



QPASTT

Annual Report

2009-2010



Queensland Program of Assistance for
Survivors of Torture & Trauma



QPASTT's MISSION

QPASTT will implement its vision by:

Working with and **alongside people** and communities not for

Building and rediscovering **peoples' strengths** and **resilience**

Remaining **culturally relevant** to service users and communities

Forming partnerships between people, service providers and community

Respecting the **importance of place** in meeting with people

Responding to peoples' needs **holistically** and **creatively**

Nurturing and **growing** a gentle and **caring** environment

Valuing our **organization's credibility** and **responsive capability** in the areas of primary health care, mental health, education, settlement services and community services

Remaining relevant by **employing people** from **community** and having community people **represented** on the **committee of management**

Continually improving the **quality** of our organization, our **workers' competencies**, and our **practice** through reflection, **learning** and evaluation

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to first acknowledge our Patron

Her Excellency, Ms Penelope Wensley AO

QPASTT would like to acknowledge the following funding agencies

- Australian Department of Health and Ageing
- Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship
- Australian Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
- Queensland Department of Communities
- Queensland Health
- Education Queensland
- Brisbane City Council

QPASTT also wishes to express its appreciation of the partnerships with the following Consortia partners:

- Multicultural Development Association
- 4 Walls
- Spiritus, Toowoomba
- CentaCare, Cairns
- LaTrobe Refugee Research Centre, LaTrobe University
- All About Living
- Communify

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

It is with great pleasure that I present the 2009/2010 President's Report on behalf of the Management Committee of QPASTT. The past year has been one of highlights and challenges for the organisation and I would like to acknowledge the support and dedication of both the staff and management committee members as we have moved through the year.

On behalf of QPASTT I welcome the opportunities that the organisation has had, to provide cross-cultural community recovery to our refugee families and to assist them to establish a new life in Australia. This year we have continued to work with new arrivals from the Middle East, from South East Asia and from different African countries along with members of more established communities from other regions of the world. In addition, we continue to work with people from many different backgrounds as they seek recovery from past experiences.

The past year has seen QPASTT continue to focus on our core business, providing strong support and needed services to people from a refugee background. The organisation has continued to concentrate on delivering high quality services within our area of specialisation rather than expand into areas that would potentially see these core services eroded.

The Queensland Pay Equity Case was welcomed by all stakeholders in the sector as it recognised that workers within this sector deserved parity with workers in other sectors and this was long overdue. It did, however, provide considerable challenges for QPASTT. As a Commonwealth funded service and with the Commonwealth Government not moving to meet the costs associated with these pay rates, the Management Committee had no choice but to re-structure the organisation in order to meet this cost. I acknowledge that the process was challenging and that some decisions were difficult. I would like to thank both Committee Members and staff for their commitment, patience and understanding during this process. The Committee does believe that the decision of the Industrial Commission to acknowledge the work done in this sector was a just and long overdue decision and that there will be long term benefits even while it has come at a cost in the short term.

In addition to this process, the organisation has also had to face a number of service delivery challenges including: a considerable increase in referrals; an increasing complexity in client presentations; and the considerable increase in clients in detention facilities in Queensland, firstly in Brisbane and more recently in North Queensland. The work with clients in detention facilities is a new area of work for us. While we have always worked with clients claiming asylum, they have in past years been housed in the community as until recently Queensland did not have any detention facilities. As an organisation we strongly believe that refugee survivors of torture and trauma should not be held in detention facilities, however, we also believe that we should be available to support individuals and families who find themselves in this position. While I cannot underestimate the cost that this change in service delivery has had on staff and the organisation, as a whole, the commitment of the organisation to ensuring that services are able to be provided to this client group has been a considerable achievement.

We welcome the recent decision by the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, Chris Bowen to move children and young people out of detention facilities by June 2011. The Committee congratulates the Australian Government for taking this decision and the people involved in working for this change.

While the organisation has faced challenges, it has also had a number of highlights. We have provided direct services to over 2,470 people from over 59 ethnic communities. We have continued to support refugee communities and undertaken a number of highly successful community projects including the Photovoice project in Toowoomba which has documented African Settlement on the Downs. In addition, for the first time we marked the UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture with an afternoon tea and drinks at the Bleeding Heart Cafe in the city. This will become a regular event and we hope this will raise the general community's awareness of the issues surrounding the use of torture across the world.

The other major event of the year was the announcement of the Brisbane Lord Mayor, Campbell Newman of Brisbane City Council's new Brisbane Multicultural Centre. The building to be provided by Council will be managed as a partnership between the Multicultural Development Association (MDA) and QPASTT and will house a number of other organisations including the International Workers Centre, the Qld African Communities Council and Community Leaders. In addition there will be a large community space for events. Work has commenced on this building and will take the majority of QPASTT's financial reserves in the next year. But it will give us a permanent home and will enable us to further develop our relationship with MDA. We thank the Lord Mayor, Councillor Geraldine Knapp and BCC staff for their foresight and commitment to this proposal.

Finally I would like to thank all QPASTT staff for their hard work and commitment in ensuring QPASTT continues to offer high quality services, particularly in the contexts mentioned above. The dedication and expertise of the staff at QPASTT cannot be understated and are greatly appreciated. QPASTT has a diverse and skilled, multicultural staff base and the Committee appreciates the extraordinary efforts of all staff in contributing to the work of the organisation. It is a pleasure to be able to say that we have strong staff teams in all areas – Administration, the Youth and Families team, the Counselling Services team and in the Community Development and Respite areas. To staff who have moved on during the year, your contribution was appreciated and I wish you the best in your new endeavours. To staff who have joined the organisation in the last year, I welcome you and hope you enjoy your time at QPASTT – you will find the organisation to be welcoming and supportive. To the senior management team, Tracy, Sally, Lois, Liz and Kristen I thank you for your superb leadership and support. A new member of this team will be joining us next week and I welcome Shelley Nielsen to the organisation.

The QPASTT Management Committee is a committed group of people with a diverse range of backgrounds, skills and experience. I would like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow management committee members: Luis Melgar, Margo Couldrey, Thubten (Mandy), Lyndall Kleinschmidt, Abel Sibonio, Robin Lonergan, Mohammad Zia and Egleema Nadir Shah. You have all been a pleasure to work with. One committee member left during the year, Iona Valent and I would like to express my appreciation for the contribution she made to the committee. I wish her all the best for the future and encourage her to stay in touch.

I would particularly like to thank the community members on the management committee. These people help to keep us connected to the issues of our refugee families and play a vital role in ensuring that QPASTT remains responsive and relevant to the families, individuals and communities we work with.

Finally on behalf of QPASTT I would like to thank members of the communities with which we work. We appreciate the involvement of community leaders and members in our service - without their participation in the design of our services we would not be as effective. We look forward to working you in the coming year.

Dr Keithia Wilson
President

TREASURER'S REPORT

I am pleased to present the Treasurer's Report for 2009/2010. As you can see from this report and the accompanying Auditor's Report, QPASTT remains in a solid financial position.

QPASTT received funding from 22 different sources in 2009/2010, with the majority coming from Commonwealth Government agencies, followed by the Queensland Government and the Brisbane City Council. Our core funding continues to come from the Australian Department of Health and Ageing, Disability Services Queensland and the Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship.

QPASTT has ended the year in a sound financial position with sufficient reserves to cover outstanding liabilities. Major outlays continue to be staffing, rental, interpreters and administrative expenses. In the next financial year we anticipate that the majority of our reserve funds will be expended on the renovation of the new Brisbane Multicultural Centre.

I would like to acknowledge the expertise and skills of Rafael Pacheco, Luis Amaya and the Administration Team in managing the financial affairs of QPASTT. Without their assistance and hard work my job would be much harder. I would also like to thank the members of the Management Committee, the Director and all the staff for their support throughout the year. The efforts of all staff in ensuring that quality services are able to be delivered within budget is appreciated.

I would like to draw your attention to the 2009/2010 Audited Financial Statements prepared by our Auditor, George Crokidas. The Financial Statements have been prepared in accordance with applicable accounting standards and reflect the financial position of the organisation for the year ended 30 June 2010 and I recommend them to you for your approval.

