO WOULD ENHANCE WHAT WE ALREADY HAD AND DID. THAT'S WHY WE CHOSE ACSO..."

Access Community Group (ACG) was an organisation that serviced the greater Illawarra region in NSW. ACG sought to change the world, one person at a time. With a focus on people disengaged from employment and education, ACG was renowned within the Illawarra for its passion to make a difference. ACG had a small team of about 25 staff. They had all been employees for years. Incredibly values driven and passionate about the work, staff often reported they loved working for ACG so much they didn't want to leave. ACG was a small organisation with a big heart.

Larissa Daniel, the former CEO of ACG, is an Illawarra local who stumbled across ACG through her own work in local Government. In need of support for a young person, Larissa made contact with ACG and ended up speaking with the (then) CEO. Conversation flowed, and the passion and drive of ACG shone through. Impressed by what she saw and heard, Larissa expressed her enthusiasm. To her great surprise she was offered a job at ACG for four weeks to cover an employee's annual leave. She said yes, and at the end of the first week was offered a permanent role. Larissa accepted this role and stayed; the engagement and connection Larissa felt were fostered by the passion of the people with whom she was now working. The passion and drive were clearly mutual, because within five years of becoming an employee, Larissa was asked by ACG's Board to be the new CEO when the incumbent retired.

Larissa realised early on that, for ACG to continue to flourish and achieve its aim of changing the world, something needed to give. Too small to make a real difference and survive in the world of big regional funding, they got creative and thought strategically. They needed to merge. A couple of years later, Larissa was invited to join the Board of Job Futures (now Coact). Whilst attending Board meetings Larissa met, and struck up conversation with, Vaughan Winther. Thoughts of potential partnerships happened quite quickly, and before long conversations around merging began tentatively. The executive and Board of each organisation met, and the more they talked, the more obvious it became.

There was symmetry on the surface, and at a much deeper level. ACSO and ACG shared corporate colours and similar sounding names, both organisations had recently turned 30, and their vision and value statements were almost identical. Larissa puts it thus, 'My unashamed mission is to change the world; this drove me and sparked my interest [in ACSO]. ACSO valued what we did. It wouldn't be a takeover but a merger. ACSO had a real recognition of what we did and what we could offer, and also what they could offer us. I was enamoured of the passion and drive Karenza has, and that sealed the deal for me.'

'The merger would bring new services to the Illawarra region. ACG had fifteen years' experience delivering a juvenile justice program, and three years of adult post-release programs. It had always been in that space, with many clients involved in the criminal justice system. Merging with ACSO would enhance what we already had and did. That's why we chose ACSO.'

The excitement ACG staff felt about the merger was really prominent, almost tangible. It provided the ability to continue doing what they loved, but more of it, and with the

reassurance and stability being part of a larger organisation would provide. Larissa says the merger was the best thing that happened during her time at ACG and they've never looked back. She remembers the launch of ACSO in the Illawarra as being incredibly successful.

Everyone in the community was really proud of ACG and excited by the prospect of increased service delivery and the ability to help more people, now they were part of something bigger, with an organisation that was so closely aligned to who and what ACG was.

Larissa says, 'To me, a vision is about the bigger picture, what's ahead, what we can do. The idea of changing the world. I want everyone to have the ability to be happy and to be loved. I feel that's my mission in life. What was important to me, more than anything, was finding somebody ACG could join with who shared our vision and would help us achieve this. I found this at ACSO.'

## THE MERGER

ACG ♥ ACSO



## WHY I LOVE ACSO

I love ACSO because it's a disruptor, an innovator. It's a thinker and a problem solver that wants to change the world. The Executive team has an open-mindedness that I feel has been crucial to ACSO's growth and success. This open-mindedness ripples down through the staff and out to our stakeholders; ACSO is about new ideas; new thinking; new ways of challenging the norm. There is an incredible energy, its palpable; you can feel it. There's an enthusiasm, a drive, a sense of pride.

I love the focus and emphasis on culture; the commitment to a culture of connectedness, of emotionally healthy staff, of strong leadership. The financial investment that supports this has been invaluable and I really think it shows throughout the organisation. People at ACSO love their jobs and get great satisfaction from knowing they do something worthwhile, something that really makes a difference. There's no discrimination, there's a willingness to support the most challenging clients, those with the most complex needs. We're loud and proud about what we do. The range of programs and services offered by ACSO are incredible. There's a willingness to explore new frontiers, to innovate, to design and implement new programs based on need, what we identify as gaps within the community. The opportunity to be a part of this, to represent ACSO in New South Wales and Queensland, having the freedom and scope to work to extend ACSO's reach, is absolutely amazing.

The innovative, pioneering spirit of the organisation is so important to me. The drive and passion of ACSO were some of the first things I noticed. I found them inspirational and they resonated with me on a personal level. I feel honoured that ACSO wanted to merge with Access Community Group (ACG) as much as we wanted to merge with them.

I'm slightly awed by the fact that, despite how much ACSO is growing, it still feels grassroots. I love the idea that we were created by a prisoner who identified a need; we haven't lost the sense of purpose, or the need to give support. Chris Cappello, one of ACSO's founding members, still works here; to me this is testimony to the focus and drive of the organisation and I feel honoured to be part of it.



# LARISSA DANIEL

STATE MANAGER, NEW SOUTH WALES

(AND QUEENSLAND IN 2016/17)





## WHY I LOVE ACSO

I love the values base of the organisation and the focus on clients. It's not just about increasing our funding, but really focuses on looking after the clients as well as the staff and the culture. I believe many agencies are moving towards a corporate mindset and losing focus on their people. I think ACSO is doing the opposite; there is significant investment in the emotional wellbeing of our staff, and the leadership team undergo extensive emotional healthy leadership courses. I love working with clients, and I really enjoy working with the staff. It's an honour to work with them, mentoring them and building the team. It's been a while since I've liked a job so much. It's refreshing to want to come to work; it's exciting and I feel passionate about it. I don't just like my job, I love it!

## WHAT I'M PROUD OF

I am excited to see the growth and development of the Reconnect program that supports people exiting prison. The Loddon Mallee has seen significant growth in this program, and staff are working hard to ensure the people we support have good outcomes and their transition back into the community is well supported and sustainable. So far we have seen a significant number of people who have achieved stable housing, employment and the development of life skills.

## WHAT WE DO

We provide intensive case management support for people on release from prison who are returning to the region to live. Our staff support people to get their lives back on track and to remain safely in the community.

We provide COATS, Victoria's specialist intake, assessment and referral service for offenders who have an assess and treat for drugs or alcohol condition as part of their order or parole.

We provide the Intake assessment and referral service into drug treatment programs for anyone living within the region who is experiencing issues with their drug or alcohol use.

We provide the Intake and referral service into community based mental health services for anyone living within the region who is experiencing mental health concerns.

We operate two, five bed specialist supported disability residential programs for people who need extra support to live safely and independently in the community.

We operate a ten bed residential rehabilitation program for young people living with mental illness who need intensive support to stabilise their mental health.

We provide specialist NDIS packages of support for justice disability clients and those, who without our intervention and support will most likely end up in the criminal justice system.

# CHRIS MCINNES

LODDON MALLEE REGIONAL MANAGER



ACSO's Youth Residential Rehabilitation program (YRR) opened two years ago, on 1 August 2014. The only program of its kind in Victoria, the YRR was designed for people aged between 16 and 25 with a focus on stabilising their mental health. This involves developing and improving their activities of daily living and life skills to enable their re-entry to independent community living or returning to live with their families. The program runs for up to 12 months and can house up to ten residents at any one time. Residents have been described as nervous and anxious upon their arrival and, 12 months later as confident young people armed with emotional tools and living skills, accommodation and often employment. The transformation the residents undergo is remarkable, and the hope generated by their stay at the YRR underpins all they achieve.

ACSO's ethos of 'create another chance' drives the YRR, not only for the residents, but also for Lily. Initially fostered to ACSO from the Greyhound Adoption Program, Lily was three years old when she came to the YRR. Lily was bred to race; retired when she was no longer fast enough; had never been part of a family; she had never walked on carpet let alone been inside a house. ACSO organised to foster Lily for three weeks giving her, the residents and the staff the opportunity to 'suck it and see'. There was some initial ambivalence: within her first days at the YRR, Lily had eaten the remote control and chewed lots of power cords. There was also love at first sight; she was a very calming presence and really fitted in; acclimatising so well that come the end of her three-week foster stay, we adopted her.

The premise behind fostering a dog was to provide an informal therapeutic approach, some pet therapy, and to make the YRR homely. It encouraged residents take responsibility they may not have had before. Some had never owned or cared for a pet and had little idea at what is involved in pet maintenance. Others had, and wanted to bring their pets with them when they came to stay at the YRR. To this end, Lily has provided structure and a sense of routine, she requires regular walks and meals and it is the residents' responsibility to ensure she is well cared for. This has prompted a motivation, previously unseen, in some of the residents to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing.

The residents and staff adore her in equal measure. Lily is a reassuring presence, offering unconditional love where it may not have been felt before. She provides companionship and reassurance, a paw, or a silky head to stroke when she senses someone is having a bad day or experiencing a rough patch. She can often be found lying on the couch (Lily lives up to the greyhounds' reputation of being a little lazy), ready to receive a hug from one of the residents. This relationship has not only been of benefit to the human residents, but to Lily, who was initially shy and uncertain about her new home and has blossomed surrounded by the love of her many shared owners.

# Youth Residential

## REHAB

MORE THAN JUST  
A RESIDENT,  
*Lily* IS PART OF  
THE YRR FAMILY.



# TIM GILES

CENTRAL MELBOURNE REGIONAL MANAGER

## WHY I LOVE ACSO

What I love most about ACSO is its uniqueness. We are the only organisation in Australia that does what we do. It's really exciting to be a part of the organisation and the vision we're trying to realise. What we're doing is ambitious and exciting; if we can divert people from the justice system we have an impact not only on the individual but the community as well. We recognise the challenges people face and work with these, rather than being punitive and punish those who commit crimes. There's always a backstory leading up to incarceration or contact with the justice system, and to be able to hear the story and address their challenges and support clients to identify their own motivation to change with themselves, is so rewarding. So many of our clients are disenfranchised. ACSO's role is not only to help clients reconnect with their communities; we also offer them hope.

For me, ACSO's vision and values talk about a connection for our clients within the community. This reconnection is something only ACSO does, and the importance of this for our clients is huge. The public is fed an overwhelmingly negative story by the media, a story of crime and inherent badness. Yes, our clients have done the wrong thing (sometimes horrendous things), but it's so short-sighted of the community to not recognise that we need to look forward, to create another chance – not only for the benefit of the offenders, but more importantly – for the wider community.

## WHAT I'M MOST PROUD OF

We deliver the COATS (Community Offenders Advice and Treatment Service) intake and referral service for offenders who have an assess and treat for drugs or alcohol condition as part of their order or parole. Our drug and alcohol assessors will often feel privileged to hear clients' stories and want to develop treatment plans to help them. They recognise the strengths and abilities of our clients and place them where these strengths will be allowed to flourish. I believe it is very difficult to achieve a sense of self-worth without employment; without connections to family, friends, the community; and without the positive aspects that come with being connected to one's community most people take for granted. The linkages and supports that ACSO strides to provide assist our clients with the tangible tools they need to turn their lives around.

## WHAT WE DO

We provide COATS; Victoria's specialist intake, assessment and referral service for offenders who have an assess and treat for drugs or alcohol condition as part of their order or parole.

We provide specialist NDIS packages of support for justice disability clients and those, who without our intervention and support will most likely end up in the criminal justice system.

Our clinical services team provides behavior change programs for people with a disability whose behaviors will likely see them enter the criminal justice system.

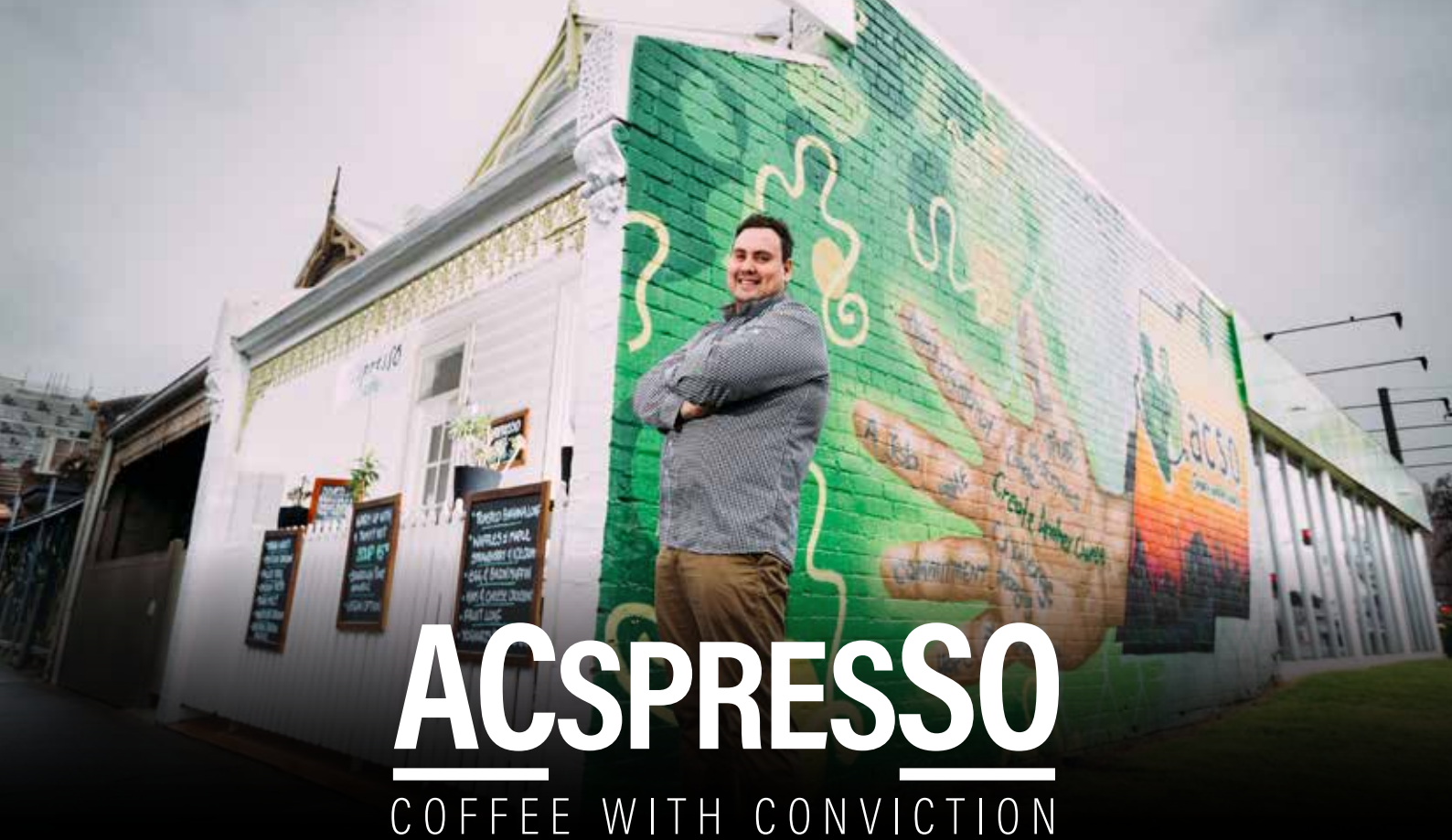
As part of Coact, we provide specialist disability employment for ex-offenders and people with a psychiatric mental health condition helping them to build the skills and experiences needed to enter the work force.

