



QPASTT

Queensland program of assistance
to survivors of torture and trauma

The Hope to Heal



AGM REPORT 2015 - 2016



QPASTT
Queensland program of assistance
to survivors of torture and trauma



fasstt
The Forum of Australian Services
for Survivors of Torture and Trauma



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The management committee

The governance and support that this committee has provided QPASTT staff, has been unfailing during uncertainty and encouraging during times of growth and development. On behalf of QPASTT Staff we thank the committee for the time and care that they dedicate to this organisation.

Professor Keithia Wilson

Mr. Luis Melgar

Dr. Lyndall Kleinschmidt

Mr. Robin Lonergan

Mr. Fraser Power

Dr. Pamela Douglas

Ms. Sharon Orapeleng

Dr. Ian Mannion

Mr Isaac Gong

President/ Executive Committee Member

Treasurer/ Executive Committee Member

Secretary/ Executive Committee Member

Executive Committee Member

Committee Member

Committee Member

Committee Member

Committee Member

Committee Member



The leadership team

Tracy Worrall	Chief Executive Officer
Stephanie Long	Direct Services Manager (part)
Megan Leitz	Direct Services Manager (part)
Lois Whiteman	Clinical Services Manager
Liz Gordon	Clinical Services Manager
Fernanda Torresi	Manager, Community Relationships & Capacity Building
Vickie Pastellas	Manager, People & Systems
Nilissa Livingstone	Coordinator, Regional Services Team
Farah Suleman	Coordinator, Asylum Seeker Support Team
Jim Schirmer	Coordinator, Children & Youth Team (part)
Amy Burkett	Coordinator, Children & Youth Team (part)
Vedrana Jovcic	Coordinator, Counselling Services Team (part)
Kathleen McBride	Coordinator, Counselling Services Team (part)



What is counselling at QPASTT?



Counselling is the process which allows a person to talk with a trained professional about things that are worrying them. In a new country where family and friends, elders or religious leaders are not always accessible, it is very common for people to feel sad, have bad dreams at night, feel angry or have thoughts about the past continuously coming into their minds. When this happens regularly, and starts impacting on everyday life, is important to look for help. At QPASTT there are professionals who are trained to support others with these challenges. They listen, understand, and together with each client, find ways of dealing with any difficult distressing issues that arise.

The QPASTT logo symbolises the recovery process from torture and trauma: the hard ground on which the tree grows represents the hardship survivors have experienced, both before and after migration. The tree itself represents the process of regrowth – often difficult, but ultimately rewarding - for the individual, for families and for communities. The branches of the tree reach out and reconnect with others, which in turn, if there is a positive response, feeds the tree's growth.

QPASTT offers counselling for individuals and families and it is also available for children, young people and adults.

Those requiring help can call or come to QPASTT and self-refer or ask their doctor, teacher, friend, family member or any other trusted source to refer them.

Some people prefer to get to know us better first. If so, they can attend one of our activities like Family Fun Day, School Holiday Activities, Community Leaders Dinner, Homework Club, etc. and meet the staff and see our office so they can have a taste of how we work. Or they can simply come to our office to see a duty counsellor to chat and get to know more about our services.





From the President Professor Keithia Wilson

This is my 10th year as President of QPASTT and it is with great pleasure that I present the 2015/2016 President's Report on behalf of the Management Committee of QPASTT.

As most of you would know QPASTT works only with people from a refugee background who have experienced oppression, displacement, torture and extreme trauma. Along with our FASSTT sister services in the other States, we are funded as part of Australia's commitment to the International Convention against Torture, providing recovery and rehabilitation services to survivors. We strive to do this within culturally sensitive individual, family and community frameworks.

At the end of 2015, there were 65.3 million individuals forcibly displaced worldwide as a result of persecution, conflict, generalized violence, or human rights violations. This was an increase of more than 8 million over the 2014 year and 6 million over the 2015 year. There are now 21.3 million refugees and 10 million stateless people seeking resettlement. Over half of these are under 18. 54% of these refugees come from 3 countries: Somalia (1.1m); Afghanistan (2.7m); and Syria (4.9m). In 2015 alone there were 2,260,483 new applications for asylum in Europe, North America, Asia and Oceania. Australia received just 12,710 of these applications (less than .56% of the total for these countries). Yet a negative debate around asylum seekers continues to dominate the Australian conversation.



In the last year Australia resettled 13,750 people via the Humanitarian program and commenced resettlement for an additional 12,000 people from the Syrian/Iraqi conflict. It has been announced that there will be a permanent increase in the annual humanitarian intake from 2018/2019 to 18,750. We welcome this increase, and QPASTT will endeavour to continue to provide services to those who need it.

In the last year we provided services to 1917 clients from 60 different ethnicities and speaking over 60 languages. In addition, 324 group sessions were conducted with 45 sets of groups.

Services were provided across 13 locations in Queensland including:

- Cairns;
- Townsville;
- Rockhampton;
- Biloela
- Toowoomba;
- Gatton;
- Gold Coast;
- Logan;
- Goodna;
- Inala;
- Ipswich;
- Brisbane City; and
- Brisbane North.



Over the last 20 years QPASTT has remained focused on its core purpose: supporting individuals, families and communities whose experiences have often had a profound and long term impact on their health and wellbeing. The resilience of individuals and families in surviving and making it to Australia demonstrates their strength and capacity to overcome such experiences. The provision of appropriate and timely support, and recovery focused services enables survivors to positively contribute not just to the Australian community, but also to Australian workplaces and the economy.



The last year has seen the continuation of increases in the severity and complexity of issues with clients seen by the agency. This has been driven in part by the number of asylum seeker clients who have now been living with uncertainty for many years. We are also seeing an increasing number of children and young people attending the service. Children and young people under the age of 25 now make up just fewer than 50 % of QPASTT clients, reflecting the increasing number of children and young people being displaced across the world.

It is the staff who make QPASTT such a dynamic organisation, and once again it is my pleasure to acknowledge and thank them. The policy environment in which the organisation operates continues to be complex and difficult. The dedication and expertise of the people within the organisation cannot be understated and is greatly appreciated. QPASTT has a diverse and skilled, multicultural staff base with 70% of staff born overseas and representing more than 28 different ethnic communities. The Committee appreciates the extraordinary efforts of all staff in contributing to the work of the organisation. To staff who have moved on during the year, their contribution has been appreciated and I wish them the best in their new endeavours. To staff who have joined the organisation in the last year, I welcome you and hope you enjoy your time at QPASTT – I hope that you will find the organisation to be welcoming and supportive.



I would particularly like to thank the management staff including the Director, Tracy Worrall, the Senior Managers, Stephanie Long, Megan Leitz, Lois Whiteman and Liz Gordon, Fernanda Torresi and Vickie Pastellas; and the Team Co-ordinators, Nilissa Livingstone, Farah Suleman, Jim Schirmer, Amy Burkett and Kathleen McBride. They have all worked extremely hard under challenging circumstances and provide strong inspirational leadership and support.

As I reflect on the years that I have been involved with QPASTT, I am inspired by the commitment and energy of those around me - clients, staff and other committee members.