In closing I would like to propose a motion to nominate George Crokidas as our Auditor for 2010/2011.

Thank you

Luis Melgar
Treasurer

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The last year has been one of substantial challenges as well as rewards for QPASTT. The end of the financial year saw the implementation of an organisational review driven by the implementation of the new wages structure for community service agencies in Queensland. While structural reviews are an opportunity to look at how organisations are working and whether their goals are being achieved, any change can be stressful and difficult for individuals affected, especially those changes which are primarily driven by imposed factors. I would like to acknowledge the anxiety that the review created on the organisation and thank the Committee members for their care and consideration in implementing the review. I would also like to thank the staff for their patience and in many cases selflessness in seeing the changes implemented. While there is no doubt that the restructure was painful for many, I admire the way that it has been understood and accepted by staff.

As pointed out in the President's report, QPASTT has also faced a number of other challenges this year including:

- The provision of specialist torture and trauma assessment, counselling and support services to an increasing number of people in detention. This has placed pressure on the organisation to meet these needs within an environment that we as an agency do not support. We do not believe that refugee survivors of torture and trauma should be in detention facilities and we are concerned about the pressure this places on individual mental health. As the current Australian of the Year, Professor Patrick McGorry recently stated, Detention Centres are "factories for producing mental illness." I would like to thank all staff involved in undertaking this work for their expertise, professionalism, commitment and flexibility as I am aware the demands of this workload outstripped our original assumptions.
- An increasing complexity in client presentations, particularly around acute mental health issues and associated issues such as family violence has also placed pressure on our service provision. As a result waiting lists across all areas of the organisation have grown. I need to acknowledge the demands that these changes have placed upon staff at QPASTT and express my appreciation at their patience and willingness to undertake increasingly complex work.
- The number of people settling in regional and rural areas of Queensland is an increasing challenge. The organisation is currently looking at how we can best provide services to these areas. Much of this settlement is driven by employment and I acknowledge the importance of employment for good settlement outcomes. However, the provision of appropriate support services is also important.
- An uncertain funding environment, particularly with the uncertain future of the short term torture and trauma counselling program is difficult. At the moment this program ends in January 2011 and no announcement has been made in relation to the future of the program. The challenge in convincing government agencies to consider the impact of uncertain and short term funding contracts remains constant.

Despite these challenges, this year has also seen some great highlights varying from the individual—such as a permanent visa granted to an asylum seeker family we have been supporting to those with much wider impacts. Some of these highlights have included:

- the marking of the UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, this will become a regular event for the organisation;
- the establishment of the new RESP-ECCT consortia partnership with MDA, Communitify and All About Living to build sector capacity and deliver mental health respite services for carers of CALD background
- the development of our Building Stronger Families Program;

- The strengthening of our programs for young people and in particular the increased involvement of communities in these programs; and
- The forming of a partnership with MDA and the Brisbane City Council to see the development of the Brisbane Multicultural Centre and a permanent home for both MDA and QPASTT.

QPASTT staff have worked hard this year and as always I am impressed with their professionalism, commitment and capacity to provide high quality services in the face of some considerable challenges. I would like to thank all the staff for their support of their clients, of me and of the organisation.

We have had a number of changes in the management team over the last year including the establishment of a new clinical services management team – Lois and Liz. I would like to thank all the members of the Management Team for the support that they have given me over the last year. In particular I would like to thank the members of the senior management team for their support during the year. I would like to thank Sally for her hard work and commitment, Lois and Liz for their wisdom and focus and Kristen for her passion and energy. Without your support my position would be much more difficult.

I would also like to thank the members of the management committee. They are a wonderful group of committed, hard working and caring people who have supported me and the organisation throughout the year.

As a service primarily concerned with supporting people and communities to settle, I would like to thank our clients and the community we work with for their ongoing support. This is a vital, vibrant and compelling area of work and your contribution to it is as important as it is appreciated.

QPASTT remains committed to the provision of services informed by the community we serve. We remain committed to respecting the experiences of our clients and their communities and the legacy of that experience. We continue to strive to ensure that our services remain culturally informed, flexible, sensitive and delivered in a low key, friendly and accessible environment.

We remain committed to promoting human rights and advocating for the elimination of torture. Our work with survivors strongly reinforces why all forms of torture and other cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment must be prohibited by all governments. The last year has again seen a lot of public discussion about asylum seekers and their rights. We need to be mindful that asylum seekers are extremely vulnerable. They live in great fear of being returned to a home country where they believe they will be severely punished or killed. Their present and future hold unknowns and they are concerned for their families and loved ones left behind. They have a right to seek asylum and Australia has an obligation to accept. We welcome the recent announcements by Minister Chris Bowen in relation to the movement of young people and families from detention facilities into community based accommodation and congratulate all those who have taken an active role in lobbying for this to occur.

Tracy Worrall
Director

CLINICAL SERVICES REPORT

Lois Whiteman and Liz Gordon

In the last year the Clinical Services Manager position was vacant for a period until it was partially filled by Lois Whiteman and then became a full time position again in April 2010 when Liz Gordon began to job share the position. Since then we have worked to reinstitute the broad coverage of supervision for staff in line with QPASTT policy ensuring staff have equitable and consistent supervision support as well as line management.

In addition to this we have focused this year on reinvesting energy into developing clinical training during off line weeks. Training topics covered have included: revisiting the core principles of the trauma experience and recovery goals; group debriefing exercises; exploring the nature of professional supervision; QPASTT policy on working with clients experiencing Domestic Violence; the centrality of dissociation in the trauma experience; the neurophysiology of trauma and how art and yoga can support the recovery process; assessment – content and processes; family therapy theory and practice; child and youth developmental stages and the impact of trauma, and, reflecting on the somatic and emotional impact of working with a severely traumatised couple. Offline weeks have also included Occupational Health and Safety and other QPASTT policy training.

Internal training of this kind offers us not only more knowledge of the respective content areas but allows staff to explore what it means to apply this knowledge to our work here at QPASTT and the challenges inherent in this. Through this there is a strong sense of collegial support and opportunity to express, share and debrief about the work we do. As there are differing needs for training in the agency we hope to further develop offline weeks to provide specific training relevant to roles eg admin, community development etc.

The Clinical Services Managers provide input into management of the organisation on clinical matters. At QPASTT we continue to notice the increased complexity and severity of life issues facing clients. This is evidenced in severe trauma related mental health concerns, especially in, but not only attributable to, those seeking asylum in Australia either based in community or detention. This has stretched the capacity of our own services and takes its toll on worker energy and well being. We continue to aim to identify and address potential worker burnout and vicarious trauma as soon as possible through supervision, debriefing, peer support and training.

For some years now we have had the capacity to work with families through the POUCH program. We have identified that for some families the youth and/or children's counsellor may also be involved. In the last year we have highlighted the need to ensure parental trauma is assessed when considering family relationship difficulties and make sure that adult counselling picks this up when needed so that the family work can be successful. To enhance this cross team work we have instituted a regular 'Families Meeting' where staff across teams working with members of a particular family discuss and plan timely and appropriate responses.

In summary it has been a vital and challenging year and we look forward to continuing to develop and refine our work in QPASTT.

International Day in Support of Victims of Torture 26 June 2010



QPASTT joined with other members of the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims to hold an acknowledgement ceremony at QPASTT in support of victims of torture. Approximately 40 people joined us in one minute silence and presentations by Raphael, Elijah and Hsa K Paw.



This is a day on which we pay our respects to those who have endured the unimaginable. This is an occasion for the world to speak up against the unspeakable. It is long overdue that a day be dedicated to remembering and supporting the many victims and survivors of torture around the world."

Secretary-General-United Nations, Kofi Annan

The warm welcome speech for the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture

by Ana Pocrnijic, Youth Counsellor/Advocate at QPASTT

Our hope for this event is that we can all together honour the victims and survivors of torture around the world and in our own community. We also wish for this day to be an opportunity to speak out against the crime of torture and its ongoing impacts.