We operate ACSpresSO our social enterprise café when our clients can gain the skills and experiences needed to enter a career in hospitality.

We operate The Pantry our free food parcel service when our clients can gain the skills and experiences needed to get a job whilst at the same time feeding people in need.

Our life skills team develops and delivers a range of programs that help our clients build skills that can see them live independently and safely in the community.





# ACSPRESSO

## COFFEE WITH CONVICTION

With its exposed brick walls, amazing artwork and indoor plants, ACspresSO looks every bit the cool inner-suburban Melbourne café one would expect to find in Richmond. Far cooler than its appearance however, is the ability it has to make a difference in people's lives.

Blair served 26 years in prison for murder and had been back in the community for about 12 months. When interviewed for the traineeship position he looked broken. He thought nobody would give him an opportunity because of what he had done. Gratitude radiated from Blair the moment he was accepted as a trainee. Such was his enthusiasm and dedication, within two months of commencing at ACspresSO Blair was promoted to volunteer kitchen supervisor, delivering training to new trainees. Not long after this, Blair secured paid employment as a kitchen hand. Even though he had dreams of becoming a chef he was willing to start in a lower position, particularly as he had disclosed his offending history to his new employer, and they were willing to give him a chance. Blair still visits ACspresSO regularly. A chef's assistant now; he has reunified with his family; reconnected with friends; has a puppy. Blair is a different person from the broken man who walked into ACspresSO last year: he has gained confidence, self-respect and a sense of belonging. Blair was given a second chance; it provided him a miracle.

Operational since April 2015 ACspresSO is ACSO's social enterprise café; the brainchild of a small team of staff determined to make a difference and provide opportunity. Opportunity for people who perhaps haven't, up until now, experienced paid employment, or even the stability in their lives that makes having a job possible. It's a space where clients can engage in a positive way with members of the community.

This engagement is powerful insofar as it breaks down barriers. It challenges the assumptions of the clients in respect of how they think they are perceived by the public; they experience positive interactions which make them feel as though they will be well-received within the community.

Conversely, community perceptions are challenged when they understand that the café trainees aren't bad, they aren't monsters, but people who have perhaps made mistakes, or experienced hardship and want to change their lives. It isn't often that our clients and the community experience positive interactions. ACspresSO is playing a pivotal role in dismantling these barriers.

The concept of ACspresSO was very well received by ACSO's Executive and Board members. It wasn't, however, until ACSO received a grant from the Helen McPherson Smith Trust that this concept would become a reality. The money received from this grant was instrumental in enabling the refurbishment of the building and the equipment a café needs to operate.

Robust partnerships have been instrumental to ACspresSO's success: referrals have been received from Community Corrections; the Judy Lazarus Transition Centre (the JLTC provides a supervised pathway back into society for selected prisoners nearing the end of their sentence); and ReGen (ReGen supports and offers treatment to people addressing drug and alcohol addiction issues). These referrals have really driven the success of ACspresSO, and the trainees have embraced the importance of their contribution to ACspresSO; without their zeal and enthusiasm, it just wouldn't work.

The beacon of hope, opportunity and integration that ACspresSO has become, is the result of vision and hard work of several key staff members. Ivy was ACspresSO's barista and trainer for 12 months. With a wealth of hospitality experience, Ivy brought much needed business nous and savvy to the café; the standard of food produced and level of training provided both increased dramatically during her tenure. Luis, ACSO's work experience coordinator and a large influence behind the development of ACspresSO, saw his vision of the café's ambience has come to fruition; the space is amazing and has a really incredible vibe. There are thoughtful touches: a quiet nook where one can tuck oneself away, and blankets to borrow on which one can sit in the sun (or wrap one's self in on a wintry morning), that make ACspresSO all the more special.

From its April 2015 inception to the end of the calendar year, 46 people successfully completed a traineeship at ACspresSO. Of these, 29 gained paid employment. Similar numbers are being recorded this year. It's the referrals from Community Corrections and JLTC that make it all worthwhile for Luis. The referrals for trainees who have spent extensive periods of time in jail. They come to their interview at ACspresSO without hope. According to Luis, "they look broken, one more disappointment and that's it". The instant gratitude is in itself rewarding. "Watching them grow as they are given trust, responsibility, autonomy; it's fantastic".

Luis speaks of the first time he received a phone call from a trainee who had received a paid hospitality job. He says it still makes him feel emotional, "Having such an impact on someone's life is amazing. We gave someone a second chance and it changed their life".



## WHY I LOVE ACSO

I'm relatively new to ACSO, I commenced late May 2016. The initial attraction was my awareness of the good work and reputation ACSO has in the sector, of working with people who are really complex, who are involved, or at risk of being involved, within the justice system. I was aware of what ACSO does, and the reputation they have within the mental health, and drug and alcohol spaces, and within the Departments of Justice, and Health and Human Services.

I've been here 5-6 weeks and I'm loving the welcoming environment; there's something really grassroots, a really non-judgemental approach about ACSO. It's difficult to put into words really, these adjectives could describe any workplace, but it feels different at ACSO and I just can't put my finger on it. I have found ACSO really welcoming; really warm. I never felt I was the 'new kid on the block.' This is really special, really unique and I've never felt it before. I've worked in numerous roles in other organisations previously and there's never before been that feeling of being embedded so quickly, on day one. It's left a lovely impression with me. It's extraordinary, unique, special. I have instantly felt like a colleague and in a position in which I can share information. There's something about the way ACSO does stuff that makes you feel like you're a real part of things.

I love the variety of the work, the breadth of services I oversee in the northern metropolitan region of Melbourne. I really like that I have the ability to work with some key people within ACSO, and also the opportunity to develop relationships externally. I appreciate the investment ACSO is providing in the leadership space, it has really impressed me. I've completed some Global Leadership Foundation sessions and being part of that process with my colleagues was great; I valued the opportunity to reflect on my work, myself as a leader, what I bring to the organisation, my alignment with ACSO's values and ethos. It's really great to be part of these discussions. What I've seen so far is people working really hard to support clients. Essentially that's what we're here for, and I see a lot of effort and care going towards our work with clients: wanting them to feel supported, empowering them, and making a difference in their lives.

## WHAT I'M PROUD OF

I'm really excited by the possibilities available at the Glenroy office, there's a fantastic workshop space at the back of the hub.

This will provide some awesome opportunities for the social educators to utilise this space in creative ways for amazing client outcomes. I'm looking forward to exploring with staff the different programs (one existing program is woodwork) that can be delivered in this space.

## WHAT WE DO

We provide COATS, Victoria's specialist intake, assessment and referral service for offenders who have an assess and treat for drugs or alcohol condition as part of their order or parole;

We operate a five bed specialist supported disability residential program for people who need extra support to live safely and independently in the community;

We operate the award winning Francis House program, a five bed specialist supported justice disability residential program for people who need extra support to live safely and independently in the community on release from prison;

We operate Nicholson House, a new state of the art purpose built eight bed specialist supported justice disability residential program for people who need extra support to live safely and independently in the community which includes disability justice clients on release from prison;

We provide specialist NDIS packages of support for justice disability clients and those, who without our intervention and support will most likely end up in the criminal justice system;

As part of Coact, we provide specialist disability employment for ex-offenders and people with a psychiatric mental health condition helping them to build the skills and experiences needed to enter the work force; and

Our life skills team develops and delivers a range of programs including art and woodwork that help our clients build skills that can see them live independently and safely in the community.

# LEE ESPOSITO

## NORTHERN MELBOURNE REGIONAL MANAGER



# NICHOLSON HOUSE

Nicholson House began its existence as a simple design on a whiteboard; a bunch of people standing around, brainstorming and drawing ideas of what it might look like. We wanted to design and build something different, something unique. We wanted a residence for people with an intellectual disability who are involved in, or at risk of being involved in, the criminal justice system, but on a whole new level. ACSO sought to design and implement a new service delivery model incorporating a step-down program that would encourage the residents to take control of their lives.

A residence of this kind was much needed. ACSO received very strong support from the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and Corrections Victoria (CV), and developed a partnership with Launch Housing (formerly HomeGround) to build the property. It was important to get it right, and to include features that would make it suitable for forensic clients. It took almost one year to complete the design for Nicholson House. Every minuscule element of the proposed house was considered, right down to the colour scheme. Despite it being a laborious and sometimes frustrating process, it was so very worthwhile, the design is amazing. We released the tender for builders in 2014, it was built in 2015 and completed February 2016. One of the most exciting aspects of Nicholson House is the commercial kitchen. Residents will be able to use it for training and job readiness in the hospitality industry, to enable them to apply for jobs in the community and therefore increase their levels of independence and confidence. Other aims for the kitchen are to link it up with ACSpresSO and ACSO's other residential properties. To prepare food that will be sold at ACSpresSO, and that will be packaged up and delivered to ACSO's other residences for client meals. This will encourage all of ACSO's resident clients to engage in healthy eating practices, and will complement the herb and vegetable gardens that are maintained at ACSO's houses. There's just so much potential of what we can achieve with the commercial kitchen, particularly when we extend ACSO's ability as an RTO (Registered Training Organisation) to deliver accredited training and certification.

The house is an eight bed residence with a U-shaped design that's split in two. One side provides intensive support for four residents. Each room has its own ensuite and courtyard, and there is a strong staff

presence, swipe card access and CCTV that unobtrusively monitors. The other side promotes more independence, and has bigger bedrooms with bigger courtyards. This provides incentive and reward; that as their progress improves and stabilises, they will be moved to something better. Conversely, if they lapse or struggle, they can return to the more intensive area. There is the possibility of implementing a peer support model, a former resident who will motivate and lead by example.

From day one, a resident's exit is being planned. The plan is not to see how they go, but instead work on the assumption they will successfully complete their time on the Nicholson House program. Regular assessments are undertaken by ACSO's clinical team, and residents have designated outreach and life skills staff who also work with them to achieve their goals. These services complement each other to form a very strong wraparound support model. The maximum length of time any resident can spend at Nicholson House is two years.

Part of the exit planning is investigating where a client will live upon completion of their time at Nicholson House. Housing with Conviction is another component of the wraparound support ACSO provides. Housing with Conviction is an ACSO company that offers accommodation and housing support for people exiting the criminal justice system. Housing with Conviction will assist with sourcing properties and head leasing agreements for residents when they have successfully completed their time at Nicholson House.

Staff encourage clients to take responsibility for themselves and their lives, to enable them to make better choices. Clients need to build within themselves the tools necessary to move forward; Nicholson House embodies ACSO's ethos of 'create another chance'. Technology has been embraced. Residents have access to iPads on which they can record their feelings. Instead of losing their cool and storming out, they're encouraged to record and reflect upon their feelings, and better manage their responses to these.

Nicholson House is unique. There's nothing like it anywhere else in Australia. From the commercial kitchen to the service delivery model, to linkages with ACSpresSO and Housing with Conviction. This is so more than just accommodation. It was a very well-considered design that had at its heart the desire to change lives. It's a step down model that offers residents the opportunity to redefine who they are and the life they want to lead. It's a model that could be replicated anywhere in Australia. It's a model that represents hope and second chances.





RECONNECT IS, ESSENTIALLY, ALL ABOUT **EMPOWERMENT**.  
EMPOWERING PEOPLE WITH A CRIMINAL BACKGROUND, PEOPLE  
WHO ARE VULNERABLE, PEOPLE WHO HAVE OFTEN GIVEN UP HOPE.

# RECONNECT

ReConnect is a program funded by the Victorian Department of Justice and Regulation and is part of the Community Reintegration Pathway supporting serious violent offenders, female clients and ATSI (Aboriginal and Torres Strait) clients who are deemed eligible and are referred directly from prison. The program works with people coming out of prison, supporting them with their transition back into the community and by providing flexible and assertive outreach to reduce the risk of them reoffending. ACSO delivers the ReConnect program throughout south east metropolitan Melbourne, and the Loddon Mallee, Hume, Goulburn Valley and Gippsland regions of Victoria. Dependent on need, clients are referred to either a six month or a four week package. A transition plan is developed, focusing on the immediate needs of the client following their release. Staff will commence working with clients up to six weeks prior to their release, visiting them at least twice in prison prior to their day of release when staff will collect clients from the prison gate, unless clients have made alternative arrangements. The ReConnect team are a very resilient bunch; the program and the people within it are really aligned with ACSO's values. It can sometimes be incredibly challenging: you have to keep chipping away, really gradually, to establish relationships with other programs and services, advocating for clients, and developing a rapport with the clients themselves. It can be frustrating when clients' behaviours can jeopardise these tenuous, hard-won relationships with other services, especially with housing providers, yet this only serves to heighten the degree of resilience and determination of staff to maintain these relationships, whilst still supporting the client with further referrals and linkages within the community.

Sometimes it can be disheartening. Sometimes people aren't quite ready to change. Emily was referred to ReConnect. Her initial worker was unable to attend a prison pre-release case conference, so sent another as a delegate. At 4pm the worker received a phone call from the prison, Emily had a gripe that her initial worker was not at the meeting and contacted her legal representative, who somehow arranged an earlier release date for Emily, for that same afternoon. Staff dedication really kicked in. Despite being late in the afternoon and with next to no notice, the staff member booked motel accommodation, met Emily at the prison gate, took her shopping for groceries and other necessities, and dropped her at the motel with the agreement she would return in the morning. The staff member didn't get home until after 9pm that night. Unfortunately, Emily absconded from the motel, later to be returned to custody. Disheartened but not without hope, the staff member and the team contemplated whether it would have been different for Emily should she have been released as originally

planned; whether those last few weeks preparing for release would have made a difference and led to a more successful outcome for Emily. Emily's return to custody notwithstanding, this story shows the extraordinary lengths to which ReConnect staff will go to ensure clients are given every opportunity to succeed.

ReConnect is, essentially, all about empowerment. Empowering people with a criminal background, people who are vulnerable, people who have often given up hope. Empowering them to identify and reach their potential to become non offending members of the community and provide them with a second chance. It can be the little things that, for someone who has been in prison, often seem insurmountable. Making a phone call to schedule an appointment. Actually turning up for that appointment. Setting up a bank account. Shopping for groceries. Things that society takes for granted. ReConnect serves to provide the links that will pave the way for people to build the confidence and self-belief to help themselves.

ReConnect also aims to question and challenge clients. They're encouraged to reflect on past behaviours and attitudes, and consider how these have affected their life choices to date. Clients are asked to consider how they might be coming across to other people, how their body language or mode of speech might be perceived by others, and how people will respond very differently to them, depending upon their demeanour. It's about mindful and thoughtful conversations, empowering clients with the knowledge and understanding to increase their chance of better outcomes, by using more positive behaviour and staff modelling what this looks like. Essentially, it's about providing the opportunity for clients to obtain learnt experience about change, discovering that they will gain more positive outcomes to situations when their behaviour has changed. It's so very rewarding, and makes it all worthwhile, when clients have wins, even small wins, and you can see the change we have worked so hard to encourage, blossoming through.

Jacki didn't have much hope for her own community rehabilitation or reintegration. Facing release after an 18 month sentence, Jacki was estranged from her family, had few friends and no support within the community. A short-term stay in a THIM (Transitional Housing Management) property was organised for Jacki upon her release. For the first month Jacki was resistant and reluctant to engage with staff. She didn't want to meet face-to-face, and only relented to speaking with her outreach worker on the phone. It took a lot of staff dedication to gradually foster within Jacki a sense of hope that maybe she could make it. Then something shifted; Jacki felt she wasn't given up on, she felt supported. She began to engage more readily with her ReConnect staff member, meeting her for coffee. Her adult daughter got back in touch with her, then ended up moving in. Her daughter proved to be a great support for Jacki, who in turn was a source of support for her daughter, who was pregnant. Jacki and her daughter secured a permanent home through the Office of Housing. The prospect of becoming a grandmother, coupled with her newfound independence and self-belief, reinforced Jacki with a sense of hope for the future.