I would like to acknowledge the support and dedication of all the management committee members as we have moved through the year: Luis Melgar, Lyndall Kleinschmidt, Robin Lonergan, Ian Mannion, Fraser Power, Pam Douglas, Isaac Gong and Sharon Orapeleng. Together you form a committed group of people from a diverse range of backgrounds, skills and experience. You have all been a pleasure to work with and I look forward to working with you all again next year.



I would particularly like to acknowledge the community members on the management committee – they keep us connected to the issues of refugee families and play a vital role in ensuring that QPASTT remains responsive and relevant to our refugee families, individuals and communities. On behalf of QPASTT I would also like to thank members of the communities with whom we work in partnership. We appreciate the involvement of community leaders and members in our service, and without your participation in the design of our services we would not be as effective. We look forward to working with you in the coming year.

As always, it is a privilege to be part of the wonderful organisation that is QPASTT and to witness the positive contribution that this service makes to the lives of people who have fled persecution and war to seek safety in Australia every year.





From the Treasurer Luis Melgar

I am pleased to present the Treasurer's Report for 2015/16.

In the 2015/2016 year QPASTT received just over \$6 million dollars in funding and the organisation has remained in a solid financial position. The agency is able to meet all of its financial obligations and commitments. QPASTT received funding from a range of different sources during the year with the majority coming from Commonwealth Government agencies, followed by the Queensland Government. Our core funding for the work that we undertake with refugee survivors continues to come from the Australian Department of Health and the Queensland Health Department.

QPASTT ended the financial year in a sound financial position with sufficient reserves to cover all outstanding liabilities. The breakdown of expenses is in line with previous years, with employee expenses representing the majority of expenditure and other major outlays including interpreters and costs associated with maintaining a regional presence across Queensland.



I would like acknowledge the expertise and skills of Mal Bowatta 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 2015/2016 Audited Financial Statements prepared by our Auditors, Haywards Chartered Accountants. 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 2015. The report is unqualified and I recommend it to you for your approval.

In closing I would like to propose to keep Haywards Chartered Accountants as external Auditors for the forthcoming financial year and would like to move a motion to nominate them for 2016/2017.





From the CEO Tracy Worrall

I feel immensely privileged to be the Director of QPASTT and to work with the communities, clients, staff and management committee members that make QPASTT such a remarkable service.

As I noted in the last annual report, change seems constant in our environment and this year has again been marked by changes in funding, changes in policy and changes in the political environment in which we operate. As always these changes bring both positive outcomes and challenges and it is up to us to make the most of the possibilities that these changes bring for both the organisation and our clients.

QPASTT remains committed to working within a human rights framework in order to deliver services which enable recovery from state sanctioned violence and conflict. Our work with survivors strongly reinforces why all forms of torture and other cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment is unacceptable and needs to be prohibited. We remain dedicated to the provision of recovery services for refugee survivors of torture and trauma and will continue to advocate for access to appropriate services for our client group.



The work we do and the context in which we operate is one that continues to challenge us all. The fine line between being an advocate for our clients, in particular those seeking asylum and protection, and becoming an activist continues to challenge us. It is often difficult to bear witness to people's pain and not take public action to condemn this. We do, however, take up opportunities to influence public discourse around these issues whenever we can.

As an organisation that works with clients across a spectrum of life experiences, it is a privilege to be part of people's lives through these stages of their settlement and recovery. The experiences, resilience and stories of so many of our clients continue to inspire and motivate me.

I am also continually impressed with the staff at QPASTT - your commitment and dedication to service delivery, creating innovative ways to meet needs and obtain positive outcomes for clients.

The complexity of the environment in which we work drives us to find innovative and flexible solutions, something which QPASTT does well and will hopefully continue to do well into the future. It is this that makes us a relevant and important organisation both for clients and for staff but also to the broader Australian community.

One of the strengths of QPASTT is that it has been able to remain focused on its core work rather than broaden its focus in order to grow for the sake of growth. This has enabled us to concentrate on developing the skills that we need and fostering links with the communities that we work with.



In doing this, however, I am aware of the challenges and stresses staff face in working in this area and I thank you for your dedication and commitment. I am proud of the professionalism, commitment and flexibility shown by all staff in the organisation as they maintain a high level of professional services to clients. I thank staff for their willingness to undertake increasingly complex

and challenging work and their patience and commitment to the organisation as we move through these changes. The Senior Management Team at QPASTT has always been incredibly dedicated and hardworking and this year has been no different. Lois, Steph, Megan, Vickie, Fernanda and Liz, you have provided a high level of leadership, stability, direction and support to the organisation and without you the organisation would not be able to maintain the depth and professionalism of its service delivery to clients. I thank you for your knowledge, support and care, not only of the organisation but also for me personally.

The management team at QPASTT is comprised of senior managers and team co-ordinators – all hard working and committed leaders. This team tackles issues facing QPASTT with robust debate, humour and patience. While this may not always be comfortable it is always appreciated. I would like to thank you all, without your support and input this position would be much more difficult.

Again this year we have continued to support the National FASSTT Co-ordinator and it is a pleasure to have Paula Peterson in this role. QPASTT is actively involved in the National FASSTT Network and I have found Paula's support invaluable.

Finally I would also like to thank the members of the Management Committee. It is easy to undervalue the contribution provided by Management Committee members to organisations, but the willingness of QPASTT's Management Committee members to contribute of their time and skills is very much appreciated. They are a wonderful group of committed, hardworking and caring people who have supported me and the organisation throughout the year. Their role in ensuring the organisation is well governed cannot be underestimated.

As a service primarily concerned with supporting people and communities to recover from their experiences and to be active and contributing members of their communities and society, I would like to thank our clients and the communities 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.





This has been necessary as our funding and reporting obligations are changing, our service delivery is expanding and QPASTT is needing to be increasingly responsive to opportunities arising from changes in policy. What was formerly known as the Direct Services Manager position has now split into a Direct Services Manager and a Manager of Service Development. Separating these roles has given greater capacity and scope on two fronts. Firstly, to ensure that our broad range of QPASTT services continue to be delivered to a high standard befitting of a specialist torture and trauma agency. Secondly, to ensure that we are developing QPASTT services in a responsive, proactive manner that continues to meet the needs of the refugee communities that we work with.



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responding to the changing needs of newly arriving and established refugee communities, and meeting contractual expectations. The shift of funding arrangements for some of our youth programs particularly, has required us to reframe our service delivery, and changes in reporting requirements have needed operational attention. The operational supervision of the Asylum Seeker Support Team moving to the Direct Services Manager role has also meant that all the clinical services teams are centrally managed.

This has enabled common practice and staffing issues across teams to be consistently supported and solutions to be found across team experiences.



This year we have also been able to create a new role of the Brief Intake and Assessment Senior Practitioner. This role has been developed to improve triaging of new counselling referrals, and to increase our capacity to provide a meaningful contact with QPASTT quickly. Having established this role, we can now engage more fully with newly arriving humanitarian entrants in collaboration with HSS services such as MDA, MFO and ACCESS. We are very pleased that our experienced counsellor,

Ana Pocrnjic has stepped into the Brief Intake and Assessment Senior Practitioner Role and has begun to establish this role as a valuable addition to the counselling services teams of QPASTT.