Most of us in this room have had direct experiences working with, or have a passion for understanding and supporting those who have survived torture. Drawing on our own experiences and knowledge that we were privileged to learn from those we work with and also looking at the rest of the world, it is frighteningly obvious that torture and other degrading, cruel or inhumane treatment are common in a startling number of countries. Torture and ill-treatment are still prevalent in all regions of the world.

We are here to stand for a world without torture, but at this stage, unfortunately we are far from that goal. At the end of 2009 there were 43.3 million forcibly displaced people around the world, including more than 10 million refugees, according to the UN Refugee Agency's (UNHCR) annual report.

The fight against torture is persistent and even though 146 governments have signed the convention against torture, Amnesty International estimates that at least 81 world governments currently practice torture, some of those, openly. Torture is often a covert practice; therefore victims are unable to report the crime. Victims of torture also fear making any reports due to corrupt systems and fear of further repercussions this could have. These are just few of the reasons why no comprehensive statistics exist on the extent to which refugees and other displaced persons have experienced torture. However, health professionals and researchers commonly estimate that up to 35% of refugees worldwide have been subjected to torture.

A world without torture will not become a reality until we have brought healing to those who have been subjected to this appalling practice. Without healing, the effects of torture are all too likely to continue within the survivors. QPASTT takes pride in working with survivors of torture and trauma and we consider it our obligation and it is our vision to protect the dignity of each individual in our efforts to provide rehabilitation and treatment, and to promote justice in the fight against torture. As well as providing psychosocial support, counselling, advocacy, family work, community development, group work and respite, the rehabilitation of torture survivors requires needs being addressed in a broader context and QPASTT takes an active role in influencing policy and practice to address the needs of torture victims and their families. Everyone can contribute towards creating a world without torture.

The greatest threat to the fight against torture remains apathy: that we silently accept that torture exists. Today, as we honour the victims and survivors of torture all over the world, let us promise that we will not silently accept that the crime of torture continues. Let us pledge to do all we can to prevent greater numbers joining their ranks.

Right now, we – the rehabilitation centres and programmes that are members of the IRCT – are jointly raising our voices across the world, reading out this statement on this special day. Together, we are saying that we will not remain silent, and that we will continue working together to bring about a World without Torture.

COUNSELLING & SUPPORT TEAM

Vedrana Jovcic

The Counselling and Support Team has delivered another successful year of counselling, advocacy and support services for survivors of torture and trauma. We have continued services to clients from our Brisbane office as well as all our outreach locations in Logan, Gold Coast, Zillmere, Inala, Toowoomba and Gatton. We have also continued supporting people seeking asylum including clients in Detention Facilities and provided support while acknowledging their extremely difficult circumstances. Across the year our team supported children, young people and adults from 59 different ethnic communities.



There have been some changes to the team over the past year, although many familiar faces remain and some have returned. We have welcomed back Fernanda Torresi who brought back with her exceptional skills, knowledge, warmth and passion. I wish to thank both Charito and Fernanda for their time as Acting Team Leader in 2009. We also welcomed back Ally Wakefield for a short period before she decided leave once again and have a second baby.

The natural therapies program at QPASTT has been an integral part of our holistic service to assist people with recovery from the impacts of torture and trauma. An excellent complement to counselling, our natural therapies program offered nutrition therapy, herbal medicine, homeopathy, massage, aromatherapy and flower essences. It was with great sadness that this Program concluded in June 2010 as part of the restructure and we want to thank our Natural Therapist, Bronwynne Jettoo for her expertise, passion and dedication to the program and the clients of QPASTT.

X-Men Program

Soon after her arrival, Fernanda started planning and running the X-Men Program in partnership with Depression and Chronic Disease Program (QTMHC's Transcultural Approach to Honouring the Mind and Body Program) and Refugee Health Queensland (RHQ). The Program is jointly funded by Mental Health Respite and the Torture and Trauma Counselling Programs and follows some ideas of the successful Effort Program which had been designed for men and women from refugee backgrounds. During the program the participants do different exercises and activities. A preliminary result of an independent evaluation conducted by Griffith University has revealed many positive personal outcomes for participants including significant change to health. We look forward to seeing how the second group goes which started in July 2010.



CHILDREN'S PROGRAM

Suzanne Staal & Sam Anywar



The past year has seen the consolidation of the Children's Program with ongoing direct counselling work with children (aged 4 – 12 years) and their families. Our children's counsellor Suzanne Staal applies a systemic model in this program that entails working closely with the systems in which the child is heavily invested, whilst providing an outreach clinical service that has increased accessibility of service to families and their children. A multi systemic approach recognizes that the child operates within important

relationship systems and that these systems have a significant impact on this vulnerable and inarticulate client group. In relation to the child, the two most significant systems are the school and the home.

Most referrals indicate a disruption in relationships between the child and significant family members and/or peers and/or school staff. A multi systemic approach assesses and addresses the quality of the interactional patterns and dynamics of these systems and works to maximize safety, thus improving the child's capacity to utilize the therapy offered. While a multi systemic model has aimed to address risk factors by building child, family and school environment strengths (protective factors), attachment disruption has been



identified increasingly as a significant risk factor impacting directly and indirectly on relationships within all systems. As such, the quality of the attachment relationship has become an increasingly important focus of the work with children experiencing war related trauma and settlement issues. In addition, developmental issues arising from trauma for children has also become more apparent.

CHILDREN'S PROGRAM

Whole of School Approach

The Whole of School Approach (WoSA) is currently run by Sam Anywar and involves working and supporting schools to provide an encouraging educational environment for children from refugee backgrounds. Sam has been kept busy providing training, workshops and presentations to public and private schools who request WoSA training and support. Over the past financial year many schools conducted the WoSA Audit which is a partnership approach led by School Principals, with QPASTT and other key stakeholders. The audit and subsequent work includes school policies and practices, organisational ethos, curriculum and classroom programs as well as partnership programs with parents and communities.

School-based group activities including an ongoing and highly successful partnership with Flipside Circus (picture right) as well as with Impact to deliver Rock and Water have been run again in this financial year.

The network of School, Community Liaison Workers also met regularly throughout the year. Both Sam and Sally Stewart worked with this network, including TAFE Queensland to host the inaugural African Students

Awards Ceremony to recognise students of African backgrounds who have achieved well academically, in sport and those who've demonstrated leadership. It was a highly successful day which showed the importance of having these achievements recognised by parents, community leaders and the local community.

Sam also worked with the children's counsellor and the POUCH staff to deliver Children School Holiday activities which included:

- Exploring art and culture-visit to the power house
- Games and BBQ in Yeronga park with Life Be In IT
- Indoor activities (art and craft, games and movies)
- Fun day (bowling) at AMF centre at Greenslopes
- Sport day (tennis, soccer and basketball) in Yeronga park/Yeronga State School
- Experiencing technology- 3D movies at Cineplex-South Bank.



EARLY INTERVENTION TEAM

Vedrana Jovcic

The Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy funded by Department of Immigration & Citizenship is in its last year of delivery. Over 1,000 newly arrived refugees started calling Brisbane home this year and our Counsellor/Advocates were busy delivering short-term torture and trauma counselling to clients in need. Our excellent working relationship with our consortium partners MDA and 4Walls assisted that process.

The cultural identity of our main client groups in this financial year have been Rohingya, Karen, Afghan, Somalian, Sri Lankan Tamil, Burundian, Sudanese, Iraqi, Liberian, Sierra Leonian and others including Eritrean, Ethiopian, Congolese, Togo, Rwandan and Bhutan. We have also welcomed a significant number of Faili Kurds.

Some of the challenges EI experienced in this year have included:

- assisting and supporting mostly single Hazara and Tamil men settling in regional areas, primarily Rockhampton. A large number of newly arrived refugees have chosen to resettle in that region for increased work opportunities.
- a lack of Rohingya interpreters has proven to be big barrier in providing support and counseling for this client group. Fortunately, things have slightly improved with more people now registered as interpreters.

2009/2010 saw some staff changes to EI Team. We saw Rose Di Benedetto leaving as well as Valerie Eden. Following Valerie's departure, we welcomed Ricardo Rodriguez into the Team and at the end of the year Jenny Woodburn joined us, full of enthusiasm and passion. Two other additions to our Team were Mark Griffiths who came over from the Youth Team and Kali Lohman. Taher Forotan remained in EI and while I stayed in the Team, I have moved to Team Leader position.