## WHY I LOVE ACSO

There are a number of reasons I love ACSO. I love that the organisation is committed to innovation. I have been with ACSO for some time now, and have watched us develop into an organisation that now thinks in a more creative and innovative space in terms of problem solving and advancement. We're not afraid of a challenge or to be provocative.

ACSO's commitment to staff is also something I value. ACSO employs such a focus on instilling its values organisation-wide and prioritising a culturally positive workforce. It's wonderful that this is at the heart of the organisation. Recognising the importance of staff feeling appreciated is a beautiful attribute for an organisation to adopt. It is clear to me that because of this, our staff really believe in our values and are committed to our vision. It is an amazingly supportive workplace with an open-door policy that means I feel comfortable talking to anyone, from the executive, to staff in other programs or in other locations. There are rigorous processes in place to manage what we do, however to have such shared accountability and support at all levels ensures that we reach the best outcomes for staff and clients alike. This supportive nature greatly assists me in my role.

I feel that a job at ACSO is more than just a job: it's advocating for change; it's engaging in strategic conversations with State and Federal Governments for transformation at a higher level; it's the innovation and client focus. ACSO is driving the change, as well as being a part of implementing it. We own it. We are fearless in what we do. We put our hand up and say 'we're working with these clients, and we're proud'. We recognise that our clients are also victims. We see them as people, not just their offences. It's a privilege to work in this field particularly when our clients let us into their lives; show us their vulnerabilities; reveal their trauma; voice their hardship. At times we can lose sight of this, but it's great to be a part of their story and a trusted part of their journey.

## WHAT I'M MOST PROUD OF

Relocating our South Eastern Hub from Cranbourne to Dandenong, was an amazing experience for me and the team. Our new office is more accessible for our clients and has facilities that allow us to offer so much more than we were previously able. Being able to cement ourselves within this community and establish new connections has really enhanced our sense of belonging and level of contribution. Our staff have been actively networking with organisations such as the Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Justice and Regulation and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander support services to better assist cohesive client care and support. Our location in Dandenong enables our staff to smooth the progress of community outreach through localised activities such as public transport training or meeting at shopping centres and other public locations.

## WHAT WE DO

We deliver ReConnect, an intensive case management support program for people on release from prison who are returning to the region to live. Our staff support people to get their lives back on track and to remain safely in the community.

We provide COATS, Victoria's specialist intake, assessment and referral service for offenders who have an assess and treat for drugs or alcohol condition as part of their order or parole.

We operate two five bed specialist supported Justice disability residential programs for people who need extra support to live safely and independently in the community including people on release from prison; We operate Armadale House, a specialist residential program for females with an intellectual disability and co-occurring mental illness.

We provide specialist NDIS packages of support for Justice disability clients and those, who without our intervention and support, will most likely end up in the criminal justice system.

# EMMA BELL

SOUTHERN MELBOURNE REGIONAL MANAGER





# AUSTRALIA'S FIRST RECIDIVISM *Social* *Impact* INVESTMENT

**IN AN AUSTRALIAN FIRST,**  
A SOCIAL IMPACT INVESTMENT WILL BE USED TO TARGET PAROLEES WITH  
THE AIM OF REDUCING THE RATE OF REOFFENDING AND RE-INCARCERATION

ACSO is proud and excited to be partnering with the NSW Government to deliver **Australia's first Social Impact Investment** to reduce the return to custody rates for prisoners in NSW. This exciting new program is the first of its type in Australia. It is an innovative partnership between a commercial investor NAB, not-for-profit provider ACSO and arbias and the NSW Government to take a new approach to addressing persistent challenges in the justice system.

The investment will support a new program, **On Tracc** (Transition Reintegration and Community Connection), which will work with up to **3,900 parolees** over five years to prevent reoffending and re-incarceration. On Tracc will provide these 3,900 parolees with intensive individual support to assist their successful reintegration into the community, particularly in their first 16 weeks of parole and will support the NSW Government's commitment to reduce reoffending by five per cent by 2019. The program is designed to help people get their life back on track, reduce re-offending and help prevent people going back to prison.

ACSO is excited to be able to provide this program that will keep people from ending up back in prison. ACSO will have sites in Rockdale and Bass Hill which will be the base for the On Tracc program, which is expected to provide services to 1200 people on release from prison over the next two years. Government payments and returns to investors in this innovative social investment will be dependent on the outcomes achieved by On Tracc. This will be the first social impact investment in NSW, following the Newpin Social Benefit Bond (SBB) and The Benevolent Society SBB implemented in 2013

“THE INTENDED OUTCOME IS TO REDUCE THE COST TO SOCIETY AND GOVERNMENT BY REDUCING THE NUMBER OF INMATES IN THE PRISON SYSTEM AND ENSURE THAT PAROLEES ARE GIVEN THE BEST CHANCE OF BEING REINTEGRATED INTO SOCIETY. NAB'S ROLE IN FINANCING THIS PROGRAM DEMONSTRATES OUR COMMITMENT TO PROVIDING INNOVATIVE FINANCING SOLUTIONS THAT WILL DELIVER BETTER SOCIETAL OUTCOMES FOR ALL AUSTRALIANS”

- NAB Director Capital Financing Solutions, **James Waddell**

“NSW IS LEADING THE WAY WHEN IT COMES TO SOCIAL IMPACT INVESTMENT – AND IT ALLOWS US TO ADDRESS SERIOUS CHALLENGES FACING OUR COMMUNITY WHILE HARNESSING THE EXPERTISE OF THE NOT-FOR-PROFIT SECTOR AS WELL AS FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM PRIVATE INVESTORS”

- NSW Treasurer, **Gladys Berejiklian**

# QUICK GUIDE to On Tracc

## **POLICY AREA**

REDUCING PAROLEE REOFFENDING  
AND RE-INCARCERATION

## **INTERVENTION GROUP**

UP TO 3,900 ADULT PAROLEES WITH A  
MEDIUM TO HIGH RISK OF  
REOFFENDING, RELEASED TO  
SUPERVISION IN SELECTED SYDNEY  
METROPOLITAN AREAS

## **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

INTENSIVE, INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT TO  
PAROLEES TO HELP THEM REINTEGRATE  
INTO THE COMMUNITY, PARTICULARLY  
IN THE FIRST 16 WEEKS OF RELEASE

## **OUTCOME MEASURE**

REDUCED RATE OF RE-INCARCERATION  
IN THE 12-MONTHS POST RELEASE

## **CONTRACT TERM**

5 YEARS

## **SERVICE PROVIDERS**

ACSO AND ITS PARTNER ARBIAS

## **UP-FRONT FINANCE**

ACSO AND NAB

## **GOVERNMENT AGENCY**

CORRECTIVE SERVICES NSW

## **EVALUATION**

NSW BUREAU OF CRIME STATISTICS  
AND RESEARCH





“A GREAT CONFERENCE  
BY ACSO, YET AGAIN...”

— **Dr Frank Lambrick**  
Office of Professional Practice

ACSO's CEO, **Karenza Louis-Smith**, addressing  
the delegates during the opening ceremony

EACH AUSTRALIAN PRISONER COSTS AN AVERAGE OF MORE THAN **\$300 PER DAY** (OR **\$109,500 PER YEAR**), WHICH IS **80%** MORE THAN THE AVERAGE AUSTRALIAN'S DAILY EARNINGS (\$160). IN A SYSTEM WITH ALMOST **38,000 PRISONERS** WHICH COSTS THE NATION AT LEAST **\$4.1 BILLION** A YEAR, **OVER 40%** OF EX-OFFENDERS WILL RETURN TO PRISON IN TWO YEARS. IS OUR APPROACH RIGHT? OR ARE WE WASTING OUR MONEY?

# INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE CONFERENCE



Pictured: Panellists discussing the topic of ice and its impact on the community

## DO PRISONS CHANGE LIVES?

In October 2015 ACSO hosted its 8th Biennial International Criminal Justice Conference at the MCG in Melbourne. The conference was attended by over 700 delegates over the two days and included leading national and international commentators who joined in disruption and debate that centred on whether prisons really change lives.

The conference proceedings were aptly opened by Noel C Tovey AM, a proud Indigenous man, who as member of Australia's Stolen Generation, set a crash-course with the criminal justice system in his adolescence and early adulthood. Noel shared his inspirational story about how he managed to circumvent his trajectory towards the criminal justice system, his career path in theatre and singing and on

the way, being honoured with the Member of the Order of Australia Medal.

The conference also included inspirational performances by Somebody's Daughter Theatre Company and by the Choir of Hope and Inspiration. Far from detracting from the debate and discussion, the performances provided an alternative point of view and added a consumer voice to the theme of the conference. A public forum followed on the 21st October, which was facilitated by ABC radio's Jon Faine, and included an expert panel, representing a diverse range of views on the topic of whether prisons are the most effective mechanism to rehabilitate offenders and protect the community.

### > PANELISTS INCLUDED

#### JERRY MADDEN

a US Republican who has saved Texas \$2bn a year closing prisons and reducing the re-offending rate;

#### GREG DAVIES

Victims of Crime Commissioner;

#### DEBORAH GLASS

OBE Victorian Ombudsman, who recently released a report "Investigation into the rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners in Victoria"

#### HELEN BARNACLE

Psychologist, Author and former inmate

#### KARENZA LOUIS-SMITH

CEO at ACSO, rehabilitating some of Victoria's dangerous prisoners, sex offenders along with those who have committed drug and violent offences helping them to re-integrate safely back into the community



Pictured: Jerry Madden addressing the delegates





**Pictured:** Somebody's Daughter Theatre Company



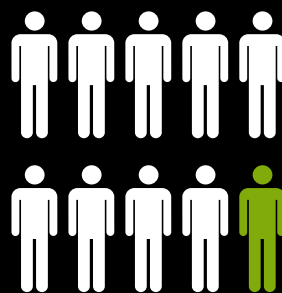
**Pictured:** Assoc. Prof. Angela Hawken providing her keynote address



**Pictured:** Panelists involved in the symposium on ABI and the justice system



**Pictured:** An artist (name withheld) with his artwork



**700+**  
DELEGATES

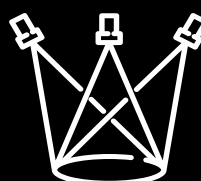
**↑ 10%**  
FROM LAST YEAR



REPRESENTATION FROM OVER  
**10+ COUNTRIES**  
INCLUDING CANADA, NETHERLANDS,  
JAPAN, SINGAPORE, INDONESIA, USA,  
SOUTH AFRICA, NEW ZEALAND AND UK



**40 PRESENTERS +**  
INVOLVED IN POLICY, RESEARCH, TREATMENT,  
SERVICE DELIVERY & CONSUMER ADVOCACY



**PERFORMANCES BY**  
**CHOIR OF HOPE & INSPIRATION**  
**SOMEBODY'S DAUGHTER**  
**THEATRE COMPANY**



**Pictured:** (L to R) Karenza Louis-Smith (ACSO CEO), Stanley Tang (SCORE CEO), Andrew Chadwick (ACSO Board Member), Stewart Leslie (ACSO Board Chair)

As part of the 8th Biennial Conference proceedings, ACSO launched its very own Yellow Ribbon Project. The Yellow Ribbon Project brings attention to the challenges of ex-offenders being accepted and afforded another chance when they have been released from prison.

ACSO's Yellow Ribbon Project was launched by Mr Stanley Tang from Singapore Corporation of Rehabilitative Enterprises (SCORE). The launch formed part of the welcome reception and incorporated concert performances from local Australian artists.

The Yellow Ribbon Project, started in Singapore (with an organisation called SCORE), was inspired by the popular song, "Tie a Yellow Ribbon Round the 'Ole' Oak Tree", which is supposedly based on the real life tale of an ex-offender's journey to forgiveness. "With over 40% of people returning to prison each year we need to work harder to help people get out and stay out of prison."

The conference showcased art work from 18 artists who have been involved in the criminal justice system. The art work showcase was available for purchase from delegates. The art exhibition was a resounding success, with 80% of all artworks sold and all proceeds went directly to the artists.

## 2015 Launch Event

# YELLOW Ribbon PROJECT

**"THE DESIRE TO WORK WITH ACSO ON THE YELLOW RIBBON PROJECT AND OTHERS IS REMARKABLE. I AM SURE THERE ARE SOME GREAT OPPORTUNITIES AHEAD FOR ALL OF US."**

**Jerry Madden**  
Former Republican Senator, Texas, USA

## ABOUT SCORE

Singapore Corporation of Rehabilitative Enterprises (SCORE) was established as a statutory board under the Ministry of Home Affairs on 1 April 1976. SCORE plays an important role in the Singapore correctional system by creating a safe and secure Singapore through the provision of rehabilitation and aftercare services to inmates and ex-offenders. SCORE seeks to enhance the employability of offenders and prepare them for their eventual reintegration into the national workforce by focusing on four main building blocks of training, work, employment assistance and community engagement.



**SCORE**

**Singapore  
Corporation of  
Rehabilitative  
Enterprises**

*Building Bridges, Changing Lives*



“HOUSING WITH CONVICTION IS A START-UP ENTERPRISE WITH INITIAL SEED FUNDING FROM ACSO. WE WILL PROVIDE INNOVATIVE HOUSING SOLUTIONS FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE AT A HIGH RISK OF HOMELESSNESS AND RECIDIVISM BY UTILISING THE EXPERTISE OF OUR PEOPLE, PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT, PROGRAMS AND FUNDING”

— **Sylvia Paruit**  
Housing with Conviction Manager



# HOUSING WITH CONVICTION IS A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE, OWNED AND OPERATED BY ACSO

In 2014 ACSO's Board strategically agreed to create a new company in order to build a social housing response for people in or at risk of entering into the criminal justice system. This company called Housing with Conviction will directly support ACSO's Vision – "to build a safe and inclusive community freed of crime and prison". Housing with Conviction was registered by ACSO as a company limited by guarantee in early 2015.

In Australia, homelessness is more common among those with a history of contact with the criminal justice system, it lasts for longer, and is more likely to reoccur than for other homeless people.

# HOUSING WITH conviction

**The Health of Australia's Prisoners Report**, released in 2015 found:



**of prison entrants reported being homeless in the 4 weeks immediately prior to imprisonment.**

(This is a decrease since 2012 from 35%, mainly due to a decrease in the proportion of entrants having come from short-term or emergency accommodation.)



were in short-term or emergency accommodation

were in unconventional housing or sleeping rough



In 2015, the oldest entrants, aged at least 45 years, were the group most likely to have been in their own accommodation (78% compared with 71–74% of others), and the least likely to have been in short-term or emergency accommodation (14%).

Indigenous entrants were slightly more likely than their non-Indigenous counterparts to be in short-term or emergency accommodation (22% compared with 18% respectively). The results for men and women were similar.

## OUR FIRST 3 YEARS

Housing with Conviction will focus on three models of social housing for the first three years which are regulated under the Residential Tenancies Act (Vic) 1997 or the Disability Act (Vic) 2006. Whilst also seeking tender opportunities in other states. These models will incorporate head leasing properties, management of disability properties within the NDIS framework and standalone management of NDIS properties.

In partnership with Corrections Victoria we will develop a head leasing tenancy model to house offenders on release from custody. Housing with Conviction will lease properties and tenant clients in these acting as a landlord. ACSO will provide the staffing to support the people we house to maintain their tenancy. After 12 months, tenants will be able to have the lease transferred into their name.