We have also begun preparing for the increased humanitarian intake, and particularly people arriving from the Syrian/Iraqi conflict. We have sought to increase our understanding of this complex conflict and how the fractious nature of the conflict may impact on those experiencing feelings of persecution. We have met with MDA and ACCESS to develop clear referral pathways for new arrivals who are indicated by UNHCR as having a torture or trauma experience. We have also collaborated with MDA and Mater Centre for Primary Health Care Innovation to have a consistent presence at the MDA *LifeSkills* program for new arrivals.



Some of the smaller projects across the year have included:

- Drafting a Compassion Fatigue, Burnout and Vicarious Trauma Guidebook for volunteers, community members and professionals working with survivors of torture and trauma from a refugee or asylum seeking background.
- Updating our Temporary Protection Visa handbook as a referral resource for agencies and individuals supporting TPV holders. This was also presented at the Australian Red Cross TPV forum in early June 2016.
- Refining our research policy to respond to researchers approaching QPASTT to participate in their projects.

As is inevitable for organisations the size of QPASTT, we have responded to a number of staffing changes as people adapt to life's challenges and opportunities. Recruitment of new staff and the facilitation of existing staff to move across teams, remains a core role of the Direct Services Manager position. We continue to be fortunate to have a number of skilled and experienced professionals eager to work at QPASTT, including professionals from refugee backgrounds.



From the Clinical Service Managers Lois Whiteman & Liz Gordon

The Clinical Service Managers are responsible for ensuring that the organisation has strong clinical frameworks and clinical governance arrangements.

Clinical Supervision

This last year has seen the continued consolidation of the professional supervision team and an ongoing commitment to the provision of clinical supervision across the organisation. With QPASTT having a staff group of over 70, the provision of clinical supervision has become a team effort. In addition to Lois Whiteman and Liz Gordon, as the Clinical Services Managers, supervision is also provided within the organisation by Kristy Howard (Clinical Supervisor), Tanya Van Bael (Senior Clinician) and Erica Fernandez (Senior Clinician). We also thank Kathleen McBride who was able to assist in the provision of supervision for three months while Lois Whiteman took her well-earned long service leave.

QPASTT also continues to provide a balance of individual and group supervision. Group supervision and learning circles have a specific focus, involving external supervisors with specialist knowledge, and covers the areas of Family and Adults (Paul Gibney), Children and Youth (Libby Morton and Ulrike Kraus), Regional Work (Kristy Howard) and Asylum Seekers (Lois Whiteman).



Internal Clinical Training of Staff

The internal clinical training of staff has continued as a feature of the offline weeks that occur at QPASTT three times per year. In the past year, this has involved training delivered internally by QPASTT staff, including training on clinical assessment (Lois Whiteman and Liz Gordon), Working

Cross Culturally (Lois Whiteman and Erica Fernandez) and a case note workshop (Liz Gordon and Stephanie Long). An exciting new feature of one offline week was a staff showcase which involved staff providing interactive training on an area related to their role where they have developed further expertise. In the area of clinical practice this included training on Art Therapy (Farah Suleman) and Dialectical Behavioural Therapy and Self Harm (Sarah Kristensen)



Lois Whiteman continues to conduct ongoing quarterly Dream Clinics during QPASTT Offline Weeks which provide training and case conferencing on working with traumatic dreams and nightmares so prevalent in our client group. This year saw a number of Offline Week training sessions facilitated by External Trainers. There was a session which provided an introduction to the concepts and application of sensory approaches. This has led to the purchase of sensory materials and the greater use of sensory techniques which are especially useful in the grounding and emotional regulation of clients recovering from trauma. Counselling staff working with children and young people have also been trained in the use of a Computer Assisted Interviewing (CAI) tool in partnership with University of Melbourne and Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Trauma (VFST).

All new staff attend compulsory induction training in the clinical frameworks which is delivered throughout the year by clinical supervisors. New counsellors are also involved in an observation of practice process with their clinical supervisor which aims to optimise worker development and quality service delivery.

External Training

All clinical supervisors have been involved in the delivery of training for the external training calendar on topics as diverse as Vicarious Trauma and Burnout, Therapeutic Frameworks and Interventions, Incidental Counselling, Working Cross-Culturally and Working with Families and Children

FASSTT Involvement

Liz Gordon has continued to be involved in the Senior Clinicians FASSTT working group. This year has seen the finalisation of the FASSTT Report Writing Guidelines for Asylum Seekers and the updating of definitions and review of data collection in the FASSTT Minimum Data Set.

Other Clinical Projects

A number of additional projects related to the provision of clinical services have also been completed or commenced in the last year. This includes guidelines for cross team communication and care of counselling rooms, as well as the improvement of the counselling room spaces, such as sand play set up and equipping the children's counselling room. Work has also commenced on a cross cultural workers induction guide, clinical contribution to Whole of School Approach DVD and improved suicide risk assessment processes.



Trends/Themes in Counselling Work

The past year has seen counsellors and supervisors enjoying recovery successes with their clients but on the other hand, becoming increasingly concerned about the worsening mental health of others. This is particularly the case for asylum seekers who, due to a lack of a secure, safe refuge and limited access to services here in Australia, are observed to be experiencing heightened impacts of traumatic stress: increased suicidal ideation and risk, serious dissociative symptoms, serious sleep disturbance to name just a few. For those with permanent residency, of concern are the increasing difficulties of family reunion, and the increasing risk for family members remaining in their countries of origin. The chronic stress and complex grief related to separation from family overseas is seen as exacerbating trauma symptomology and impeding recovery. QPASTT has seen a steady increase in the number of referrals received for children and young people which also speaks to the impact that these issues have on all members of family units, not just adults.

The effect of this ongoing strain on clients (and also on QPASTT staff) is of great concern to Clinical Supervisors because at times it is difficult to ensure that clients receive the various professional mental health responses they need. *Timely advocacy, in addition to counselling, aims to promote access to a range of services in the community that enhance quality of life and reduce significant stress in clients' lives. While we still have clients in need of acute services, many clients are able to avert hospitalisation through the counselling they receive.*



As noted earlier, we recognise the heartening changes we witness in the supervision process as staff reflect on their clients' recovery through the therapeutic process. Daily in supervision sessions, supervisors note the increasing trust and emotional safety as clients connect with the counselling process and have a protected space in which to express themselves. Counselling support provides a safety net while the painful memories and current stresses of life in Australia are worked through.





From the Manager of Community Development & Capacity Building Fernanda Torresi

This year, we would like to thank all the communities from refugee backgrounds that have worked alongside us. We would also like to thank our partners and colleagues from the government and non-government sector with whom we continue to work and collaborate. We hope you all enjoy reading about what we have done as much as we have enjoyed doing it.

“Community is a place where you can find your own people and people you can identify with and share your cultural identity. Community is not always coming from a particular place, ethnicity, religion or culture, however. For some people it is instead, a group of people who come together to provide practical, emotional, social and financial support to each other. Trust, collaboration, stability and celebration are the key elements of community.” [Youth Voice- 2014 DATSIMA Youth Consultation].

Recovery happens at an individual, family and community level. What has the CR&CB Team done this financial year to honour the recovery framework and this definition of community?



“Community is a place where you can find your own people and people you can identify with and share your cultural identity.”