Counsellor/Advocates were involved in the number of programs during this year. QPASTT in partnership with Nutrition Australia offered workshops for newly arrived Rohingya families in March and April 2010. The workshops were big success with many families enjoying preparing, cooking and eating healthy food and learning about healthy food choices.

The EI Team anticipates big changes in the near future as its 5 year contract comes to an end and we look forward to new challenges that are coming our way.



POUCH PROGRAM

- **Promoting our Unity, Culture and Human Rights**

Susan Knopke

The POUCH Program is an early intervention program that provides information, support and practical strategies for managing the impacts of cultural transition on family relationships. The program incorporates counselling, group work and community development initiatives. The bicultural family relationship counselling model adopted in POUCH has brought depth and flexibility to the family support we can provide at QPASTT as well as to the work of the whole organisation. Working in a therapeutic relationship which can include a family, a family counsellor, a bicultural worker, an interpreter and sometimes other relevant organisations can be very challenging. However, our experience and client feedback to date, demonstrates that the richness of understanding and humility that our bicultural staff bring to the counselling relationship and the organisation, delivers a great service of benefit to our clients.

This year has also seen the further development of the 'Building Stronger Families' Program, which is an eight week facilitated group for parents from a refugee background. This Program is an early intervention approach that assists families to develop new strategies for parenting and for managing family relationships in the Australian context, in harmony with cultural values, individual family needs and Australian laws and customs. Over the past 12 months, with additional funding from the Brisbane City Council and Local Answers Program of FaHCSIA, we have delivered this program to new communities on the North side of Brisbane. This program has been well received with very positive feedback from participants and will continue to be utilised by QPASTT in its work with families. We believe this group support, located in community is important to nurture stronger families and individual wellbeing.



In addition to providing direct family work and the group work program, the POUCH team also delivered a number of information sessions in collaboration with MDA to new arrivals. These information sessions provide opportunities for families to consider their new environment and its potential impact on family relationships.

To celebrate the end of 2009, the POUCH Program incorporated the fundamental concepts of play and family fun into the program with a Family Fun Day. This activity brought together more than 60 children and their parents and caregivers in Yeronga Park, to eat, play and participate in great outdoor activities facilitated by staff from 'Life Be in It!'. It was a wonderful celebration and encouraged families to spend time together, have fun and socialise.

YOUTH & FAMILIES TEAM

Valerie Eden and Ana Pocrnjic

Last year saw a transformation with the Youth Team and the Families Team combining into one team. Both teams experienced changes as some of our short term programs wrapped up and new ones commenced. In February, Kristen Price the Team Leader moved to a new position with Red Cross in Melbourne (only to return recently!) and Valerie commenced in the role. We sadly farewelled Elijah Buol who did a fantastic job as project worker on our 12 month Eat Well Be Active Project. Since then Elijah has commenced work at Communify and is still connected to QPASTT through the RESP-ECCT program.

Through our counselling and advocacy services we continued to provide outreach services to Milperra SHS, Coorparoo Secondary College, Nyanda SHS, and Sunnybank SHS addressing a variety of issues including conflict, difficulties coping with school, low self-esteem, impacts of torture and trauma, suicidality, grief and depression. Our collaboration with Kedron SHS continued to develop as our Community Youth Worker, Hsa K'Paw worked in partnership with the school and other services.

During the year we worked via the Northside Interagency Youth Working Group (NIYWG). We participated in a newly formed network to support the mental health of students from a refugee background as they transition from Milperra SHS to the Mainstream education system (STARS). We continue



to host the Young Refugee Mental Health Network Interagency Meeting held bi-monthly, and regularly attend the Northside Refugee Network Meeting, the Yeronga SHS External Agencies Meeting, and the Culture Sharing Reference Group.

We have continued to support young people through a range of activities including Homework club and School Holiday programs. In addition the youth team has sought to actively support a number of activities and groups working with young people from refugee backgrounds including PAWES.

As part of a Brisbane City Council funded project designed to increase participation of young people from refugee backgrounds in mainstream services on the Northside of Brisbane, the Youth Team conducted a series of consultations with young people and leaders from the communities from Burma. This in turn led to the development of a number of other workshops with members of these communities focused on issues raised.

YOUTH & FAMILIES TEAM

School Holiday Activities

School holiday activities have continued to be popular and well-attended. This year saw the usual activities such as movies and sports days, but we were also very privileged to partner with other agencies which enabled us to really stretch our legs, minds and creativity! Led by Elise, we collaborated with 'The Edge' and a visiting artist to offer multimedia training to young entrepreneurs. This workshop offered skills in digital media such as CD and DVD production. Also with 'The Edge' and another visiting artist, several young women were afforded the opportunity to produce their own 'Suitcase Art'. This allowed the combination of both a reflective space and an artistic and creative opportunity. The resulting artworks are inspirational.

Training

Training and capacity-building continues to be a high priority for the team as we strive to support and encourage an inclusive, appropriate and holistic learning environments for young people from refugee backgrounds. This year we spoke at the TAFE English Language and Literacy Service Conference in Brisbane. We also provided training to The Outlook, YSC's, and a large number of schools, and consultation regarding individual students to both teaching and non-teaching staff, and other agencies.

Homework Club

Homework club has been extremely well attended this year and we are very fortunate to have a group of dedicated, capable, patient, and caring volunteer tutors who have been selfless with their time and energy. We also supported the founding of a new homework club at the Zillmere Library; providing training, staffing and administrative advice.



YOUTH & FAMILIES TEAM

Youth Support Co-ordinator

Our YSC worker Abdi Yusaf has continued to work with young people from refugee backgrounds attending Sunnybank SHS, Nyanda SHS, Coorparoo SHS supporting over 100 young people in the last year. As part of the program a number of groups have been run with all three schools including the Working Together Program—learning about how to manage relationships. Abdi has also provided professional development for all YSCs across Brisbane in relation to the impacts of torture and trauma on young people in a family and community context and providing strategies for worker engagement with young people from refugee backgrounds.

Rock & Water

As an outcome of Youth Team's work with Impact delivering Rock & Water Programs to a number of schools and groups, a development program was established involving a community mentorship component. 10 mentors from a range of different communities including Burundi, Somalia, Kenya and Rwanda learnt Rock & Water skills alongside selected young people and provided an additional mentorship role to facilitate longer term outcomes from the Program. The program aimed to enable young people to acquire a better understanding of how to deal with conflict resolution and anger management, appropriate forms of communication and positive relationships with their families, schools and communities.

Eat Well Be Active

This one year project funded by Sport & Recreation allowed QPASTT to employ Elijah Buol as a Community Worker who did a fantastic job of drawing young people, their local communities and families together to learn and share in health activities. A highlight was work with the leaders of the Karen community to build and strengthen relationships with North Star Soccer Club which saw the development of teams with more than 25 young people who play regularly. Together additional resources were leveraged to support the purchase of uniforms, shoes and ongoing fees. In addition 16 nutrition workshops (in partnership with Nutritional Australia) were conducted, 19 activity days for young people including some for whole families (partnerships with various local sporting venues including Zillmere PCYC). These activities days included tennis, swimming, and other recreational activities. There were also 2 Flipside Circus run under this Program with young people.

Digital Storytelling

In partnership with Storyscape, 3 day Digital Story Telling Workshops were run at QPASTT with young people from the Karen community. This project led by Chela provided participants with accessible and interesting training in digital video production and creating narratives on film. The young people were supported in creating their own audio-visual story. This allowed the participants control over their story lines, audio visual material and the means of expressing their stories. By giving young people the means to identify, narrate and explore their own experiences the project provided a unique opportunity to view suicide ideation, self harm and suicide prevention through the eyes of the young people.

TOOWOOMBA & GATTON

Jenny Withnall

The past year seems to have flown by very quickly and some major changes have occurred in the Toowoomba office. Our administration worker, Donna Innosent left QPASTT in February, taking her great sense of humour with her which the young people seemed fascinated with. Her repertoire of Australian sayings, once understood, always made them laugh.