This approach will see people who would normally find it really hard to get into safe, affordable accommodation have an opportunity to get their lives back on track. This will help ACSO break the cycle of reoffending.



## OUR VISION

EVERYONE TRAPPED IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM HAS A HOME.

## OUR MISSION

PROVIDING SAFE AND RELIABLE HOMES TO REBUILD THEIR LIVES AND BREAK THE CYCLE OF CRIME.

## OUR FUTURE

WE WILL DESIGN SPECIALIST HOUSING MODELS AND PROVIDE SPECIALIST TENANCY AND IN-REACH WRAP-AROUND SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM. OUR TENANTS WILL INCLUDE PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES, HISTORIES OF MENTAL ILLNESS, SUBSTANCE USE, AND OFFENDING. A SPECIALIST RESPONSE IS ESSENTIAL AS THE COMBINATION OF THESE FACTORS CAN OFTEN RESULT IN THIS COHORT FALLING THROUGH THE GAPS, "BURNING BRIDGES" WITH HOUSING PROVIDERS AND LANDLORDS.





BUILDING FOR THE **FUTURE...**

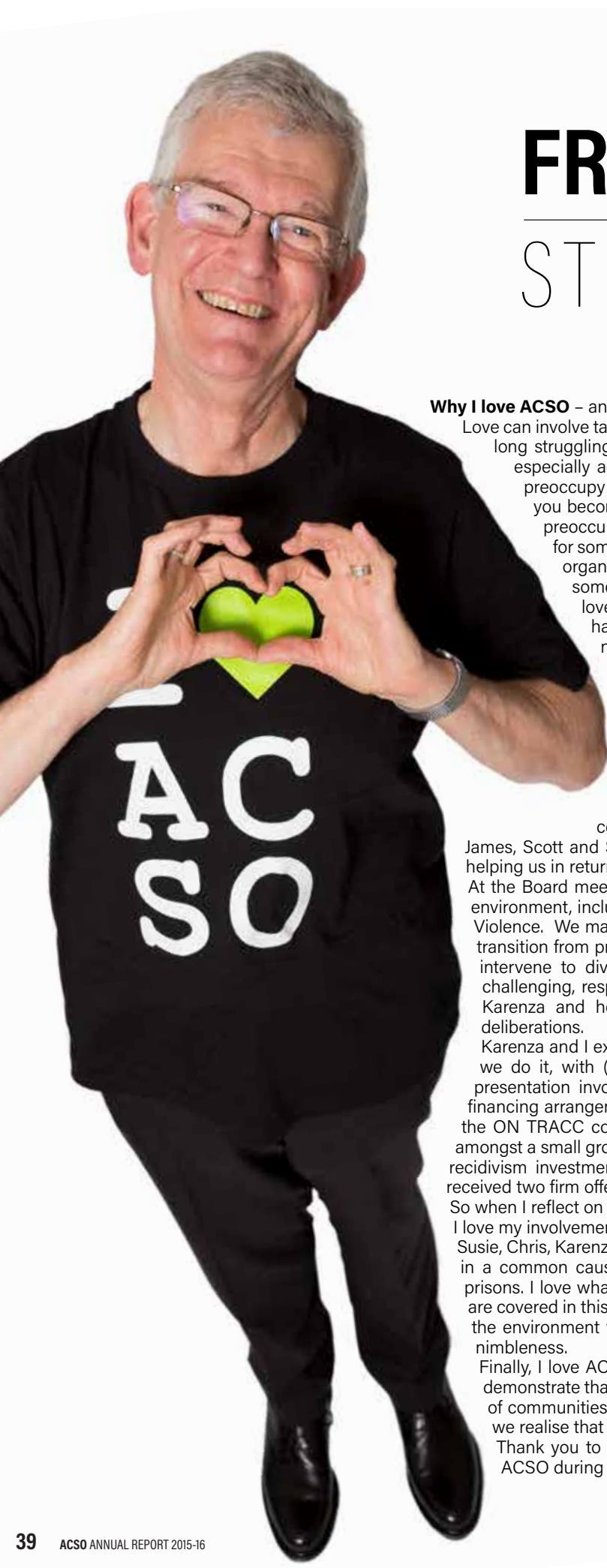
*Create another chance*



# GOVERNANCE

AS WE LOOK TO THE FUTURE, WE SEE THE VALUE AND IMPORTANCE OF **ACSO** OPERATING IN THE PREVENTION SPACE. IN DOING SO WE, IN A METAPHORICAL SENSE, BEGIN TO **"PLACE A FENCE AT THE TOP OF THE CLIFF..."**





# A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

---

## STEWART LESLIE

### **Why I love ACSO** – an unusual theme for a Chair's report to an organisation's stakeholders.

Love can involve taking a great interest and pleasure in something. I am interested in my long struggling football teams' fortunes and take great pleasure in their victories, especially against certain teams. But my love for St Kilda does not absorb or preoccupy me, except on certain days like the 2010 drawn Grand Final. Once you become involved with ACSO you cannot help but become absorbed and preoccupied by it. Love is characterised by having a strong feeling of affection for something or somebody. Can you have a strong feeling of affection for an organisation? Affection is characterised by devotion and attachment to something or somebody; having an affinity with that thing or person. If love for ACSO is indicated by absorption and preoccupation with, and having a strong feeling of affection for ACSO, then I love ACSO. I will now try and explain why.

In the fortnight it has taken me to write this report I have attended the sixth birthday celebration of ACSO's Consumer Advisory Group, chaired a Board meeting and, with our Chief Executive, spoken to a group of chartered accountants about ACSO's work. Our Cultural Ambassador, Christine Cappello, hosted our Consumer Advisory Group's birthday celebrations. Chris has been with ACSO from day one – over thirty years of devotion and attachment in a variety of roles and is still ACSO's heart and soul. At the celebration, I had the opportunity to talk to Marjorie, Noel, John, Peter, James, Scott and Susie – people who have been helped by ACSO and who are now helping us in return. All spoke with great fondness about their involvement with CAG. At the Board meeting, the Directors shared their knowledge about ACSO's operating environment, including the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Family Violence. We made decisions to enhance how we deliver our mission to help people transition from prison, assist them in the community, stop them from reoffending and intervene to divert others from committing crime. Board discussions are open, challenging, respectful, but above all, focused on our mission. Our Chief Executive Karenza and her leadership team attend and are active participants in Board deliberations.

Karenza and I explained to the group of chartered accountants what we do and how we do it, with (inevitably) a focus on how we fund our operations. Part of the presentation involved an explanation of social impact bonds and in particular the financing arrangement ACSO has entered into with National Australia Bank to finance the ON TRACC contract in New South Wales. I was proud to tell the group we are amongst a small group of social impact investment participants in the world, and the first recidivism investment in Australia. The presentation struck a chord – at the end we received two firm offers of help.

So when I reflect on those three events in the life of ACSO I understand why I love ACSO. I love my involvement with ACSO's people – Marjorie, Noel, John, Peter, James, Scott and Susie, Chris, Karenza and her team and my Board colleagues – because we are all united in a common cause to make our community safe and inclusive, freed of crime and prisons. I love what we have achieved over the last twelve months; achievements that are covered in this Annual Report. I love the challenge and the opportunity to innovate; the environment we operate in constantly changes and we respond with agility and nimbleness.

Finally, I love ACSO's potential. Our moves into New South Wales and Queensland demonstrate that we have developed something that can be replicated for the benefit of communities beyond Victoria. Our strategy is being constantly refined to ensure we realise that potential.

Thank you to my Board, Karenza and her team and all who have contributed to ACSO during 2016.



Appointed to Board in 2004, Ms Brown was elected Patron in 2011. After working as a solicitor, tertiary lecturer and barrister, Ms Brown was appointed a magistrate in Victoria in 1985; one of the first two women appointed to the Court. In 1990 she was appointed Chief Magistrate. Between November 1993 and June 2010 she was a judge of the Family Court of Australia. As a decade-long board member of the Australian Institute of Judicial Administration and a member of the inaugural board of the National Judicial College, Ms Brown was instrumental in the development and delivery of judicial education in Australia, particularly education relating to gender and culture, and the incidence and impact of family violence and sexual assault. She has maintained a long-standing interest in juvenile justice, sentencing, child protection and human rights; she chaired the Board of the Australian Institute of Criminology for seven years, has been a member of the Alfred Hospital Board and the Board of the Australian Drug Foundation, and is a member (and former Victorian president) of the International Commission of Jurists. Her name was entered on the Victorian Honour Roll of Women in 2003 and she was appointed a member of the Order of Australia in 2006.

**The Hon. Sally Brown AM**

**ACSO's Patron**

## ACSO BOARD



**Ex-Officio Member** Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee, Quality, Safety and Service Delivery Committee & Justice Innovation Committee

Appointed to Board in 2009, Mr Leslie is a Fellow of Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand and holds the Graduate designation from the Australian Institute of Company Directors. For 15 years he was a partner with accounting firm KPMG, where he specialised in assurance and advisory services. Since retiring from that partnership in 2001 he has been appointed to a number of governance roles in the public sector. He is a Board member of 100 Story Building, which provides opportunities for marginalised children and young people to build literacy skills, confidence and a sense of belonging. He also holds a senior management role at a significant philanthropic foundation. Mr Leslie is a past member of the Board of the Royal Women's Hospital and the Board of the Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority.

**Mr Stewart Leslie**

**ACSO Board Chair**



Appointed to Board in 1996. Ms Barbone is a Registered Legal Practitioner and a partner with White Cleland Pty Ltd. She has been practising law for over 20 years, having practised as a solicitor almost exclusively in the area of commercial litigation, enforcement and insolvency work. She is a member of the Law Institute of Victoria and Australian Institute of Credit Management.

Over her career, Ms Barbone has held a number of appointments in various organisations including school advisory boards and philanthropic organisations and has chaired and been a member of various committees involving governance and strategic positioning. She continues to provide pro bono advice to various non-profit organisations.

Ms Barbone has witnessed ACSO's growth and change from the early days of the Epistle Society to its expansion as VOSA and subsequently its current form as ACSO.

**Ms Ersilia Barbone**

**ACSO Board Deputy Chair**

Justice Innovation Sub-Committee Member



Appointed to Board in 2009, Ms Barker draws on over 20 years leadership and operational experience across the health, insurance and human resource sectors. Formally a senior executive with the Transport Accident Commission, she successfully led that organisation's workforce transition from Melbourne to Geelong.

She is the founder and principal consultant of Andeol Consulting established in 2009, where she specialises in organisational coaching, leadership and business transformation. She is an alumni of Leadership Victoria, is actively involved in and is passionate about community leadership.

**Ms Kathleen Barker**

ACSO Board Member  
Quality, Safety & Service Delivery Sub-Committee Chair





Appointed to Board in 2014, Mr Chadwick is an Associate of Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand. He has been a member of the Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee since 2009 and was appointed Chair of the Committee in March 2014. He is a financial consultant, following 12 years with BHP Billiton as a Senior Manager in Group Reporting, which included six years with responsibility for external financial reporting. Previously he was with accounting firm KPMG, as a Partner for 12 years in the assurance and advisory services division. Mr Chadwick first became involved with ACSO in 2001 when he was engaged to provide financial consulting advice.

**Mr Andrew Chadwick**

ACSO Board Member  
Audit, Risk & Compliance Sub-Committee Chair



Appointed to Board in 2014, Ms Corry is a qualified Chartered Accountant and built her career at KPMG, where she was a partner at KPMG Consulting until 2002. She is a Director of her own consulting business, where she focuses on strategy, governance and risk services, particularly focusing on the interaction between business and information technology. She is a Board member at Holmesglen Institute of TAFE, ACMI (Australian Centre for the Moving Image), Eva Tilley Memorial Home and is the independent chair on the Department of Premier and Cabinet's Audit and Risk Management Committee, Service Victoria sub-committee.

**Ms Karen Corry**

ACSO Board Member  
Audit, Risk & Compliance Sub-Committee Member, ICT Sub-Committee Chair



Justice Paul Coghlan was admitted to practice in 1969. After nine years as a solicitor, he joined the Victorian Bar in 1978, where he specialised in criminal law. He was a judge of the Supreme Court from 1995 until 2009 and was the principal judge of the Criminal Division of the Court between 2010 and 2012. In 2001, following highly-regarded service as a Senior Crown Prosecutor and Chief Crown Prosecutor, he was appointed Victoria's fifth Director of Public Prosecutions. He was appointed as a judge of the Court of Appeal of the Supreme Court in 2013 and retired in early 2014 after over 40 years in practice.

**Justice Paul Coghlan**

ACSO Board Member  
Quality, Safety & Service Delivery Sub-Committee Member



Appointment to Board in 2007. Prof. Gassner has extensive experience in social policy development and working through the complexity of government and non-government sectors to achieve sustainable social outcomes. This has been nationally and internationally in the fields of family violence, Aboriginal health, perpetrator intervention in violence against women and also gender equity in medical research. He works with the Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission in China working on system and legislative reform in responding to violence against women. He is a partner in Reos Partner, former Assistant Commissioner, Victoria Police, fellow of the Institute of Public Administration Australia (Victoria), member of Victorian Systemic Review of Family Violence Deaths Reference Group (Coroners Court) and former member of the Commonwealth Government Violence against Women Advisory Group, Victorian Government Mental Health Reform Council and White Ribbon Day Council.

**Prof Leigh Gassner**

ACSO Board Member  
Quality, Safety & Service Delivery Sub-Committee Member



Appointed to Board in 2014, Dr Sullivan is a consultant forensic psychiatrist. He holds a medical degree from the University of Melbourne, and Masters degrees in Law (Melbourne) and Bioethics (Monash). He is currently completing a management degree through the International Masters for Health Leadership at McGill University in Canada. He is a Fellow of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists, a Fellow of the Royal College of Psychiatrists (UK) and an Associate Fellow in the Royal Australasian College of Medical Administrators. He holds honorary academic positions at the University of Melbourne and Swinburne University, and is active in research, teaching and publishing academic articles, with fifteen book chapters and over twenty peer-reviewed papers. He has sat on a range of committees and expert advisory groups in areas of ethics, psychiatry and legal issues.

Dr Sullivan has been the Assistant Clinical Director of the Victorian Institute of Forensic Mental Health (Forensicare) for over ten years and has also worked as consultant to the Multiple & Complex Needs Initiative. At various times he has been the visiting psychiatrist to most Victorian prisons and has clinical experience with offenders, including those with disability. He frequently provides expert evidence in criminal, child protection, coronial and regulatory jurisdictions.

**Dr Danny Sullivan**

ACSO Board Member  
Quality, Safety & Service Delivery Sub-Committee Member



Appointed to Board in 2014, Ms Glanville is the Deputy CEO of the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA). In that role she is working towards the roll out of the National Disability Insurance Scheme. Prior to joining NDIA, Louise spent three years at the Attorney-General's Department as First Assistant Secretary and A/g Deputy Secretary in the Civil Justice and Strategic Policy and Coordination Groups. Ms. Glanville has also worked with the Victorian Department of Justice as Executive Director, Legal and Equity Group. In her career she has held positions in local and state government, academia, the private sector and ministerial offices. She holds a Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Social Work from Melbourne University, a Bachelor of Laws from Monash University and a Master of Arts (Research) from Victoria University.