QPASTT has continued to support the development of the African Australian Women’s Network (AAWN). It has supported the organisation and facilitation of its fortnightly meetings as well as supporting the mentoring of the future leaders of the network. Two main achievements of AAWN worth mentioning are: winning an award at the African Australian Awards as well as getting a grant from the Department of Communities for the International Women’s Day 2016. In collaboration with BCC, QPASTT has also been able to link AAWN with other women’s networks such as the Pasifika Women’s Alliance (PWA), Global Organisation for People of Indian Origin (GOPIO) and others in order to promote intercultural dialogues.

Members of the established Syrian community in Brisbane, have started an Association to support new arrivals from the Syrian/Iraqi community in QLD. The new leaders participated in the End of the Year Community Leaders Dinner, and introduced themselves to the rest of the leaders and other service providers to further develop their network. The leaders also attended a meeting at QPASTT where they were able to have a better understanding of QPASTT services. They met the QPASTT Chief Executive and the President of the Management Committee.

Women from the Somali community gathered together at Richlands East State School for the purpose of having a safe place to talk about the everyday issues that they encounter as well as sharing their success stories and skills. The group sessions were divided into two segments: psycho-education and sewing. The women freely expressed their feelings and experiences while upholding the traditions of respect, support and mutual co-operation. Attending the group helped the women to build relationships, strengthen their confidence and improve skills. The women also received a better understanding of the different services that QPASTT offers.



“Community is not always coming from a particular place, ethnicity, religion or culture, however. For some people it is instead, a group of people who come together to provide practical, emotional, social and financial support to each other”

QPASTT held more than 60 consultative meetings with community leaders and relevant service providers across Brisbane, Logan, Ipswich and Toowoomba. The meetings were aimed at identifying key issues affecting these communities and individuals to ensure appropriate services are engaged to provide needs-based interventions.



Four Community Leaders Dinners were planned, organised and held in partnership with MDA, attracting over 300 people in total. The topics addressed at each of the dinners were related to leaders' expressions of interest around the needs of their communities.

These topics were: Education and Training Pathways; End of Year Celebration; Refugee Community Health and Access to Hospital Support; Domestic and Family Violence. The presenters were from services such as the Department of Education and Training, TAFE TELLS, Griffith University, Queensland University of Technology and Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre; the Department of Health, Mater Health Services, Logan Hospital, Ipswich Hospital, Mater Refugee Health, and Health Consumers Queensland; Queensland Police Service (QPS), Immigrant Women's Support Service (IWSS), the Brisbane Magistrates Court.

The Leaders' Dinner brought together ethnic community leaders from predominantly communities from refugee backgrounds to interface with experts in the topics mentioned above. The leaders were able to ask questions, give their input and raise concerns about different issues impacting their communities. They were also able to network among themselves and service providers, to share strategies and engage in collaborative work.



The Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services, the Hon. Cameron Dick MP, was the keynote speaker of the Refugee Health and Access to Hospital Support dinner highlighting the new government Refugee Health Policy. The Hon. Shannon Fentiman MP, Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence was the keynote speaker for the Domestic and Family Violence Dinner. Both Ministers took the time to greet each of leaders, listening to some of their concerns, which was highlighted as being very positive by the leaders.

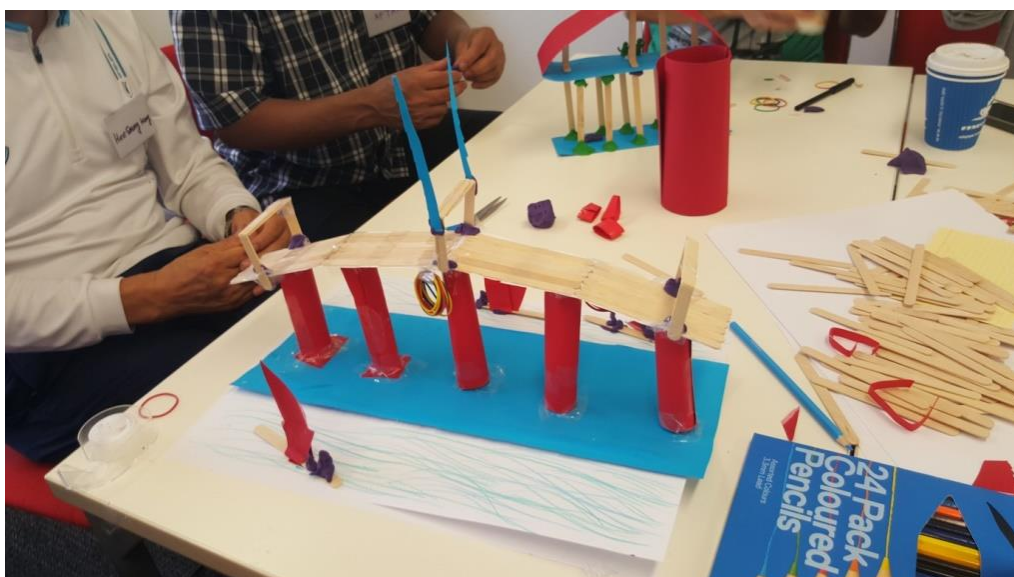
From our torture and trauma work we also know that many people from a refugee background distrust authority and are especially fearful of those who are in high government positions. Having had the opportunity to meet and greet government representatives is also part of the recovery and healing process and provides people with a sense of belonging.





To continue our commitment to supporting people in getting together, four sets of holiday activities were held for children (aged 5 to 12 years) and their parents/carers, with more than 370 participants. The families who attended the activities were from many different communities. The activities were held in different locations in order to make activities accessible to as many clients as possible. This also enabled families to become familiar with local facilities so that they can continue to use them after the activities. These activities were delivered in partnership with Ipswich City Council, Logan City Council, Brisbane City Council and Ginger Sport.

Support, Skill and Connect (SSC) is a pilot program that has been developed by QPASTT. This program aims to create a safe and secure environment where the participants (Southbank TAFE students from refugee backgrounds) can feel more in control of their lives and learning experience. The program is also designed to build connections between students, volunteers, teachers and facilitators as a way of restoring connections with other human beings in a safe and supported environment. Support, Skill and Connect successfully ran at Southbank TAFE from April to June.



There were 12 participants on average, along with the class teacher and two QPASTT facilitators. Volunteers were a vital part of this program, attending each week for a half a day. The program evaluation showed that it was successful in reducing learning barriers and increasing job readiness; providing opportunities for establishing safe, trusting relationships and building wider connections through involvement of volunteers and other staff that students do not ordinarily have the opportunity to interact with. The program was also effective in providing a therapeutic environment where feelings of shame, emotional distress, worry and traumatic stress could be identified and shared. The students were empowered to find appropriate ways of managing these. The program team would like to gratefully acknowledge all of the stakeholders who collaborated with QPASTT in the implementation of Support, Skill and Connect, especially TAFE Queensland Brisbane and the QUT School of Public Health, whose workers contributed their time and expertise in evaluating the pilot program.

QPASTT was part of the Multicultural Youth Day in Inala. QPASTT continues to participate at QPS meetings convened for different communities such the QPS South Brisbane District Community Meeting, QPS Somali Community Meeting and QPS Muslim Community Representative Meeting. QPASTT also attended the annual QPS Multi-faith Dinner.