Apart from the ongoing work involved with our IHSS short term, counselling work and long term counselling and youth counselling, there were some great highlights with youth activities. Gabriel Pioth was recruited to fulfil the community youth worker in 2010 and excelled in this role in a highly dedicated fashion. Highlights of our NEXUS youth work included:

- On Australia Day, our youth group were involved in a “laugh till you cry” comedy held at Helidon, courtesy of the creative drama group, the Cultural Stargazers. Sudanese mothers in the audience laughed hard when they saw a larger than life “Jake the Peg” perform and the stage was full of children of all racial backgrounds, celebrating local diversity in an ultimate way, laced with loads of humour.
- Fun Days were held along with BBQs and The Great Race. Teams of young people competing in a rally style, problem solver raced around the community leading them from one community service to the next, making it educationally relevant. Unfortunately the weather was a complete “peasouper,” which for those who do not know our weather patterns, here on the mountain, means the fog was so thick you could hardly see your hand – all day! It made the clue hunting and locating of sites more mysterious for sure.
- For the duration of the first term we ran healthy eating and activities at our Wednesday youth group in conjunction with Amutha Kandasamay (our hospital’s nutritionist) and Ben Malone. The numbers visibly increased as we held cooking sessions each week. The young people rose to the occasion donning their QLD Health Department aprons and bantering to each other across the kitchen as the onions were chopped and the rice was boiled with the girls often laughing openly at the boys about their less than practiced methods. The young men, despite stereotypes to the contrary, proved they can and do cook. Amutha insisted on good nutrition and ensured by the end of the course that they had many good ideas as to how to get it; reducing fat and sugar being the ultimate message.
- At Easter time, we filled two small vans collecting some Gatton youth on the way to travel to Brisbane to visit the groovy new tech centre called “The Edge” at Southbank. There, young people can make and access video and sound recording studios free of charge. After seeing The Edge, we went to the top of Mt. Cootha and saw how big Brisbane really is.
- Radio Africa continues with great regularity; a team of four young men rotate the duty to present the music and news of Sudan and local anecdotes in Dinka. Ideally, we are hoping to get more air time and expand the diversity of languages being presented.
- The South African FIFA cup was celebrated in Toowoomba with great passion and two teams emerged of mainly Sudanese youth. They could not both be called Sudan so the name “Ghana” was randomly selected for the second team. Noting there were Burundians and Congolese on both sides, the spirit of the occasion was of the best sporting kind. When “Sudan” beat all the local teams.

- in Toowoomba, they travelled to Brisbane until their luck ran out there. Toowoomba-ites must be thinking there are a lot of Ghanaians here as well now, and how similar many of them are in appearance to the Sudanese. All in all, a great month of Soccer was had.

Possibly Toowoomba office's proudest achievement this year has been the realisation of Photovoice which was a proposal successfully funded by the Regional Arts Development Fund to enable a group of photographers to be recruited to learn and document the range of African cultures on the Darling Downs and in the Lockyer valley. Photographers Ann Alcock and Lorraine Seipel mentored new photographers, who prior to that had not owned cameras much less used them.

Dubbed "**One Decade On – African Settlement on the Downs**", 17 photographers worked through the months of April, May and June to realise some beautiful work which will be able to tour perpetually on 12 large free standing screens to educate the broader community. Photovoice is also a project of the "here and now" which is a great focus to have when sometimes previous traumatic experiences tend to keep people living emotionally, in the past.

Participants made changes both within themselves by learning about composition, balance and how to manage light and shade, and externally to themselves by having the opportunity to learn together, work together and make new friendships. Many humorous and proud moments occurred as photos were framed and thumbs were hurt, clothes were displayed, and food was shared. I heard of bird chasing expeditions and the challenges of sports photography.....these are moments I know will remain in people's memories long after the project is over.

There were enormous contributions from individuals, both in front of and behind the cameras which left people feeling happy and proud, especially when knowing that these books will be kept in libraries, allowing all school children to read and learn from them.



The exhibition of photographs, a book and 12 free standing screens covered with photographs and stories written by the participants was recently launched on the 2nd October as an exhibition to run for a month in the Kath Dickson Art Space, Toowoomba. After that it has already been offered to tour regional libraries state wide, and will be available for loan to schools, fetes and events requiring multicultural input.

Finally as a result of the QPASTT organisational review, the Toowoomba office as a standalone office has had to be disbanded and the service reformed into that of outreach from Brisbane. At the end of

June said goodbye to Rebecca Dawson, Gabriel Pioth and our youth group assistant Akoc Adhil. I will remain until the end of this current IHSS contract in January 2010.

Kristy Date has been appointed to be the regional outreach worker. She is getting into her stride and it is likely Gatton will have an improved service as she will be there weekly on a Monday and in Toowoomba for two full days on Thursday and Friday. Happily Kristy knows Toowoomba well, having worked here for QPASTT in 2004- 2005 and she has already met people, who remember her fondly.

It has been wonderful that QPASTT has had the office and services here, as long as it was possible and we know that quality services will continue.

RESP-ECCT PROGRAM

Terri McDonald

The RESP-ECCT Program focuses upon strengthening the wellbeing of carers who are people of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, looking after someone with a mental health concern. We primarily offer services to people living in North Brisbane (to Deception Bay) to engage in peer group support, recreational activities and we also offer advocacy and referral as required.

Our program is a partnership between QPASTT, Communify, All About Living and the Multicultural Development Association. Each organisation contributes to the delivery of a flexible service allowing carers, family and community members or the person with a mental health concern to participate. We run a range of group activities including (but not limited to) a multicultural women's English group, X-Men's (exercise) program, Women's multicultural craft group, Women's sewing group, an Afghani social support and outing group, Kurdish soccer group, Women's volleyball, Faka'eve'eva'i (Tongan women's outing group) and a Pacific Islander Storytelling group. Participants have told us that these activities have assisted them to connect with others, have improved their opportunities to make friends, has increased their knowledge about mental health and the support systems available.

The RESPECCT Program has also delivered a community strengthening component where we have worked with the Samoan, Tongan, Sudanese, Afghani, Iranian and Kurdish communities to assist community leaders and active community members to access resources. This includes educational opportunities to support people with mental health and wellbeing in their community. Some examples of the education support provided includes, Mental Health First Aid with Transcultural Mental Health QLD and "Orientation to Pastoral Care and Mental Health" at A Place to Belong.

Most of the people in our RESPECCT Program do not identify as having a mental illness or caring for someone in their family or community who does. This is for a number of varied and important reasons including stigma, non-western or non-medical beliefs surrounding their health, limited access to or understanding of health and mental health services in Australia. Our bicultural mental health workers employed by RESPECCT for their cross cultural, community engagement and support service expertise have been a key success factor in working with people who say they are isolated and unwell. Without these workers and the use of interpreters, the people we engage with would remain hidden carers and people disengaged from our community due to mental illness.

As part of RESP-ECCT, QPASTT and Griffith University have partnered to support a PhD scholarship for Michelle Harris who is researching under the guidance of Professor Elizabeth Kendall at the Centre of National Research on Disability and Rehabilitation Medicine, Griffith Health Institute at Logan Campus. As part of her PhD, Michelle will be evaluating the strengths and challenges of this partnership approach to build individual and sector capacity around mental health respite for carers of CALD background. We hope that this research partnership will assist program outcomes to be included in future programs of service delivery and program development for the sector.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Grace Samuel and Sally Stewart

A new focus to our community development work commenced this year with the successful funding awarded to QPASTT under the Coordinated Advocacy in the Multicultural Sector Network (CAMS Network). This new funding for the targeted position to work with refugee communities has allowed our CAMS worker Grace Samuel to continue her part-time, strategic role in supporting community groups and extend from Brisbane to Toowoomba and Gatton.

Building stronger community relationships is the key focus of our work strengthened by our passion for promoting human rights, cross cultural understanding and community partnership. Community mentorship was part of the training offered under this Program and Halima (pictured right) worked with QPASTT to support a number of projects including the 2009 Brisbane Refugee Women's Forum. We also wish to acknowledge the achievements of a small project supported by local theatre group—VMF Foundation who gave a donation to help isolated women from the DCR of Congo now living in Brisbane and Logan.