**Ms Louise Glanville**

ACSO Board Member (Resigned Mar'16)  
Justice Innovation Sub-Committee Member (Resigned Mar'16)

## HOUSING WITH CONVICTION BOARD (HWC)



**Ms Jacqui Watt**  
HWC Board Chair

Appointed to the HWC Board in 2015, Ms Watt is a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. With a Social Policy degree from Edinburgh and a Masters in Management, her previous board roles include the Community Housing Federation of Australia and the Social Enterprise Coalition in Scotland. Previous roles include being CEO of two peak bodies advocating for Community Housing and a year as Director of Client Services at Anglicare Victoria. Ms Watt has had direct service delivery responsibility in the fields of alcohol and drugs, mental health, disability and social housing over the past 30 years. In February 2015 Ms Watt took up the CEO role at No To Violence and Men's Referral Service. As Chair of Housing With Conviction she is supporting ACSO's social housing work and developing our capacity in this important area.



**Mr James McGinnes**  
HWC Board Member

Mr McGinnes was appointed as an inaugural board member of HWC in 2015. He has also been a member of the ACSO Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee since 2014. Mr McGinnes is a Member of Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand. He is a partner with accounting firm Romanis Cant, where he has been since 2002, he specialises in business services, taxation and forensic accounting. Mr McGinnes is also the President of not-for-profit organisation Playstation Inc. which provides occasional care services for children in the Boroondara area.



**Mr Stewart Leslie**  
HWC Board Member

Appointed to the HWC Board in 2015, Mr Leslie is a Fellow of Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand and holds the Graduate designation from the Australian Institute of Company Directors. For 15 years he was a partner with accounting firm KPMG, where he specialised in assurance and advisory services. Since retiring from that partnership in 2001 he has been appointed to a number of governance roles in the public sector. He is a Board member of 100 Story Building, which provides opportunities for marginalised children and young people to build literacy skills, confidence and a sense of belonging. He also holds a senior management role at a significant philanthropic foundation. Mr Leslie is a past member of the Board of the Royal Women's Hospital and the Board of the Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority.



# 2015 - 2020 STRATEGIC PLAN *Where we're at...*

## INSPIRE, INNOVATE & LEAD

ACSO WILL PROVIDE THOUGHT AND PRACTICE LEADERSHIP TO INFLUENCE BETTER CLIENT, COMMUNITY AND POLICY OUTCOMES.

## SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

WE WILL CONTINUE TO GROW A PLANNED, VIBRANT AND SUSTAINABLE ACSO.

## BUILDING CAPABILITY

WE WILL LEVERAGE OUR INFORMATION, TECHNOLOGY AND INTELLIGENCE SYSTEMS TO CREATE BETTER CLIENT, COMMUNITY AND ORGANISATIONAL OUTCOMES.

## ONE ACSO

WE WILL MAINTAIN OUR UNIQUE, FLEXIBLE, UNIFIED AND OUTCOME FOCUSED CULTURE.

Priorities that shaped our new strategic plan were driven by a comprehensive consultative process led by the Global Leadership Foundation. The process involved a broad range of key stakeholders, including government, community sector partners, our staff and most importantly the consumers of our services. At the end of the process our Board established 4 pillars which have become the foundation of our strategic plan.

After the first 12 months we have made significant inroads:

### INSPIRE, INNOVATE & LEAD

We established our first Justice Innovation Lab built on our culture that supports dynamic thinking focusing on youth offending

We held our largest international criminal justice conference to date with 700+ delegates and strong media coverage

We developed Australia's first recidivism social impact investment in partnership with the New South Wales Government, NAB, Corrs Chambers and arbias.

### SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

We successfully merged with Access Community Group in New South Wales, expanding our geographic footprint

We established Housing with Conviction as a company limited by guarantee in order to develop an innovative housing model for people trapped in the criminal justice system

NDIS trial site participation successful with numerous NDIS packages commencing

### ONE ACSO

A new regional management structure launched to strengthen our existing business and growth

Our team has defined and launched our behaviours framework that support our values across all roles

Our leadership capability framework has been developed and launched with our people receiving training in partnership with the Global Leadership Foundation

### BUILDING CAPABILITY

Our data warehouse project has been established and the framework built for future reporting across our business intelligence systems



“ THE ONE THING THAT STANDS OUT TO ME AS THE CEO OF ACSO IS THE PASSION IN EVERYTHING WE DO. WE DO THIS WORK TO PUT OURSELVES OUT OF BUSINESS. WE PROUDLY AND UNASHAMEDLY WORK TOWARDS CREATING A SAFE AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY FREED OF CRIME AND PRISON ”

— **Karenza Louis-Smith**  
ACSO CEO

## OUR FOCUS FOR THE NEXT 12 MONTHS:

Our Board met in early 2016 and set priority areas for the organisation to focus on as part of our strategic plan over the next 12 months. This focus has been driven by the sector transformation that we find ourselves part of. With the emergence of the NDIS and significant reform in drug treatment, mental health and the justice sectors our Board set a vision for ACSO to continue to be an innovative, resilient and sustainable organisation.

### INSPIRE, INNOVATE AND LEAD

We will strive to become the leading voice in the criminal justice sector. In the next 12 months this will include expanding our geographic presence down the eastern seaboard of Australia, delivering new services in Queensland and in New South Wales.

### SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

Our Board and Executive will develop guiding principles that ensure ACSO's continued sustainability. In the next 12 months our investment with NAB in building and delivering Australia's first recidivism social impact investment will see ACSO build a framework that will enable us to fund programs and services in new, innovative ways into the future.

### ONE ACSO

In a time of sector transformation, ACSO will maintain its high level of staff engagement across the three States in which we operate. Our workforce will be engaged and connected to the heart of ACSO. Our people will demonstrate that they chose “right over easy” and we will have a culture of shared accountability across our leadership.

### BUILDING CAPABILITY

Within the next 12 months we will have identified and implement our “next generation” client management system across all ACSO programs and services. This system will best meet the demands of a not-for-profit sector undergoing significant change.



# PEOPLE & CULTURE

## WHY I LOVE ACSO

I love ACSO for what it does. How it supports the most vulnerable; those most in pain within our community. I feel honoured to support our frontline staff. I'm humbled by their passion and willingness to work with those many others don't, won't or can't, help. My role at ACSO encompasses the design and implementation of strategies to enhance the working experience of our frontline staff; I love the flexibility, creativity and freedom afforded me to do this.

I joined ACSO in January 2015 as the inaugural General Manager, People and Innovation (now Chief People Officer). I knew little about the organisation other than its Vision and Mission. Originally trained as a nurse and midwife, I always sought to care for others. I had never been inside a prison let alone a courtroom. Never knowingly met a criminal. But I wanted to help.

My initial attraction to ACSO stemmed from my past employment at other not-for-profit organisations. My nursing background exposed me to mental health and drug and alcohol issues; these were the only threads that wove through to my brand new journey at ACSO. I have savoured the chance to learn about a whole new sector; one I'd only ever previously seen (albeit inaccurately) on a television screen. The forensic space was completely new to me, but I relished the opportunity and the challenge.

What touches me most is that our staff put themselves in potential danger every day. They do so willingly and with commitment, because they believe the people they're trying to support are worthy of their help. They believe the clients' ability to change their lives is a very real thing that can be achieved with the right support. That's what gets me out of bed in the morning. It drives me to ensure we create an organisation that puts staff safety, wellbeing, and risk management front and centre; that we focus on the engagement of the right people with the right skills and the right attitude.

ACSO's four core values of passion, integrity, belief in humanity and pioneering spirit, resonate deeply with me.

To me, passion is wanting to come to work; willing to go above and beyond. Being rewarded, acknowledged, thanked. Its seeing people doing amazing work; hearing

about what our staff do. Passion is an energy source. Passion is the essential ingredient: it takes things to the next level, it solves problems that otherwise are too hard. Passion is about looking for opportunities to do it differently, better. Passion is my petrol.

I hold integrity dearly. I value truth. I do as I say. I value personal and professional relationships very highly, no matter how well I know someone or how recently we've met. The underpinning values of respect and dignity are really important to me. An underlying belief in humanity is my *raison d'être*. I've had the opportunity to work in culturally sensitive environments; this has underscored my position that no matter what someone believes, or has done, everybody deserves the opportunity to grow, to learn, to move beyond who they may have been in the past. I believe everybody deserves another chance.

To me, pioneering spirit is a function of passion. If passion is the noun, pioneering spirit is the verb. If you have the drive and vision you can't help but solve problems or seek new ideas and solutions. Pioneering spirit is never being satisfied with status quo, always questioning, a constant state of dissatisfaction. That and the knowledge that there's always another way. Always.

## WHAT I'M MOST PROUD OF

I'm proud to see our managers posing themselves and their teams more challenging questions, shifting the focus. Focusing on staff safety, more appropriate people management practices. I've witnessed a shift over the last twelve months. Managers and staff are taking the time to reassess, consider whether there's a different way. A way that's more disciplined, more planned. ACSO's staff are so passionate about what they do, they're driven by the heart, we need to balance this with more of the head. Need to ensure robust business and safety procedures are factored in.

It's been challenging sometimes; I'm patient in front of people but my challenge is that I'm impatient on the inside. This impatience is tempered by, outweighed by, the joy that I've been part of the implementation of this shift, this new awareness, this questioning of past ways of doing things. It makes me proud.

# KYLA EVANS

CHIEF PEOPLE OFFICER

## THE WAY WE DO THINGS AROUND HERE

In the last twelve months I have immersed myself in ACSO and am proud of what I've achieved in the People and Culture space. We have completed a major piece of work focusing on values and behaviour, recruited to key roles within People and Culture, enhanced and strengthened leadership and executive capabilities, developed a culture plan, refined core competencies. If culture is defined as 'the way we do things around here', our culture plan needs to describe what we need to do, and ensure that 'the way we do things around here' encompasses the safety and wellbeing of our staff, sophisticated risk and business management, a staff community who are appropriately skilled, qualified and aligned to ACSO's mission and values. The leadership team is committed to staff support and safety and the idea of 'slowing down to speed up'; to take the time to plan and communicate with staff and to role model good work-life balance practices to make sure that all our employees have the energy and vitality to continue with the growth and change ACSO is undergoing.





# STRENGTHENING THE PEOPLE & CULTURE TEAM

We have made a commitment to strengthen our focus on the management of organisation risk by appointing (for the first time) a Senior Manager Quality, Risk and Clinical Excellence. This role, reporting directly to the Chief People Officer, has responsibility for maintaining and monitoring our risk register, reporting risks assessed as high and extreme to the Executive team and Board and socialising our Risk Management Framework throughout the organisation. The appointment of this position has supported ACSO's operations team through: policy and procedure development review and implementation; taking responsibility for independent investigation of client related allegations; and critical incident review. The Senior Manager Quality, Risk and Clinical Excellence also has oversight of ACSO's quality improvement plan, accreditation, privacy issues and feedback (compliments and complaints).

All regional and senior managers have undertaken risk management training with the Victorian Managed Insurance Agency this year. Our leadership team now share an understanding of how effective risk management can assist with the achievement of goals and how to apply the principles of risk management in their various roles. The People and Culture team has been further strengthened by another inaugural role, the appointment of a Senior Manager, Workplace Health and Safety (WHS), also reporting through to the Chief People Officer. It is imperative staff look after themselves so they can provide the best possible support to our clients. This role assists our staff to identify risks, with the aim of ensuring that our employees are able to identify and manage their emotional health. This position is responsible for regular site inspections, support of the Health and Safety Committee, centralised WHS information on ACSO's Intranet and providing WHS support to managers and staff. Performance indicators have been developed, continue to be refined and monitored as does the incident reporting of staff incidents. Workers Compensation, when it occurred, has been delivered through the People and Culture Unit.

These two roles are complemented by ACSO's Senior Manager of People and Culture who provides us with sophisticated and accurate support regarding any and all people management matters, as well as designing systems that will better enable best practice and support ACSO's growth.



Previous role of **Senior Manager, Research and Evaluation** will transition across to newly created role of **National Manager, Service Design & Implementation** in 2016/17.









# INVESTMENT IN EXCELLENCE



# WORKFORCE PLANNING

This year ACSO began the process of evaluating its workforce planning strategies with the ultimate aim of ensuring that we're delivering our services to a high standard to as many people as possible. This ongoing task is focusing on ensuring that we understand the types and volume of work coming in, that based on that our programs are adequately staffed and that we have the skill sets and succession planning strategies in place to ensure high quality, continuous service. All manager and coordinators received training in recruitment and selection and the introduction to our new e-recruit system in order for them to ensure they're following best recruitment principles.

# RESEARCH & EVALUATION

Headed up by a passionate and highly skilled Senior Manager, this team strongly advocates for ACSO's clients, and the sector at large, by drawing upon research and organisational knowledge to influence public policy. The team collaborated in an evaluation of the Alcohol Diversion Pilot Program with Victoria Police and Department of Health and Human Services. They are also in various research partnerships, one of which was Monash University's Imprisonment Observatory, which has sought to transform knowledge and develop new ways of thinking, bringing insights into policy debates associated with practices of, and alternatives to, imprisonment.

# THE LEGACY PROJECT

## WHAT ARE WE DOING?

We are looking at how to divert young people, who are likely to enter or have just entered the criminal justice system, from going onto leading a life of crime. We know this is a key part of the system where change can be leveraged. Collaborating with REOS Partners, we are going to do this with others who also can, and want, to make a difference and influence systemic change.

## WHY ARE WE DOING IT?

Why are we doing it? - ACSO recognises it wants to go beyond being just a good service provider. We feel diverting youth from prison or life of crime is a key part of the criminal justice system that can be explored and re-imagined. We also know there are many and varied perspectives that influence this issue so it needs an innovative way to bring together those we need.

## HOW ARE WE DOING IT?

We have started the Justice Innovation Lab (JI-Lab), which is part of a social lab process. Social Labs, which we will run over this year, is a way of bringing people together from across the system to seek root causes behind their problems and then collaboratively devise and test innovative and sustainable solutions. These solutions will be aimed at key leverage points - that is focusing effort at the point for the best return - and we hope they will be prototyped in the "lab" of the real world—over time and in context.

Towards our goal of an emotionally healthy workforce, ACSO has invested in the expertise of the Global Leadership Foundation (GLF). The GLF is committed to helping develop and transform managers into capable, empathic and effective leaders. This investment has included a year-long leadership development program for our middle management team, 'hub crawls' that have provided all staff with the opportunity to gain an understanding of, and contribute to, the ongoing development of ACSO's strategic and cultural plans, and ongoing mentoring support to our executive team.

Together with GLF we have developed a suite of core capabilities that will drive and shape our future staff development programs. This will in turn assist us in continuing to develop and enhance the services we deliver to our clients and ensure we're best able to meet the needs of our funding partners. All levels of the workforce have capabilities they are expected to meet, ensuring that our workforce know not only what is expected of them but also, what they can expect of their leaders.



# ACSO'S FORENSIC SERVICES STANDARDS

## BACKGROUND

ACSO has identified that amongst the suite of quality assurance standards that organisations are assessed against, the specialist needs of clients with a criminal history are not accommodated.

We have developed Forensic Services Standards (the Standards) to address this gap, and to provide organisations with a guide to assess and improve how inclusive and responsive their practices and services are to forensic clients.

This project was developed as part of ACSO's Justice Innovation Lab which was created at ACSO with the objective to support dynamic thinking and continuous improvement and to cultivate innovation.

## SCOPE

The standards apply to organisations providing community based services to forensic clients. The term "forensic client" is defined as people (individual or groups) aged 18 and over;

- ✓ who have a criminal history or have had formal involvement with the criminal justice system but did not obtain a criminal record;
- ✓ are currently or will be receiving community based services; and
- ✓ access the services voluntarily or mandated by a court order.

Forensic clients can also have co-occurring conditions such as mental health issues, disability, drug and alcohol issues and acquired brain injury which can also hinder their ability to participate in services.

## IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

The Standards are supported by an implementation guide that provides a summary of the intent behind the development of each of the standards and sub-standards and a self-assessment tool to facilitate the organisations to reflect on their current processes against the Standards.

VIEW THEM ONLINE NOW AT  
**WWW.ACSO.ORG.AU**

## USE OF THE STANDARDS

The Standards are designed to assist services to enhance the quality of service and support to forensic clients. Organisations can use the Standards in different ways:

- ✓ as an internal audit tool that can be used to review how inclusive and sensitive their organisation and its services are, to forensic clients;
- ✓ as a guideline or checklist to help identify opportunities for making improvements and to monitor and evaluate the progress made from those improvements; and
- ✓ as a framework of reference to assist in planning and establishing new forensic client services.

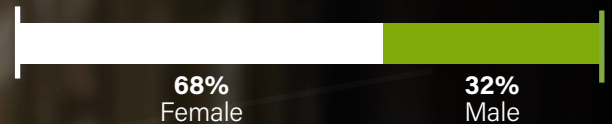
In some cases, for example in smaller services, it may not be possible or appropriate to fully implement all standards. Nonetheless, the standards should be used to enhance service delivery and quality improvement. These Standards should be used in conjunction with government policies and legislation.



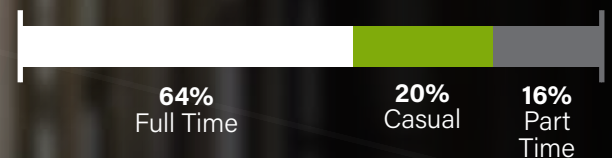
# OUR PEOPLE

## A SNAPSHOT

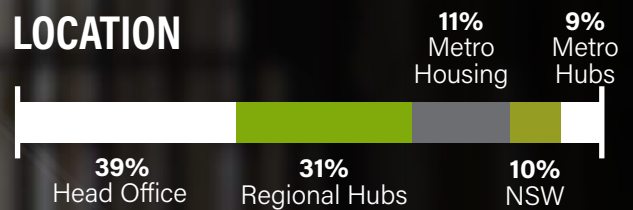
### GENDER



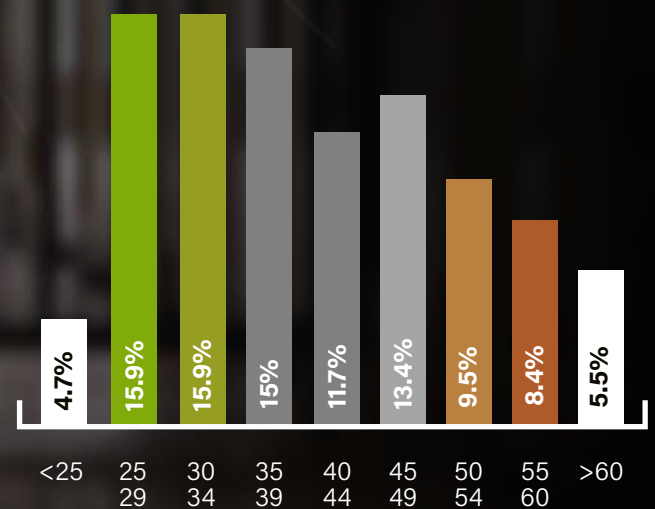
### EMPLOYEE TYPE



### LOCATION



### AGE PROFILE







EACH YEAR ACSO HOLDS ITS ANNUAL AWARDS WHERE IT RECOGNISES THE OUTSTANDING WORK OF OUR STAFF AND PEOPLE WHO GO ABOVE AND BEYOND IN THEIR WORK. STAFF ARE ABLE TO NOMINATE THEIR COLLEAGUES FOR AWARDS AND A JUDGING PANEL CONSIDERS ALL NOMINATIONS AND CHOOSES THE CATEGORY WINNERS.

## THE CAPPELLO AWARD **EMPLOYEE** OF THE YEAR

### EMMA BELL

"Emma is an inspiring leader/co-worker. Emma's ability to connect with people is paramount to her success"

#### **Highly Commended:**

TK and Armadale House Team.  
Doloros Homoc, Dominic Buick, Orla Daly, David Chapman, Simon Jones, Jess Leehy, Rohit Verma.

"Both teams worked together to transition JP and IF from Calabro to TK. Both teams showed exemplary communication, problem solving, coordination and dedication to our residents"



## BUSINESS PARTNERS EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR



**HUONG  
NGUYEN**

"Over the past year, her support to operations has made a significant impact on our ability to forecast workforce strategies and address client needs through maximising budgetary opportunities"

**Highly Commended:**

The Penelope CMS team: "They work tirelessly at trialling the new version, checking in with other group members whose program is impacted by the changes, and do so with positivity and infinite amounts of energy"

## ACSO CONNECT EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR



**PAULINE  
MANN-STRINGER**

"Pauline's commitment and dedication to the work, as well as her positivity and constructive critique, with an immense focus on client outcomes, makes her more than deserving of an award that recognises this"

**Highly Commended:**

COATS assessors: "COATS assessors have remained almost unchanged over the years, with most change due to the growth of the team, rather than retention issues, which I believe is due to the commitment the assessors have to their work and clients"

## REINTEGRATION EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR



**SHARMILA  
SELVARAJU**

"With firsthand experience of the Centrelink system, she treats clients with respect, dignity, equality and most importantly, with a strong sense of humour that brings a human experience to the whole work for the dole program"

**Highly Commended:**

Michael Cooper: "Michael's professionalism, industry knowledge, career experience and academic qualifications were instrumental in building a strong working relationship with Dubbo Corrective Services"



## INNOVATION



**BELINDA  
BAKER**

"Her hard work building relationships with our mainstream AOD services, and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHO's) continues to have outstanding impacts on taking the passion of ACSO's vision and mission to address the significant disproportionate disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal clients in our justice systems"



## LEADERSHIP ENCOURAGEMENT



**TAMSIN  
SIEVERS**

"For the best part of a year Tamsin had the unenviable task of team leading four residential facilities: Calabro House, TK House, Armadale House and Gippsland House, however, she did so with grace and maintained professionalism at all times"



## LEADERSHIP



**JENNY  
SVOBODA**

"Jenny has the ability to instil confidence and affirmation in each of us, and provides us the inspiration and steadfast direction in our roles to achieve our and ACSO's vision. It is easy and a pleasure to be lead by someone who is always approachable, reliable and has faith in our abilities to be leaders, positions of which we are very proud of"



# CONSUMER ADVISORY GROUP

"I LOVE THAT I AM ABLE TO  
ENCOURAGE CLIENTS TO  
REFLECT ON THEIR  
EXPERIENCES AND SPEAK  
ABOUT THESE, KNOWING THEY  
WILL HAVE AN IMPACT ON  
FUTURE SERVICE DELIVERY"

Chris Cappello is ACSO's longest service employee. Chris took a chance, the biggest of her life, when she made the decision to leave her job and volunteer at the Epistle Centre; a newly established drop-in centre for men who had recently been released from prison. This was in 1984. Medicare came into effect, Advance Australia Fair was proclaimed the national anthem, the one dollar coin was introduced and ACSO, in its first incarnation, was born. Chris was there and believed in Stan McCormack's vision. She helped to establish and then run, the drop-in centre on Napier Street, Fitzroy.

Housing was, as it still is today, a fundamental yet often unmet need for people exiting prison. ACSO's founder, Stan McCormack, sourced and rented a property in Carlton. Named McCormack House in Stan's honour, this property was an early prototype of the innovative and strong residential program ACSO runs today. Chris managed McCormack House (this first property in Carlton, then a later version in Brunswick) from 1985 until 2004. More than 1000 people resided at McCormack House in this period of almost 20 years.

Chris says, "It was amazing to make a difference to so many lives. We were a team: Len Reynolds, Sister Clare McShee and I. It was grassroots, it was new, it was incredibly rewarding." In 2004 Chris left McCormack House and transferred to ACSO head office. She states, "I was ready for the change, and I was awed by how much ACSO had grown during that time, and am still amazed at how much ACSO continues to grow. I love that the staff haven't lost the original passion of Stan McCormack. My interactions with staff show me they're still as passionate now, as they were in the beginning, to create another chance and make a difference in people's lives."

ACSO's Consumer Advisory Group (CAG) was established in 2010. With a membership of eight current and former clients, CAG was created as a vehicle that would enable and facilitate client feedback and input to ACSO and its programs. The CAG provides a different, yet critically important, perspective and has a presence ACSO wide, including a representative on the Board.

The CAG provides feedback and recommendations based on referrals by the Board, executive, senior management and program managers and staff and evaluate the effectiveness of programs and services. In 2015-16, CAG has provided input to ACSO's website, policies, brochures and information booklets, ensuring they are easy to understand and

relevant to clients. The CAG membership was exceptionally pleased to collaborate with Forensicare's Consumer Advisory Group to make recommendations for more robust and effective mental health programs at the new Ravenhall prison. The group was delighted to learn many of their recommendations were accepted and will be adopted in Ravenhall and other prisons throughout Victoria.

Chris was invited by CEO Karenza and COO Vaughan to lead and run this group, an offer that thrilled her. Chris likened her appointment as CAG Coordinator to coming full circle. She had worked with clients, then 'behind the scenes.' She reports that she loves the opportunity to work with clients again, but in a different capacity. Chris states, "I love that I am able to encourage clients to reflect on their experiences and speak about these, knowing they will have an impact on future service delivery. It's so important to me. If something isn't meaningful for our clients, if it doesn't help them, then why do we do it? What we do needs to help, needs to work."

CAG members are enthusiastic; enjoy being part of the team; get a great deal of satisfaction from being able to give back to the community. They feel this turns their negative experiences into positive contributions. Chris witnesses people grow and develop confidence during their time on CAG. "They feel so good about contributing. They've often been through the justice system and once they decide they want to go straight, they want to give back. They want to contribute to ACSO and the community, they want their voice to make a difference. ACSO makes a difference to clients; CAG is all about clients making a difference to ACSO."

Chris attends ACSO's Board meetings as the CAG representative. ACSO's Chair, Stewart Leslie, regularly tells Chris that the CAG report is one of the most important Board reports, that it keeps ACSO real. Chris relayed this feedback to CAG members recently; their faces lit up with pride. Chris reflects on her 30 years at ACSO and how that chance she took, back in 1984, has provided so many chances, so many opportunities, to so many people, "There's a former client, one who resided at the original McCormack House in Carlton, more than 20 years ago. He still rings me to this day, every six months or so, to thank me and the team there for what we did, what we provided, what we sought to achieve. He thanks us, he tells me we're the reason he stayed out of jail!"



# CHRIS CAPPELLO

FOUNDATION MEMBER,  
CONSUMER ADVISORY GROUP COORDINATOR,  
CULTURAL AMBASSADOR.



# TECHNOLOGY FOR INNOVATION

In 2016 ACSO took a giant step in its growth strategy and expanded to provide services into NSW and won a contract to provide services in Queensland. In 2017 ACSO will leverage the power of technology and introduce video conferencing facilities in all its main hubs in Victoria, NSW and Queensland. Furthermore, Business Skype will be deployed to all staff devices allowing easier video communication amongst staff.

## OUR NEXT GENERATION CLIENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM WILL BOAST SOME GREAT FEATURES INCLUDING:

TECHNOLOGY TO  
SUPPORT WORKFORCE



CLIENT ONLY HAS TO  
TELL THEIR STORY ONCE



DEVELOPMENT OF  
DATA WAREHOUSE



SINGLE CLIENT RECORD



MULTIPLE USER  
COLLABORATION



We are committed to using technology to innovate in all facets of our work. It's critical that technology can support our mobile workforce to deliver strong client and community outcomes. Over the past year we have worked to develop our technology strategic plan and vision for the future.

The cornerstone of our technology vision is a single client record that can follow an individual through all of ACSO's programs and services. It is our intent that a client only has to tell their story once and for their information to follow them throughout their journey at ACSO and with our partners.

### TO THIS END WE FOCUSED OUR EFFORTS ON FOUR KEY AREAS DURING THE PAST 12 MONTHS:

The identification of, and investment into, our next generation client management system. Our system will enable multiple users to collaborate and share information regarding the care and support of clients that access our services;

The development of our data warehouse. This will enable us, at the flick of a switch or push of a button, to understand, share and evaluate data, client outcomes and the value and impact of our services and interventions;

The introduction of technology to support our work force to build resilience during a time of sector transformation and enable ACSO to develop sustainable service delivery models of care for our clients;

AND

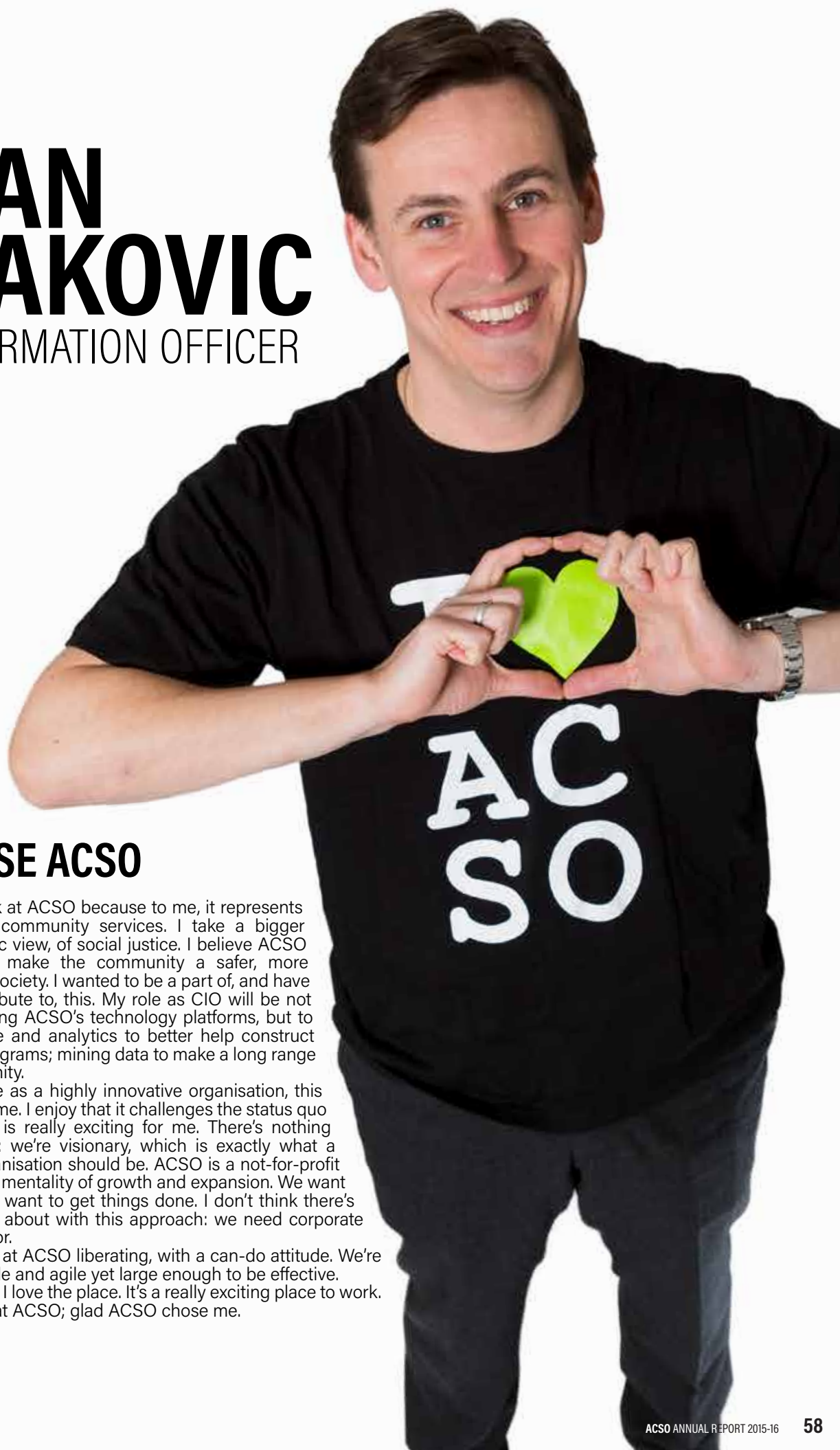
Invest in the development and implementation of our next generation client management system in collaboration with our key stakeholders and partners in Government and the community. By July 2017 we will have migrated our data into the new system and have trained our workforce and partners.