QPASTT delivered five Parents' Engagement Workshop sessions to parents from refugee backgrounds in Richlands East State School. The workshops were attended by 18 parents. Most of the parents who attended the workshops have been in Australia less than 5 years and were originally from Somalia, Ethiopia, Congo and Burundi. They reported that they received a better understanding of the education system in Australia and felt more confident about discussing issues about their children's education with school representatives.

We have donated 6 used computers in excellent condition to AusCongo, which is a volunteer organisation dedicated to community development projects that help the Congolese community in DRC to alleviate poverty. They'll use the computers to help young people with their studies back home.



“Trust, collaboration, stability and celebration are the key elements of community”

Through these key elements of community, QPASTT has worked with and alongside communities, and celebrated:

- The International Women’s Day with the African Australian Women Network in March and the African Australian Awards in November. QPASTT supported the organisation of both these events that brought more than 500 people together from the communities, government and non-government sector.
- The achievement of the Afghan Women’s group that received a grant for their volleyball team and the Afghan and Somali young men that were able to participate in the soccer tournaments that they wanted to be part of.
- Several AGMs and community festivals with the Karen, Eritrean, Tamil, Congolese, Somali, South Sudanese, Burmese, Sierra Leonean, Tanzanian, Iranian communities and others.

It is also important to build the capacity of other service providers to develop trust, collaboration and stability with our client group in order to build these communities. To this end, QPASTT partnered with Ipswich City Council to deliver a Principals Breakfast Forum in Ipswich for schools in Ipswich and surrounding areas and a Service Provider Forum. These forums aimed to raise awareness and understanding of the refugee experience and the impact of trauma and resettlement. A range of service providers working with people from a refugee background were invited to raise awareness about their existence and build referral pathways. Both forums were very well attended.



QPASTT has also been actively involved in consultations with a number of PHNs regarding needs assessments, new funding arrangements and other issues. QPASTT is a key participant in the Refugee Health Network. This network is a co-operative venture involving Queensland Health, the Mater Hospital, PHNs, Settlement Agencies, other relevant services and QPASTT.

The Training Calendar is delivered by QPASTT staff to build the capacity of other service providers, government and non-government representatives, students, volunteers and people from the community in general. The aim is to broaden understanding of the refugee experience and the impact of trauma. On top of this, we have also delivered more than 20 tailored trainings requested by other service providers.

And last but not least, a word about the Community Relationships and Capacity Building Team members. This year we welcomed to the team, Letitia Casagrande in the role of Project Officer. I would like to thank everyone in the team for all of their hard work. The year has been enjoyable and challenging, yet all team members remain fully engaged in this rewarding and important work.





From the Manager of People & Systems - Vickie Pastellas

The motivation, resilience and dedication of everyone in this organisation is truly inspirational.

Despite the very real challenges faced in working with such troubled clients within the current political framework, QPASTT workers remain generally buoyant and optimistic. I often ask myself how this can be, when surrounding circumstances can seem rather bleak. I believe at least part of the answer lies at the heart of QPASTT's multicultural base. QPASTT as an organisation should take great pride in its success as a culturally diverse workplace with staff from more than 32 different ethnic communities. The Administration team alone, over the past year, has included around ten different nationalities.



QPASTT's cultural diversity has nurtured an atmosphere of acceptance, tolerance and inclusion. Differences are celebrated and accommodated; workers are supported and buffered. Food is a big part of QPASTT culture and our regular shared lunches provide many opportunities for staff to relax, connect, engage and celebrate diversity through the food they bring to share. Most QPASTT events also involve the sharing of food with clients and stakeholders. It is a fine way of building cohesion which allows us all to move towards a shared vision. I say this every year, but it remains for me, a great privilege to be working at this wonderful organisation.

At an operational level, we are increasingly busy. One of the most significant things that happened this year was the refurbishment of our new premises at Kingston Road Slacks Creek. The space in its original state was dark and shabby, but with its large windows and central location we saw its

potential and, over a period of a few months, the ugly duckling turned into a beautiful swan! On entering the space, I defy anyone to feel anything other than uplifted and comfortable. The decor is bright and colourful. Large airy counselling rooms and a spacious work area for staff are a feature. Workers have enjoyed the use of a larger room which is very popular for both group activities and meetings. There is storage space for what seems like one thousand files, and there is ample parking, which is very welcome to many of the workers and clients who attend there.



In April, our new office was officially opened by the State Member for Woodridge the Hon. Cameron Dick MP, Minister for Health, Minister for Ambulance Services. The Mayor of Logan, Luke Smith was also present, joining the other guests predominantly from the Logan community. The formal program included inspiring speeches and energetic musical entertainment, all of which was followed by an afternoon tea with a mind blowing display of delicious treats.

Another major event for us this year was the 20th anniversary of multicultural mental health funding in Queensland. This very successful event was held at Parliament House and hosted by the Minister of Health the Hon. Cameron Dick. The organising committee for this event was drawn from QPASTT, The Queensland Transcultural Mental Health Centre (QTMHC); The Queensland Centre for Multicultural Mental Health and Wellbeing (Harmony Place), and the Townsville Intercultural Centre. Please read more about this wonderful event on page 52.

This year, funding for the new arrivals from Syria/Iraq, has created opportunities for more workers to join QPASTT, however this creates the usual operational challenges in terms of space and technical equipment. In Dibley Street, we have managed to accommodate new workers by creatively reconfiguring rooms and space. The Training Room, a large room previously used for groups and

larger meetings, is now a space fitted out with 6 new workstations and an office. Where there's a will, there's a way!

Workers were further supported this year with the purchase of two new cars, one of which is a small van that has proven to be very useful when we need to set up for the many events and activities that QPASTT puts on throughout the year.

We are in the final stages of installing a new integrated software system that has been custom made to suit QPASTT's needs. It is called NERO. This is the culmination of an extended process of consultation and discussion with Brian McKillop, our technical consultant. A small dedicated team of QPASTT workers – Laks Jambulingam, Marcela Barra, Megan Leitz and myself - have been working with Brian to manage and coordinate the process of development and ultimately transition. Whilst the process of developing the new system has been time consuming and intense at times, it has also allowed the team to take a step back and look carefully at QPASTT systems and processes generally, which has been a very useful exercise.

The Administration Team continues to flourish. We said good bye to George Rajesh earlier this year. George, who was in the role of part time Data and Systems Officer, has gone on to pursue other endeavours and we all wish him well. ***A big thank you goes out to the remaining members of the team – Saira, Laks, Marcela, Jacki, Rhonda and Mal. Their support is very much appreciated.***



The role of administration worker at QPASTT is not straightforward. It involves the usual administrative tasks, but it also necessitates a level of understanding and compassion for both clients and workers that is not a common commodity these days. These qualities coupled with humour and energy make each person in the team valued and appreciated.

Everyone in the team operates within a framework that demands both autonomy and interdependence. One worker will always be more than ready to step up and support the other when needed to enable common goals to be achieved. Communication between team members is key, and the importance of reliability and cooperative interdependence is recognised and valued.

One of the strengths of the team lies in its cultural diversity. The tolerance and support we afford each other, and the affection that we feel for each other is the beating heart of the team. Those qualities keep us all going when everyone feels like they are spread too thinly across too many tasks and too many responsibilities.

I celebrate the team and look forward to maintaining close working relationships into the future.