We would like to thank the Elders, Leaders, men, women and young people of the newly arrived and existing communities and services whom we worked with this year who assisted us to understand their needs, allowed us to work alongside them and supported our needs in helping clients and broader community initiatives.

Over the past 4 years we have provided meaningful connections and developed strong working relationships between community groups from Africa, services and the Queensland African Communities Council (QACC). We are also now working in this Program with newly arrived communities from Burma. A broad range of issues arose throughout the year including racism, access to space, child protection issues as well as youth and family violence. In response, we worked with QACC, Police, Church Groups, Schools, Local and State Members, BCC, other services and all levels of government to advocate with community groups and assist affected families to have a role in local based solutions.



ADMIN & SUPPORT TEAM

Sally Stewart

The Administration Team is the first point of contact at QPASTT. Its main function is to warmly welcome clients and stakeholders in reception as well as support our 40 staff in their program delivery. We work with a broad range of stakeholders and manage QPASTT's policies and procedures, finances, human resources, OH&S requirements, data collection and reporting.

Over the past year we have instituted a number of system improvements and of significance was the internal audit of our Family Relationship Program—POUCH by the Department of Families and Housing, Community Services & Indigenous Affairs. This was an extensive audit in which QPASTT did exceedingly well with feedback about some of our innovative policies and well developed and respectful guiding Principles, Core Values and Code of Conduct.

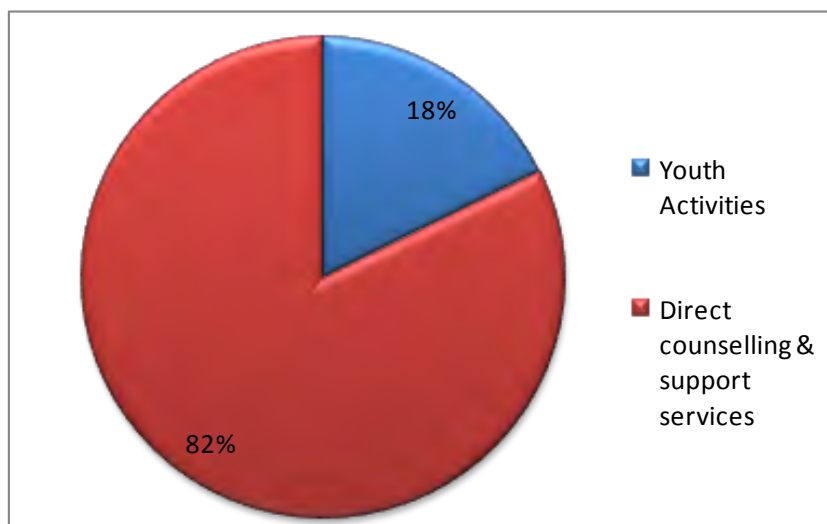
At the end of June as part of the restructure, the Team Leader, Helen Lacson decided to leave QPASTT. Helen gave a tremendous amount of herself to the organisation and has left a strong foundation of systems and processes in place to facilitate the smooth running of the organisation. The team and organisation wishes Helen all the best for the future.



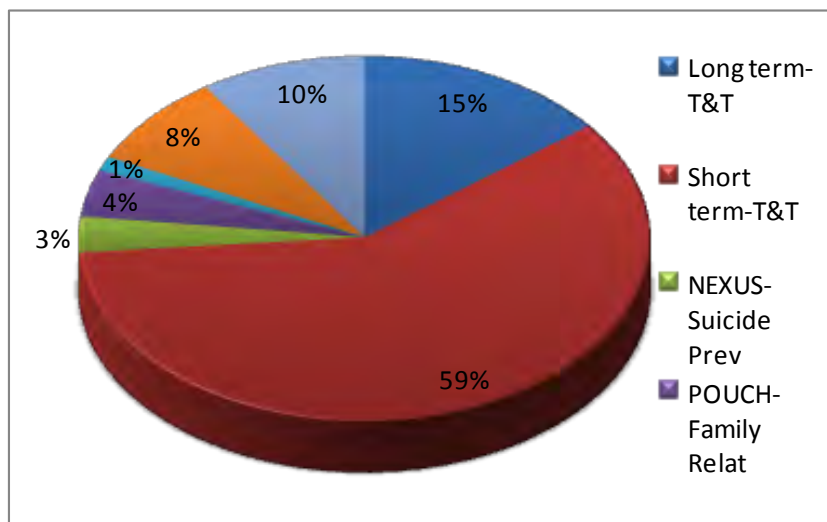
SERVICE DATA PROFILE

Total Number of QPASTT Clients 2009-2010

Service Programs	New	Continuing	Total
Counselling	1443	591	2034
Youth (school holiday and homework club)	204	234	438
Youth & Family Groups (family days, rock & water, flipside circus)	203		203
Total	1850	825	2675