### IN 2016/17, WE WILL:

Identify and invest in technology that supports our workforce to deliver its services in a range of states and locations.

# ZORAN BRZAKOVIC

CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER



## WHY I CHOSE ACSO

I wanted to work at ACSO because to me, it represents what is positive about community services. I take a bigger picture, a more pragmatic view, of social justice. I believe ACSO helps, in aggregate, to make the community a safer, more inclusive place. A better society. I wanted to be a part of, and have the opportunity to contribute to, this. My role as CIO will be not only focused on advancing ACSO's technology platforms, but to use business intelligence and analytics to better help construct effective preventative programs; mining data to make a long range difference in the community.

ACSO struck me as a highly innovative organisation, this resonated deeply within me. I enjoy that it challenges the status quo and seeks to lead. This is really exciting for me. There's nothing pedestrian about ACSO: we're visionary, which is exactly what a community services organisation should be. ACSO is a not-for-profit with an almost corporate mentality of growth and expansion. We want to change the world. We want to get things done. I don't think there's anything to be ashamed about with this approach: we need corporate skills to develop the sector.

I find the culture at ACSO liberating, with a can-do attitude. We're small enough to be nimble and agile yet large enough to be effective.

Six weeks in and I love the place. It's a really exciting place to work. I'm glad I chose to work at ACSO; glad ACSO chose me.



# BUSINESS SERVICES

## WHY I LOVE ACSO

I think ACSO is a great organisation; I believe what we do is very special; I think one of the reasons I love it so much is because we really change lives. Having had the opportunity to meet Stan McCormack and see what created this amazing organisation, where it actually originated from, solidified this for me. The principles and the ideas he had, seeing how these ideas have come to pass is incredible. To be part of delivering on his vision is something really special. We all love what we do at ACSO; I think we would be hard pressed to find people who don't like what they do. And we want people who love what they do.

It gives me an opportunity to give something back. I have been blessed; have come from humble beginnings yet had the opportunity to study and work in many places. I have worked for massive not-for-profits but in those organisations I felt the church constrained the work being done, or trying to be achieved. They didn't have the freedom we have here to be creative and innovative. To influence the way the organisation is shaped. That, for me, is very special because I feel that my contribution is very real, very direct, has a huge impact on what ACSO does.

Somewhere in my past I experienced the tribulations that some of our clients endure, but for different reasons. In my case it was for my political beliefs in my country of birth. I found myself in jail for two months in a political prison. I was the Secretary of the Union for the Reserve Bank in El Salvador. Part of my social conscience at that time in my life, 30 years ago, was to try to change the oppression my country was under. That found me in prison. I know what it is to not be able to see your family; to be locked away every night; to not be able to see the stars and the moon. I have that connection. A lot of our guys end up in jail for other reasons, drug offending and use, which has pushed them to crime to maintain their habit. Or perhaps they were mistreated in some way when they were younger and found themselves behaving in a similar manner now they're older and that found them in prison. We all have different paths in life; we all deserve another chance.

## MY SECOND CHANCE

My second chance was to come to Australia. I was lucky enough to come here as a refugee after I came out of jail. I could apply to be a refugee because I had been in jail for opposing the Government. And for me, coming here was liberating. I love the place; I love the opportunities; I love the fact that if you have a will you can do whatever you want to do. I had done economics before I came to Australia and I didn't speak English. When I arrived I learnt the language, went to university here, again, and completed three more degrees: a graduate diploma in business, which qualified me as an accountant, a graduate diploma in aged care management, and an MBA. I think ACSO is the culmination of all those things. In my case, everything in my life thus far has prepared me for this job. Every day is great, an opportunity to continue to give. I made a decision when I came to this country, to stay in the not-for-profit sector because I believe, in life; you need to do what your calling is. Even though I love accounting, love management, love leadership, I never saw myself going to the corporate world to make money for other people; that has never inspired me.

The other amazing thing is being part of ACSO's executive team. It's really, really special. I think it's the best job I have had in the last 30 years. It's very easy to love what you do when you respect the people you work with, respect your boss as I do. I think Karenza is an amazing leader and I think the executive team complement each other and that's one of the reasons we've been so successful. We work together really well and we have the best will for the organisation; we're a very cohesive team. We all have ACSO's vision and mission at heart. I think that drives us; that's really what drives all of us. Achieving that goal and changing lives. ACSO gives me the avenue to be able to do what I love doing: changing lives and helping people. That's special.



**REMBERTO  
RIVERA**  
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER





# ACCESS ALL AREAS

## ACSO'S MERGER WITH ACCESS COMMUNITY GROUP (ACG)

Early in 2015 ACSO commenced merger discussions with ACG, ACSO conducted due diligence on the organisation between August and October 2015; having determined that there was alignment of mission, vision, values and culture between both organisations, a merger deed was signed by both organisations in November 2015. On 1 January 2016, consummation of the merger process occurred and ACG's Staff, Assets, Liabilities and Reserves became incorporated into ACSO's business. The organisation added an extra \$1.5m turnover to our business. This was an exciting step in achieving ACSO's dream of becoming a true Australian company, as it marked our official opening of offices in NSW. ACG had 26 Staff and two offices in the Illawarra region; one in Corrimal and one in Shellharbour Wollongong which have now been rebranded with ACSO signage.

# ON TRACC 4 NSW

## SOCIAL IMPACT INVESTMENT PROGRAM

(ON TRANSITION REINTEGRATION AND COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS)

Perhaps the most exciting project Business Services has been involved in this year is the negotiation, contract development and sourcing Investors for the first in Australia: Social Impact Investment (commonly known as Social Impact Bonds) into Recidivism.

To finance this innovative program ACSO partnered and co-invested with National Australia Bank and brought arbias Ltd as a subcontractor and service delivery partner.

The ON TRACC program is a reintegration to the community intervention, which will be provided to high risk offenders on parole in NSW. If successful, the program outcome will be to reduce recidivism rate of 3900 high risk offenders who will be receiving the service. Reduction of recidivism will generate savings to the NSW Government, of which (and depending on the level), will fund the financial returns that investors (ACSO and NAB) of the program will receive.

The Implementation Agreement for the program is for five years, with the first evaluation occurring in year three. Should the program be as successful as ACSO believes it will be in reducing recidivism, the success in the first five years will then trigger a contract for a further five years.

Negotiations with the Office for Social Impact Investment and Corrective Services NSW took seven months, and the contract was signed by the NSW Treasurer and our Board on 5 July 2016. The program was operational from 1 September 2016, the Contracts and Facilities Unit have done an amazing job in finding and setting up our new Hub in Rockdale where the program will be headquartered.

**"A SOCIAL IMPACT INVESTMENT IS A FINANCIAL MECHANISM IN WHICH INVESTORS PAY FOR A SET OF INTERVENTIONS TO IMPROVE A SOCIAL OUTCOME THAT IS OF SOCIAL AND/OR FINANCIAL INTEREST TO A GOVERNMENT COMMISSIONER."**

# ACSO, GUARANTEED

## BECOMING A COMPANY, LIMITED BY GUARANTEE

Over the last five years ACSO has been growing at an incredible rate, this has been the result of a growth strategy set by our Board. Although its name had an innate aspiration of being an Australian organisation, ACSO since its inception was based and delivered its services in Victoria only, and it operated as an incorporated association in that State. Being an incorporated association in Victoria limited our growth potential to the rest of Australia.

Therefore, and in order to enhance our potential to move interstate, the Board in the previous strategic plan, made a decision to change its legal structure and become a company limited by Guarantee; which would allow us to operate across Australia.

In August 2015, after two years of research into the best company structure for the organisation, ACSO became registered as Public Company Limited by Guarantee. Marking a new milestone in the life of the organisation; this achievement has already borne fruits as the organisation, early in 2017 financial year, has commenced delivering services in NSW and Queensland.

# SELF-SERVE

ACSO has grown by 50% in the last two years alone, this has definitely required an expansion of the finance team to service the business needs.

One of the most exciting tools implemented by the finance team last financial year, was the launch of the Employee Self Service (ESS) portal. This web enabled module of Technology One allows staff to receive their pay slips through it, applying and obtaining approval for leave, provides them access to their leave accruals and permits them to update their personal details including change of address and bank details. This has proven to be very popular with staff and is a leap in our service delivery to the business.



# BUSINESS SERVICES

## FINANCIAL COMMENTARY

“ACSO HAS GROWN BY 50% IN THE LAST TWO YEARS ALONE, THIS HAS DEFINITELY REQUIRED AN EXPANSION OF THE FINANCE TEAM TO SERVICE THE BUSINESS NEEDS.”

### FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

The consolidated net loss before interest for the 2015/2016 financial year was \$487,000, compared to a \$245,000 loss for 2014/2015. Once interest earned of \$345,000 was included, ACSO was able to post a consolidated net loss of \$142,000 (2014/2015 profit of \$256,000). The consolidated performance recognises the activities of ACSO and its subsidiaries during the period.

Government funding and related fees increased by 18% (\$4.3 million) from \$24.5 million in 2014/2015 to \$28.8 million due to increased program activities.

Community Correctional Services and Drug Treatment Services Protocol (COATS) brokerage activity decreased during the year by \$0.9 million to \$7.6 million for the financial year.

Interest earnings decreased by \$156,000 to \$345,000 for the year as a result of a decreased cash base (caused by reduced COATS brokerage cash holdings) and decreases in interest rates. The amount of interest earned during a period is subject to the volatility of interest rates.

Employee benefits related expenditure increased by \$3.5 million (a 18% increase) during the financial year due to the impact of additional staff numbers to meet increased program activities and merger, plus the continued increase in the salary base as per the Fair Work Australia ruling and National Wage Case. The Fair Work Australia ruling and National Wage Case, which is Industry wide, will see staff under the SCHCADS award continue to receive above CPI increases for the next five years.

### FINANCIAL POSITION

ACSO's consolidated cash position remains strong, despite cash and cash equivalents decreasing by 10% (\$1.4 million) over the year to \$12.6 million as at 30 June 2016. This result was due to continued decreases in COATS brokerage liabilities during the period.

Non-current assets decreased by \$377,000 due to the investment in new regional Hub locations and systems during the previous financial year (2014/15) and a change in policy which sees ACSO lease motor vehicles as opposed to buying outright.

Liabilities for Trade payables decreased by \$2.5 million due to decreases in available COATS brokerage (\$2.2 million) and the timing of payments of trade payables.

Comparing current assets (excluding non-current assets) to liabilities (current and non-current), ACSO has maintained net working capital at \$6.1 million (\$5.7 million as at 30 June 2015).

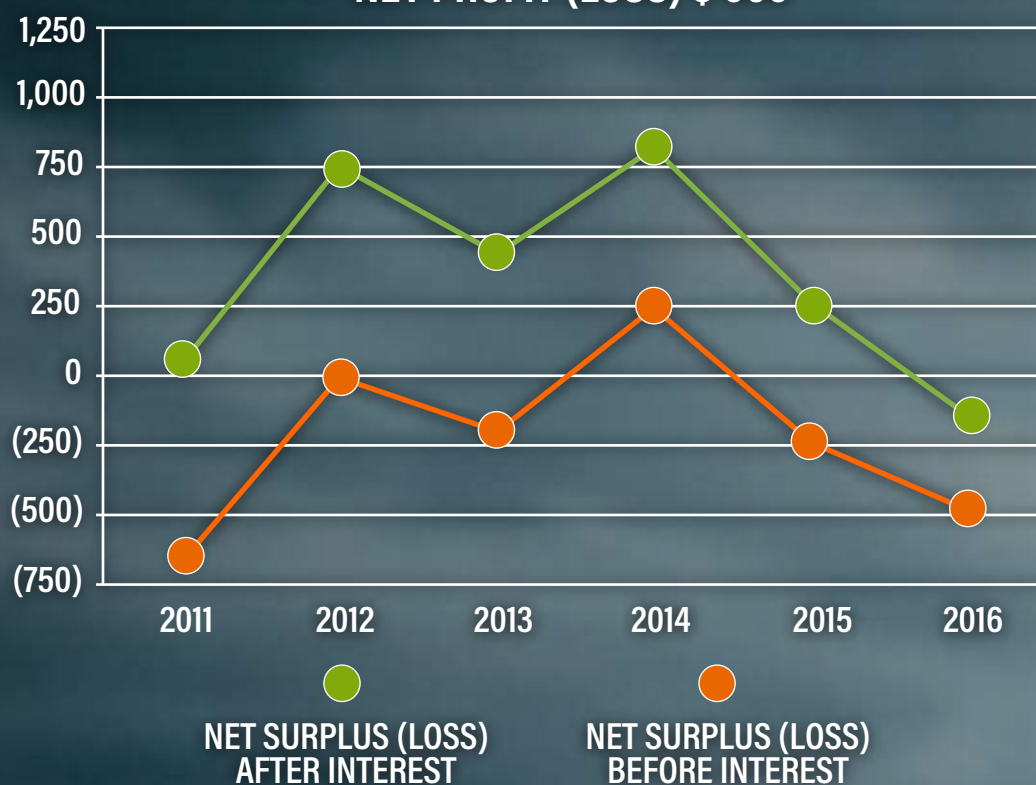
ACSO's net assets, or equity, as at 30 June 2016 now stands at \$8.8 million. This value includes net assets of \$132,000 recognised from the merger with Access Community Group on 01 January 2016.

### FINANCING & INVESTING ACTIVITIES

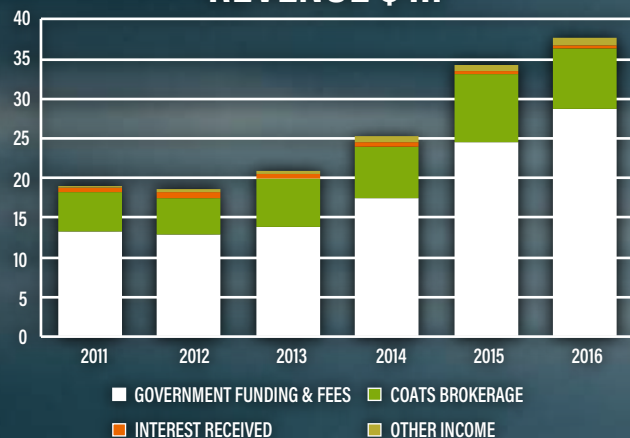
Investment policy during the 2015/16 financial year was restricted to Commonwealth Bank term deposits, investment and standard business accounts.