From the Regional Team Nilissa Livingstone

Welcome to the Regional Team! The Regional Team covers a large geographical region within Queensland.

QPASTT currently has offices in Townsville, Rockhampton, Toowoomba, Cairns and Logan. The team works with asylum seeker clients and those with permanent visas. Outreach is also provided to the Gold Coast, Gatton and Biloela.



Logan and Gold Coast

Currently we have a team of 4 counsellor advocates in Logan; Jenni Scholl, Hayley Dry, Sara Herniman and Gita Pirbadian. Victoria Kalmykova is also a member of the Logan team and is currently on maternity leave. Ana Pocrnjic has been covering Victoria's maternity leave; however she has recently taken on the new role of Brief Intake Assessment Worker for QPASTT. Maaiké Moolenaar is the counsellor advocate for the Gold Coast and is currently on long term leave. Immaculate Murekatete and Ivan Choy are currently in the regional team as asylum seeker counsellors.

The Logan office was officially opened on 22st April 2016 by the Hon. Cameron Dick MP, Minister for Health & Minister for Ambulance Services. Our stakeholder colleagues and friends joined us for an amazing office opening, which included speeches from a client and Minister Dick. The audience enjoyed the festivities which included African drumming and delicious food. The office boasts a wonderful bright décor of QPASTT green and white with large windows and ample space for clients to meet with counsellors in the purpose-built counselling rooms, including a dedicated children and families room.



Logan is one of the fastest growing cities in Australia with a population of 305,110 residents. It is a highly diverse area with over 217 different ethnicities. The Logan/Gold Coast team has been extremely busy this year providing counselling services to children, young people and adults. The team will soon expand to include a dedicated children's counsellor and a family counsellor. The Logan/Gold Coast team work in close partnership with our settlement colleagues at MDA and ACCESS services to ensure new and existing clients from refugee backgrounds are linked with the support services they need. The Logan team participated in the Refugee Awareness Week in June 2016 at Griffith University. The team provided an information stall about QPASTT and Kristy Howard, QPASTT's Clinical Supervisor, provided some workshops for participants around the mental health needs of people from a refugee background.

Trauma Informed Yoga

The Logan team ran a women's only Trauma Sensitive Yoga Group for QPASTT clients from April to May 2016. Trauma Informed Yoga has foundations in Trauma Theory, Attachment Theory, Neuroscience and Hatha Yoga practice, yoga forms and breathing practices. Trauma Informed Yoga has been found to reduce symptoms of complex trauma and PTSD. Clients of the yoga program also had access to "talk-based" counselling to complement their yoga practice during the 8-week program. *The women who attended the group benefited from learning simple yoga poses and breathing exercises. They also had a greater awareness of the impact of trauma on their bodies following the completion of the sessions.*



Regions

The north Queensland regions continue to provide individual counselling services to permanent residents and asylum seeker clients. Sharyn has continued in her role as counsellor advocate in the Cairns office in Manunda. The Cairns region has seen a reduction of refugee clients arriving and remaining in the Cairns region over the past 12 months. Sharyn has worked closely with Cairns Settlement Services (Cairns Migrant Services-CMS) to provide several Families in Cultural Transition Groups (F.I.C.T) with the Bhutanese community over the past 2 years. The Bhutanese community enjoyed engaging in group work and it is likely that QPASTT will continue to work with CMS in the future if the need arises again to run such groups.

Christy McGuire was the counsellor/advocate for the Toowoomba region until March 2016. The service was without a replacement permanent worker for several months, however Sara Herniman from the Logan Team was able to provide outreach to Toowoomba and Gatton until a new worker will be recruited for the position.

Following a needs analysis for a QPASTT counsellor in Rockhampton and Biloela by Angie Hoskins, QPASTT will continue to provide a service in the Rockhampton region and conduct a recruitment round shortly. Rockhampton and Biloela continue to see a steady stream of asylum seeker clients seeking work opportunities in the meat works.

Consy Sakaria has continued as the counsellor advocate in Townsville for the past 4 years. Consy works closely with her colleagues from Townsville Migrant Settlement Services to provide support to new and existing refugee clients. Townsville has seen a steady increase in clients arriving on women at risk visas in the region. Consy provides regular information sessions to newly arriving clients to provide psychoeducation around the benefits of trauma counselling.

"I learned that courage was not an absence of fear but the triumph over it. The brave person is not he/she who does not feel afraid, but he/she who conquers that fear." [Nelson Mandela]

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the strength and courage our clients teach us everyday. Thank you to the regional team for your dedication, warmth and humor; it is a pleasure to work with you all everyday.





From the Children & Youth Team

Amy Burkett

Over the past twelve months, the Children and Youth Team have been dedicated to delivering high quality programs and counselling services to the children, young people and families that they meet on a daily basis.

The team continues to feel privileged to be in the position of being able to have a positive impact on the lives of the many young people who are the recipients of our services and who take part in our programs.



In February 2016, the team welcomed a new Coordinator, Amy Burkett and said good-bye to Jim Schirmer as he moved back to his role within the Asylum Seeker Support Team. The team was incredibly grateful for the support Jim provided and his useful contributions throughout his time coordinating the team.

For a short period we welcomed back a familiar face in Meriam when she joined us in a counsellor locum position. Other than that, the team has remained stable with regards to staffing but expansion is on the horizon for the year ahead as we endeavour to meet growing client need.

School Outreach

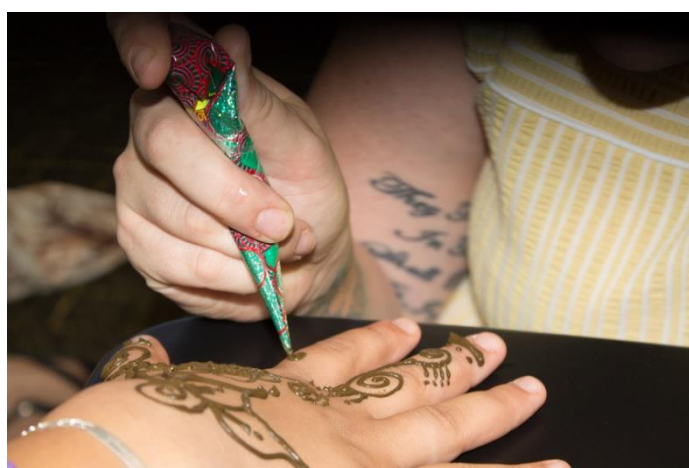
We have seen more clients being settled in the Greater Brisbane area which has seen our counsellors kept very busy travelling long distances to provide therapeutic support. Our youth workers have also continued to be busy with School Outreach, providing individual support to clients, and organising groups based on needs identified within the school. This program will continue to expand in the coming year and will see the team foster new relationships with other schools that have large refugee student populations.



Peer mentoring

Our Peer Mentoring program is well underway and proving to be a very successful project.

The aim of the current peer mentoring program is to support mentees aged between 12 and 18 who are from a refugee background and who are from single parent families. At the current time we have 18 successful pairings with the mentors and mentees meeting up on a fortnightly basis to offer support, with some even meeting more frequently as they are finding the process so valuable. We are constantly recruiting suitable mentors and providing them with appropriate training and support. The whole group also aims to meet monthly for social gatherings, which so far has seen them enjoy a BBQ at Roma Street parklands, several games nights at QPASTT and a BBQ and sports day at Yeronga Park.