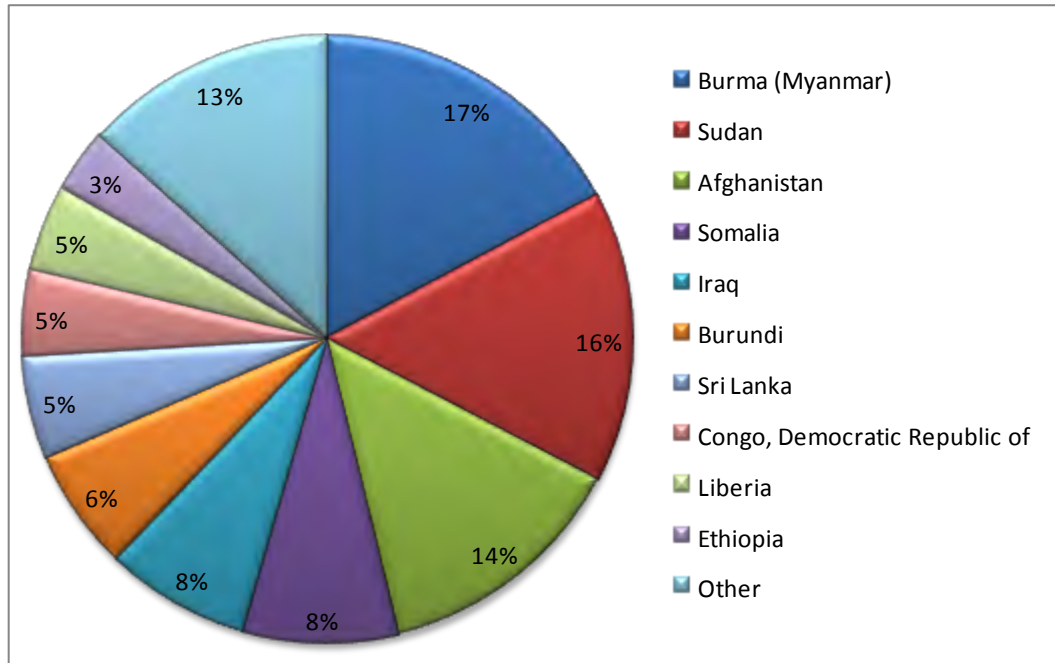
Total number of clients



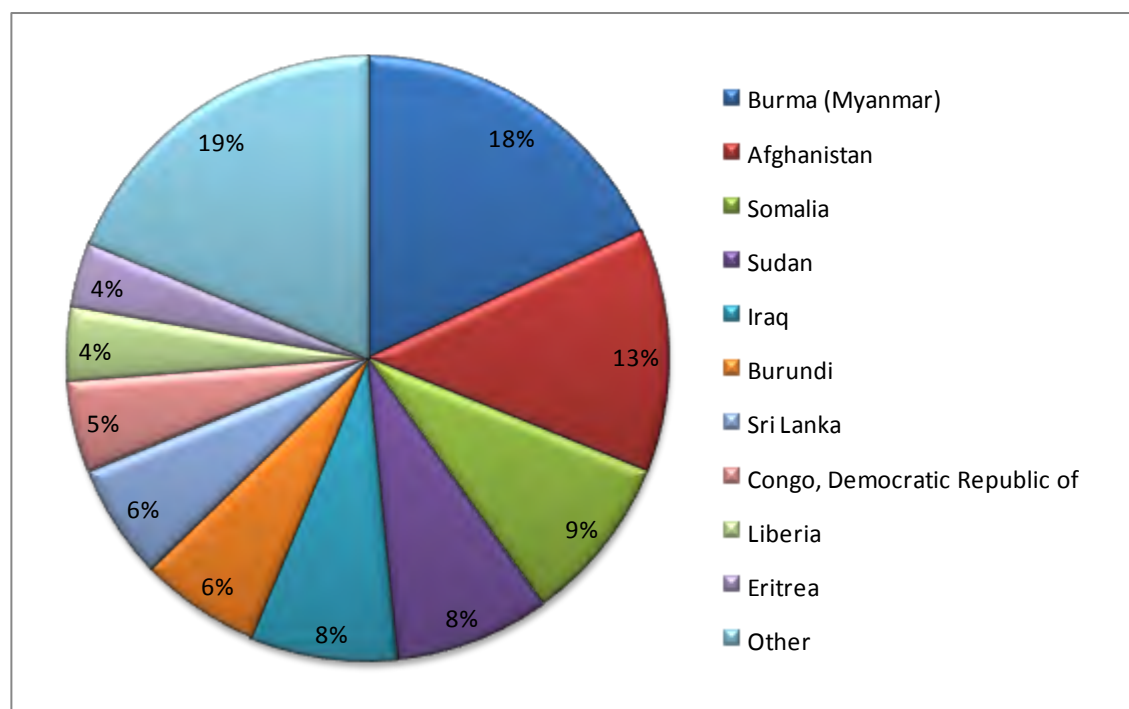
By Individual Program Area

SERVICE DATA PROFILE

QPASTT saw clients from 59 different countries of origin of which the top 10 countries are represented below.