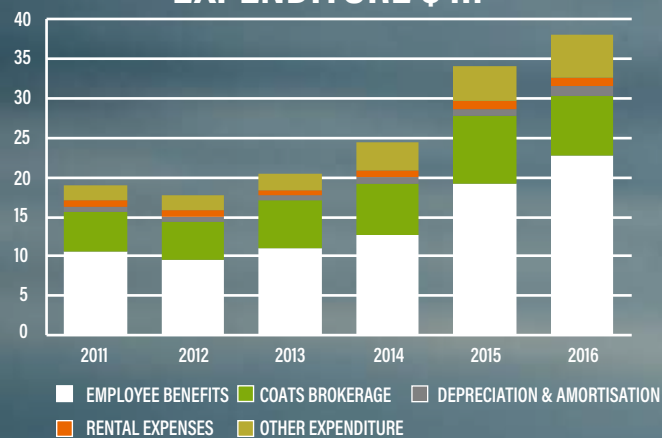
## NET PROFIT (LOSS) \$'000



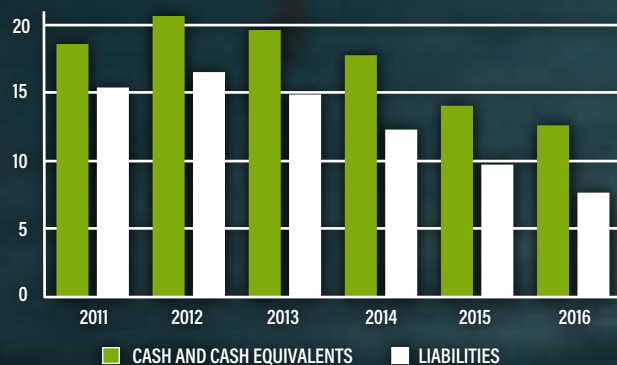
## REVENUE \$'m



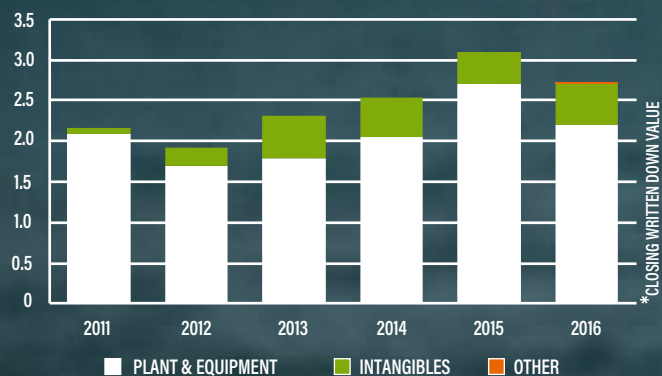
## EXPENDITURE \$'m



## CASH ASSETS TO LIABILITIES \$'m



## NON-CURRENT ASSETS\* \$'m



# FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

## CONSOLIDATED PERFORMANCE 2015-2016

REVENUE	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Government Funding & Fees	\$13,245	\$12,792	\$13,828	\$17,542	\$24,504	\$28,818
COATS Brokerage	\$4,912	\$4,726	\$6,022	\$6,433	\$8,530	\$7,590
Other Income	\$195	\$235	\$435	\$757	\$789	\$1,010
	<b>\$18,352</b>	<b>\$17,753</b>	<b>\$20,285</b>	<b>\$24,732</b>	<b>\$33,823</b>	<b>\$37,418</b>
EXPENDITURE						
Employee Benefits	\$10,686	\$9,667	\$11,021	\$12,796	\$19,141	\$22,644
COATS Brokerage	\$4,912	\$4,726	\$6,022	\$6,433	\$8,530	\$7,590
Depreciation & Amortisation	\$751	\$709	\$715	\$7,769	\$974	\$1,192
Rental Expenses	\$724	\$779	\$645	\$788	\$1,027	\$1,165
Other Expenditure	\$1,936	\$1,876	\$2,084	\$3,694	\$4,396	\$5,314
	<b>\$19,009</b>	<b>\$17,757</b>	<b>\$20,487</b>	<b>\$24,487</b>	<b>\$34,068</b>	<b>\$37,905</b>
<b>NET SURPLUS / (LOSS) BEFORE INTEREST</b>	<b>(\$657)</b>	<b>(\$4)</b>	<b>(\$202)</b>	<b>\$245</b>	<b>(\$245)</b>	<b>(\$487)</b>
Interest Received	\$707	\$753	\$642	\$571	\$501	\$345
<b>NET SURPLUS (LOSS) AFTER INTEREST</b>	<b>\$49</b>	<b>\$749</b>	<b>\$440</b>	<b>\$816</b>	<b>\$256</b>	<b>(\$142)</b>

INCOME & EXPENDITURE \$'000

CURRENT ASSETS	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Cash & Cash Equivalents	\$18,529	\$20,630	\$19,627	\$17,703	\$14,025	\$12,597
Trade Receivables	\$1,082	\$1,081	\$436	\$181	\$465	\$397
Other	\$155	\$212	\$237	\$384	\$964	\$715
	<b>\$19,766</b>	<b>\$21,923</b>	<b>\$20,300</b>	<b>\$18,268</b>	<b>\$15,454</b>	<b>\$13,709</b>
NON-CURRENT ASSETS						
Intangibles	\$75	\$220	\$526	\$482	\$380	\$503
Plant & Equipment	\$2,083	\$1,700	\$1,784	\$2,049	\$2,714	\$2,194
Other	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$20
	<b>\$2,158</b>	<b>\$1,920</b>	<b>\$2,310</b>	<b>\$2,531</b>	<b>\$3,094</b>	<b>\$2,717</b>
	<b>\$21,924</b>	<b>\$23,843</b>	<b>\$22,610</b>	<b>\$20,799</b>	<b>\$18,548</b>	<b>\$16,426</b>
LIABILITIES						
Trade & Other Payables	\$14,261	\$15,445	\$13,582	\$10,858	\$7,736	\$5,270
Provisions	\$1,106	\$1,092	\$1,282	\$1,379	\$1,994	\$2,348
	<b>\$15,367</b>	<b>\$16,537</b>	<b>\$14,864</b>	<b>\$12,237</b>	<b>\$9,730</b>	<b>\$7,618</b>
<b>NET ASSETS (AS AT 30TH JUNE)</b>	<b>\$6,557</b>	<b>\$7,306</b>	<b>\$7,746</b>	<b>\$8,562</b>	<b>\$8,818</b>	<b>\$8,808</b>

ASSETS & LIABILITIES \$'000

CASH & EQUIVALENTS	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
CASH & EQUIVALENTS	\$18,529	\$20,630	\$19,627	\$17,703	\$14,025	\$12,597
OTHER CURRENT ASSETS	\$1,237	\$1,293	\$673	\$565	\$1,429	\$1,112
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>\$19,766</b>	<b>\$21,923</b>	<b>\$20,300</b>	<b>\$18,268</b>	<b>\$15,454</b>	<b>\$13,709</b>
<b>TRADE &amp; OTHER PAYABLES</b>	<b>\$14,262</b>	<b>\$15,444</b>	<b>\$13,582</b>	<b>\$10,858</b>	<b>\$7,736</b>	<b>\$5,270</b>
<b>PROVISION LIABILITIES</b>	<b>\$617</b>	<b>\$578</b>	<b>\$787</b>	<b>\$873</b>	<b>\$1,219</b>	<b>\$1,639</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>\$14,878</b>	<b>\$16,023</b>	<b>\$14,369</b>	<b>\$11,731</b>	<b>\$8,955</b>	<b>\$6,909</b>
<b>WORKING CAPITAL (AS AT 30TH JUNE)</b>	<b>\$4,888</b>	<b>\$5,901</b>	<b>\$5,931</b>	<b>\$6,537</b>	<b>\$6,499</b>	<b>\$6,800</b>

WORKING CAPITAL \$'000



## ACSO NATIONAL OFFICE

Level 1, 1 Hoddle Street, Richmond VIC 3121

VIC

### CENTRAL MELBOURNE METRO HUB

Ground Floor, 1 Hoddle Street, Richmond VIC 3121

- Work Experience Services, Little Hoddle Street, Richmond VIC 3121
- ACspresSO Cafe, 2 Regent Street Richmond VIC 3121

### NORTHERN MELBOURNE METRO HUB

151 Wheatsheaf Road, Glenroy VIC 3046

- Forensic Residential Service: Cappello House
- Forensic Residential Service: Francis House
- Forensic Residential Service: Nicholson House

### SOUTHERN MELBOURNE METRO HUB

Ground Floor, 280 Thomas Street, Dandenong VIC 3175

- Forensic Residential Service: Armadale House
- Forensic Residential Service: TK House
- Forensic Residential Service: Calabro House

### GIPPSLAND HUB

3/35 Grey Street, Traralgon VIC 3844

- Forensic Residential Service: Gippsland House
- Bairnsdale Office, 305 Main Street, Bairnsdale

### GRAMPIANS/GREAT SOUTH COAST HUB

305A Dana Street, Ballarat VIC 3350

- Warrnambool Office, 172 Merri Street, Warrnambool VIC 3280
- Geelong Office, 5/30 Little Malop Street, Geelong VIC 3220

### LODDON MALLEE HUB

28 Pall Mall, Bendigo VIC 3550

- Mildura Office, 70 Lemon Avenue, Mildura VIC 3500
- Swan Hill Office, 13 Prichard Street, Swan Hill VIC 3585
- Forensic Residential Service: Aspin House
- Forensic Residential Service: McShee House
- Forensic Residential Service: Bendigo Youth Residential Rehab (YRR)

### GOULBURN VALLEY/HUME HUB

95-97 Welsford Street, Shepparton VIC 3630

- Wangaratta Office, 40-42 Rowan Street, Wangaratta VIC 3677

## ACSO NSW STATE OFFICE

Level 1, 21-25 King Street, Rockdale NSW 2216

NSW

### CENTRAL SYDNEY METRO HUB

Level 1, 21-25 King Street, Rockdale NSW 2216

- Wagga Wagga Office, 66-70 Coleman Street, Wagga Wagga NSW 2650
- Dubbo Office, 1/80 Gipps Street, Dubbo NSW 2830

### ILLAWARRA HUB

87 Railway Street, Corrimal NSW 2518

- Shellharbour Office, 4/12 College Avenue, Shellharbour NSW 2529
- Nowra Office, Level 1, 685 Graham Street, Nowra NSW 2541

## ACSO QLD STATE OFFICE

Level 1, 35 Amelia Street, Fortitude Valley QLD 4006

QLD

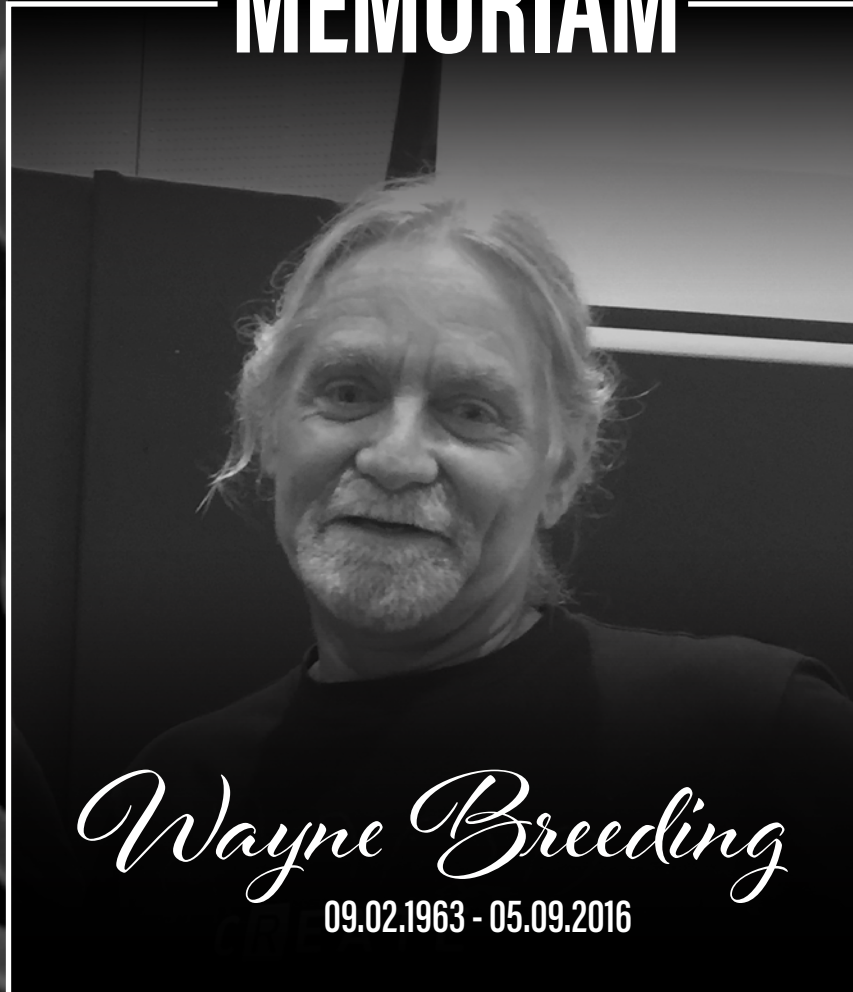
### CENTRAL BRISBANE METRO HUB

Level 1, 35 Amelia Street, Fortitude Valley QLD 4006

- Beenleigh Office, 100 York Street, Beenleigh QLD 4207
- Ipswich Office, 5-8 Wharf Street, Ipswich QLD 4305
- Toowoomba Office, 171 Hume Street, Toowoomba QLD 4350

OUR NATIONAL  
**FOOTPRINT**

# *In* **MEMORIAM**



*Wayne Breeding*

09.02.1963 - 05.09.2016

Wayne started working at ACSO in 2014, as the Coordinator of our Green Army project, where he supported young, disengaged people to learn new skills and to get their lives back on track. Through the program, Wayne helped young people build pathways into work and education and at the same time, deal with the issues that had impacted on their lives.

Wayne was someone who the young people respected, looked up to and most importantly, learnt from. A testament to his success in this role was his achievement of the highest audit score for Green Army in Australia, but most importantly,

Wayne's impact on nine young lives - young people at risk of re-offending - was his greatest achievement.

Having led a very successful Green Army program, Wayne joined the high risk team at ACSO working in the Reconnect program, supporting people to transition from prison back into the community. Wayne worked with people with very complex histories, drug use, mental health issues and long histories of offending, again working with people to help support them to make changes - and ultimately change their lives.

Wayne was held in very high regard at ACSO by his colleagues, his managers and the clients with whom he worked. In particular, the staff at the Loddon Mallee Hub in Bendigo, where Wayne was based, remember his work at ACSO with great admiration, as do Wayne's managers. It was his passion for his work and his commitment to helping people get their lives back on track that saw Wayne receive the high risk division's **Employee Of The Year** award for his work in 2015.

**Wayne was a loved partner, son, father and friend to many people whose lives he touched. His legacy will live on in the lives of the people he helped transform - to get out, and stay out, of the criminal justice system.**



**EMPLOYEE  
OF THE YEAR**

HIGH - RISK  
DIVISION





**“ OUR WORK HELPS TO KEEP THE COMMUNITY SAFE BECAUSE WE EFFECTIVELY DIVERT PEOPLE FROM CRIME. ALL OF OUR PROGRAMS ARE DESIGNED TO MOTIVATE PEOPLE TO CHANGE. BY DOING THIS, WE ARE WORKING TOWARDS ACHIEVING OUR VISION OF A SAFE AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY, FREED OF CRIME AND PRISON. ”**



**Australian Community Support Organisation Limited**  
ABN 43 037 816 628

**National Office** 1 Hoddle Street, Richmond VIC 3121  
**P** 03 9413 7000  
**F** 03 9413 7188  
**E** [acso@acso.org.au](mailto:acso@acso.org.au)

[www.acso.org.au](http://www.acso.org.au)