School Holiday Activities



The school holiday periods continue to see the Children and Youth team providing group activities for young people. The activities are divided into either 'social groups', which are open to all young people of a refugee background aged between 12 - 24 years, or 'therapeutic groups' that are based on age and gender. Each school holiday period, we endeavour to provide at least one all-inclusive social group.

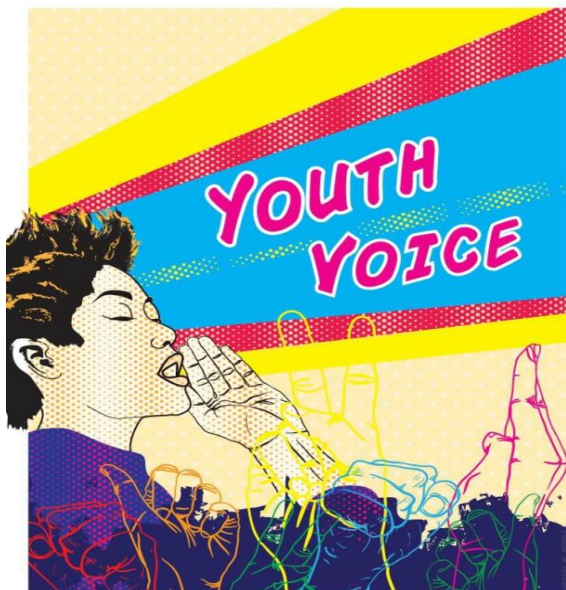
Over the past year, these have included a day of canoeing, games in the park, and a trip to Inflatable World. We tend to see familiar faces at all of these activities and many of the young people enquire about the activities during the school term as they are a highlight during their school holidays. As mentioned, the therapeutic gender based groups have continued to be facilitated. This year saw the female group split into two groups - clients aged between 8 and 13 years, and clients aged between 14 and 21 years - based on the different needs in each of these groups. *The counsellors involved in these groups put in considerable time and effort, ensuring that the activities for the day have a clear purpose and goal - the ultimate aim is that the clients attending gain the maximum benefit.* This year has seen the therapeutic groups include Equine Therapy, trauma informed yoga, Drumbeat, self-care and self-confidence activities and a trip to Lone Pine Animal Sanctuary.



Youth Voice



The Youth Voice project has continued to have a great presence in the wider community and deliver successful events. The committee is made up of volunteer young people who are interested in being involved in a committee to explore ideas and educate their peers and the broader community on social justice issues and social policies which impact young people. They are a highly dedicated group of young people and it will be very exciting to watch them continue to grow and expand in their roles over the coming year.





Groups

Groups that have run during this year have included a therapeutic group at Richlands East State School, co-facilitated by two QPASTT Counsellors from the Children and Youth Team. The aim of this group was to assist children that were soon to be transitioning to high school who had been identified by the school as presenting with several refugee related trauma symptoms that were subsequently impacting on their ability to remain engaged with school. While this group provided the counsellors with several challenges, they found it to be an incredibly rewarding experience and were able to notice an improvement in the students that regularly attended. Early in the year, our team collaborated with MDA on a twelve month pilot Migrant Youth Vision Project. This involves delivery of an additional Ucan2 program each term at suitable TAFEs around Brisbane. Additionally, we are in the process of establishing a new Homework Club at Inala, also a part of this partnership.





This year the team commenced a weekly young womens' fitness group with an external female personal trainer delivering the sessions. New QPASTT clients were welcomed alongside previous participants. *The young women who regularly attended, reported that it was a positive and empowering experience which built self-esteem and connections with peers in a safe and supportive environment.* While the karate program continued for only half of this year, QPASTT supported two of the founding clients to be able to complete training to become qualified karate instructors.

The team was very proud when one of our counsellors, Katie Brooker was selected to present a paper at the Second Biennial Childhood Trauma Conference in June. We look forward to several other conference presentations scheduled for the year ahead, which highlights the wonderful contribution the Children and Youth team continue to make to the refugee community. The members of the Children and Youth Team continue to display incredible passion for the service they provide to all the young people and families they work with. It is due to this dedication and enthusiasm that they are able to have compassion for the refugee experience and strive to continue to provide quality services to support these young people in a positive way. We look forward to the year ahead and the challenges and opportunities that are presented.





From the Counselling Services Team

Kathleen McBride

Trauma and wounding happens in the context of relationships; so does healing and recovery

The Counselling Services Team (CST) consists of professionally qualified and experienced practitioners from a diverse range of cultural backgrounds including Afghanistan, Argentina, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Fiji, Germany, Iran, Ireland, Myanmar, Serbia and South Sudan. The CST are committed to learning from each other and working in partnership, to effectively support clients seeking to recover from the impact of refugee related torture and trauma.

In the last year the long term CST coordinator Vedrana J has been on leave and her role has been ably fulfilled by other experienced QPASTT staff – Steph Long and Erica Fernandez. I am currently in the role and we look forward to welcoming Vedrana back in January 2017.



QPASTT understands that refugee related trauma and resettlement challenges impact on all aspects of a person's daily life including individual health, family relationships and community connections. Therefore the CST continues to offer a holistic and culturally competent model of therapeutic support and advocacy that promotes individual, family and community recovery and resilience.

The culturally diverse Counselling Services Team has delivered trauma informed individual and family counselling, systemic advocacy and therapeutic mutual support groups to clients from the full range of refugee backgrounds. This includes clients who have recently arrived in Australia from Syria, Iraq, Iran and Sri Lanka, as well as clients from more established cultural communities from Myanmar, Afghanistan, The Democratic Republic of Congo and Somalia to name a few.

Continuity of care -what has remained the same?

While in the last year there have been many exciting new developments, the foundation of counselling practice remains the same. The CST seeks a safe starting point, to over time develop a collaborative and trusting therapeutic relationship. As trauma and wounding happens in the context of relationships, so does healing and recovery. We are privileged that those who have suffered the abuse of their fundamental human rights, at the hands of others, are also willing to trust again and share with us their own personal story of trauma, courage and recovery.

“For all my life I have been trying to forget about the past but I never could. Coming to QPASTT I do not feel alone. I feel like I can talk and someone understands.”

(Female individual counselling client, 49 yrs. from Iran.)



To increase a client's ability to access services, the CST has continued to offer counselling at community outreach locations in Goodna and Inala, close to where existing and newly emerging refugee communities are settling. On a weekly basis CST counsellors meet with individuals and families at Inala Community Hub and The Salvation Army Community Centre Goodna. QPASTT is very appreciative of this collaboration with both agencies, as locating counselling services in a community centre promotes social inclusion. QPASTT clients have felt welcomed and have been able to join local neighbourhood groups which has increased their sense of belonging and capacity to build relationships with other local people.

New developments – what has changed?