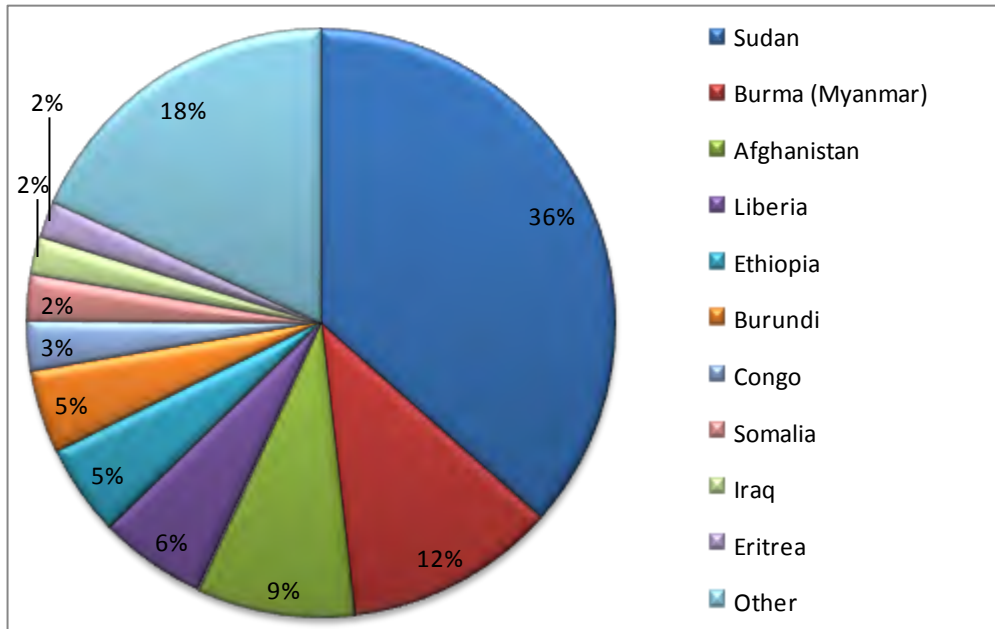


Country of Origin for Counselling & Advocacy

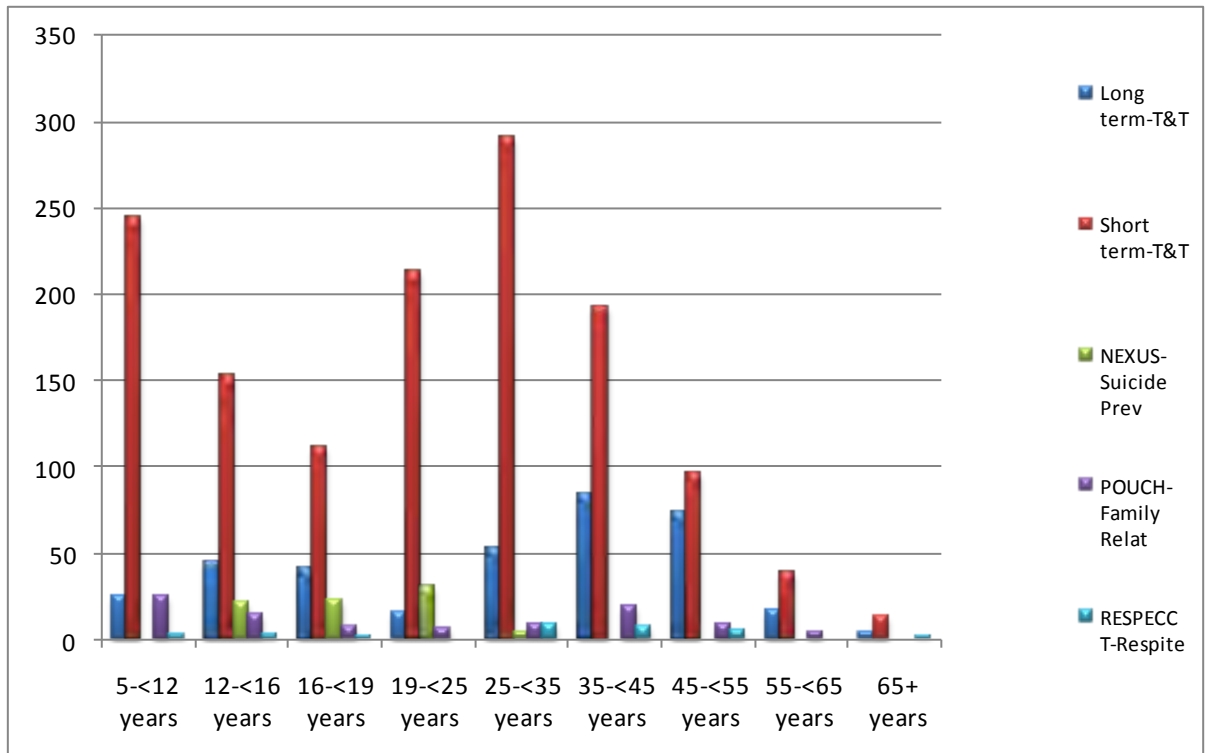


SERVICE DATA PROFILE

Youth Activities



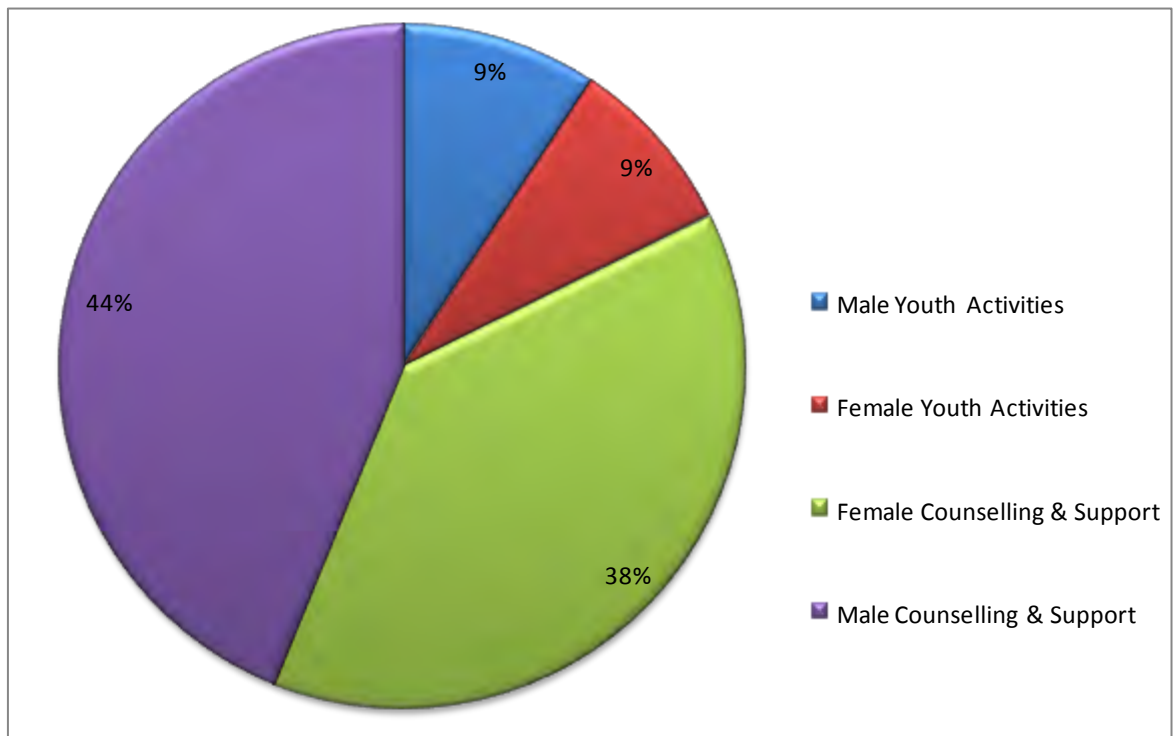
Client Ages by Program



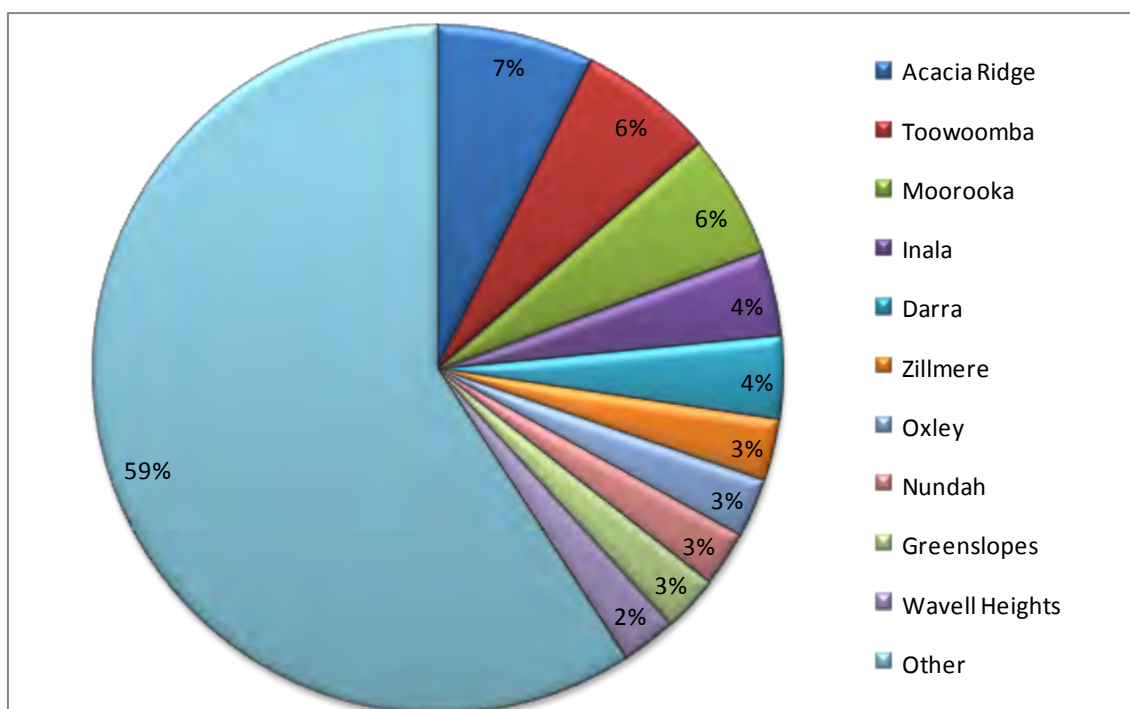
RESP-ECCT Program only refers to QPASTT clients in the Program

SERVICE DATA PROFILE

QPASTT Clients by Gender



QPASTT Clients by Suburbs



WHO was WHO at QPASTT 2009/2010

Committee of Management

Keithia Wilson	President
Luis Melgar	Treasurer
Ani Lozang Thubten	Secretary
Lyndall Kleinschmidt	Committee Member
Margo Couldrey	Committee Member
Abel Sibonio	Committee Member
Iona Valent	Committee Member (part year)
Egleema Nadir Shah	Committee Member
Mohammad Zia	Committee Member
Robin Lonergan	Committee Member

Staff

Tracy Worrall	Director
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Administration

• Helen Refalda- Lacson	Team Leader Administration
• Jackline Dada	Administrative Officer
• Azeb Mussie	Administrative Officer
• Saira Buksh	Administrative Officer
• Teegan Winters	Database Officer

Financial Services

• Rafael Pacheco	Financial Consultant
• Luis Melgar	Financial Consultant
• Luis Amaya	Financial Officer

Clinical Services

• Lois Whitman	Manager Clinical Services
• Liz Gordon	Manager Clinical Services (part)

WHO was WHO at QPASTT 2009/2010

Counselling and Support

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| • Charito Hassell | Counsellor Advocate/Acting Team Leader |
| • Fernanda Torresi | Counsellor Advocate /Acting Team Leader |
| • Kristy Date | Counsellor Advocate (part) |
| • Vicki Eroles | Counsellor Advocate |

Children Program

- | | |
|------------------|------------------------------------|
| • Suzanne Staal | Counsellor Advocate |
| • Ally Wakefield | Counsellor Advocate (part) |
| • Sam Anywar | Community Capacity Building (part) |

Natural Therapies

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| • Bronwynne Jettoo | Natural Therapist |
|--------------------|-------------------|

Early Intervention (IHSS) Team

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------------|
| • Rose DiBenedetto | Team Leader (part) |
| • Vedrana Jovicic | Team Leader (part) |
| • Taher Forotan | Counsellor Advocate |
| • Vedrana Jovicic | Counsellor Advocate (part) |
| • Mark Griffith | Counsellor Advocate |
| • Ricardo Rodriguez | Counsellor Advocate |
| • Jenny Woodburn | Counsellor Advocate |
| • Kali Lohman | Counsellor Advocate (part) |
| • Valerie Eden | Counsellor Advocate (part) |

Youth

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------|
| • Kristen Price | Team Leader (part) |
| • Valerie Eden | Team Leader (part) |
| • Abdi Yusuf | Youth Support Coordinator |
| • Elise Barton | Youth Worker |
| • Ana Pocrnjic | Counsellor/Advocate |
| • Hsa K Paw Hein | Youth Worker |
| • Elijah Boul | Community Worker |
| • Purity Chelangat Goj | Research Assistant |

WHO was WHO at QPASTT 2009/2010

Family & Community Services

Sally Stewart Manager Family & Community Services

Community Development

- Grace Samuel Community Development Worker

POUCH

- Susan Knopke Project Coordinator /Counsellor
- Magdalena Kuyang Bi-Cultural Worker
- Edith Santos Bi-Cultural Worker

RESP-EECT

- Valerie Eden Co-ordinator (part)
- Bree Somers Co-ordinator (part)
- Terri McDonald Counsellor/Advocate

Toowoomba Office

- Jenny Withnall Coordinator & NEXUS counsellor
- Rebecca Dawson IHSS Counsellor Advocate
- Gabriel Pioth NEXUS Community Youth Worker (part)
- Akoc Adhil NEXUS Community Youth Worker (part)
- Sharon O'Phee NEXUS Community Youth Worker (part)
- Donna Innosent Administration Officer (part)

LaTrobe Refugee Research Centre, LaTrobe University

- Dr Igancio Correa-Velez Deputy Director
- Gerald Onsando Project Officer (part)
- Purity Chelangat Goj Research Assistant