QPASTT and the CST are always striving to improve the accessibility, quality and outcomes of the counselling and advocacy we offer to clients. In the last year this has included the following new developments:

- CST counsellors presenting psycho education about trauma and mental health and as part of the weekly Health Clinic at the Life Skills programme for newly arrived humanitarian entrants to Brisbane. This important collaboration between the Multicultural Development Association (MDA) and Mater Integrated Refugee Health Service (M.I.R.H.S) offers a non-stigmatising response to mental health care aimed to promote timely access to a range of QPASTT programmes.
- The Motherhood Fellowship Group at Inala for grandmothers and mothers who are separated from extended family and feel socially isolated. The purpose of the group was to increase each participant's sense of identity, self-care, and meaningful connections with others. The group used a therapeutic tool called the "patchwork of life" whereby participants made a patchwork bag as a metaphor for sharing their life story – the patch work of their life experiences.

"In Australia I have been so sad, staying at home on my own because I do not know my neighbours. My counsellor convinced me to join the group and I am so happy. I am here with the rest of the women sewing and sharing together. We do this a lot in my country"

(Motherhood Fellowship Group participant, grandmother (55yrs) from Afghanistan).

- In terms of advocacy and influencing systems change, the CST had a series of meetings with key Centrelink staff responsible for assessing job readiness and eligibility for Disability Benefit. This also included the Multicultural Services Officers for Brisbane region who already have a long term, strong working relationship with QPASTT. The discussion was intended to clarify the eligibility for Disability Benefit as the CST team had noticed a trend of increasingly more client applications for Disability Benefit being refused. This was matched with greater expectations being placed on clients with complex physical and mental health issues, to be actively seeking employment. The outcomes of these meetings included identifying ways of working more closely together to ensure clients are accurately assessed in terms of job readiness and Disability Benefit. In addition, the Centrelink staff requested professional development training in relation to the refugee experience and the impact on health which was also delivered by the CST in 2015.



Future plans- what next?

In 2016-2017 QPASTT and the CST plans to promote access to specialist therapeutic services by developing further outreach locations on the North side, particularly at venues closer to the newly arrived communities from Syria and Iraq. The CST also plans to engage with these newly arrived communities through offering group sessions that respond to issues identified by the community, such as parenting in a new country and culture. These parenting discussion groups provide an important opportunity for parents to share experiences, skills and ideas that foster social connections and mutual support.

The CST also plans to continue to actively pursue professional development particularly in relation to therapeutic models such as Biofeedback and Narrative Exposure Therapy that have a strong evidence base for improving the mental health of clients from a refugee background.

We also look forward to continuing to learn from and support each other as colleagues who have come to work together at QPASTT from all over the world. It is our privilege to bear witness to our clients' personal stories of trauma, courage, suffering, resilience, recovery and healing.





From the Asylum Seeker Support Team

Farah Suleman

In navigating yet another challenging year, it has been inspiring to see the asylum seeker team and our clients draw from such a high calibre of creativity, resilience and expertise.



Our counsellors and clients' ability to continue to engage with each other in ways that emphasise dignity, self-worth and the importance of human connection is a testament to the passion, strength and ongoing hope that is maintained despite these challenges.

We continue to hold a position where clinical and service independence are prioritised within a political climate that increasingly struggles to respond to global humanitarian crisis and continues to promote "deterrence" and punitive solutions.

There have been some staffing changes in the team; a few of our team members moved to other areas of the organisation and at the same time we welcomed Taryn McBurney and Elise McKenzie.

Some of the challenges faced this year have included:

- An exacerbation of symptoms for our clients from Nauru following the High Court ruling in February 2016 that off shore detention of asylum seekers was legal.
- In March 2016 Queensland reported opening its regions to SHEV holders. To date we await the announcement of the designated areas in this region.
- Tragically, this year also saw the death of Omid Masoumali through self-immolation in late April. His death was a great loss and it naturally greatly impacted people and communities nationally and internationally, including QPASTT clients from Nauru.

- In late April 2016 Papua New Guinea's Supreme Court ruled that the Manus Detention Centre was unconstitutional and ordered it to be closed. Since then the PNG's parliament have opted to move asylum seekers to their transitory facility.
- As of 31 May 2016 there were no children in held detention in Australia and whilst the asylum seeker policy continues to be punitive it is these small windows of positive change that need to be acknowledged.



The QPASTT Asylum Seeker Support Team has maintained our practice of delivering both individual counselling and group work. Our group work portfolio for this reporting period has been limited despite it being an area of our work that we are able to see positive impact in the quality of clients' lives.

QPASTT, in collaboration with Kyabra Community Association (Kyabra), conducted two Circle of Security parenting groups with Farsi speaking asylum seeker women. The groups ran for a total of eight sessions; one held at Kyabra in Runcorn and the other at QPASTT. The second group was targeted at mothers who had spent some time in held detention on Nauru and are currently in Brisbane in community detention. Following the completion of the groups, an evaluation was conducted with the participants. The overwhelming response from the participants was that

participating in the group had a significant and positive impact upon their parenting. Participants were able to identify ways in which engaging in the group had changed their views on parenting, while also detailing specific examples of skills they had developed.

“I know more about my child’s needs and how to keep the balance.”



Given the often complex emotions that are experienced by parents and children as a result of both past trauma and the asylum seeking process, improving parent’s abilities to identify and respond to their children’s emotions and needs is highly valuable in this client group. In doing this we provide parents with the skills to not only manage their children’s day to day behaviour, but to also develop deeper relationships with their children and enable them to become an integral part of their children’s recovery.

The Asylum Seeker Support Team has been grateful for the support of the Management Committee and Senior Management team throughout this reporting period. It has enabled us to remain a client focused service in a difficult political climate for asylum seekers.

We have also felt inspired and buoyed by the many instances of altruism and community spirit that many clients have consistently demonstrated throughout the year including engaging in volunteering, donating blood/registering for organ donations and joining in community activities and events. Our clients continue to demonstrate their resourcefulness and resilience in the myriad of ways they support themselves and their families.

Our team would like to recognise the courage of all our clients and the commitment of our partners in the field.

QPASTT Provides 20 Years of Support



2015 marked the 20th Anniversary of specialised mental health services for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in Queensland.

In 1995 the Queensland Government released a Non-English Speaking Background (NESB) Mental Health Policy Statement to assist specialised mental health services to promote, improve and maintain the mental health of people from a non-English speaking background in Queensland. The Policy Statement outlined for the first time, clear directions for change in the planning, organisation, resource distribution and delivery of specialised mental health services for people from non-English speaking backgrounds in Queensland. The Policy aimed to translate this recognition into the better delivery of appropriate and accessible mental health services to people from non-English speaking backgrounds.



Out of this policy, Queensland Government funding became available to:

- The Queensland Program of Assistance to Survivors of Torture and Trauma (QPASTT);
- The Queensland Transcultural Mental Health Centre (QTMHC);
- The Queensland Centre for Multicultural Mental Health and Wellbeing (Harmony Place)
- Townsville Intercultural Centre



The funding provided to QPASTT was to match Federal Government funding allocated specifically for refugee survivors of torture and trauma. QPASTT opened its doors in August 1995 with 2 positions and 3 staff. The agency has grown to over 60 staff providing services to 2000 people across 12 locations in Qld each year. QPASTT was established to be a holistic wrap around community based service established for and by people from refugee background as a complement to the medical model. It remains true to these principles today. QPASTT continues to work closely with the other services funded through this initiative to provide mental health services for people from an extensive number of cultural groups. QPASTT alone provides services to people from more than 70 ethnic backgrounds speaking more than 50 languages.



20th Anniversary Celebrations



The Hon. Cameron Dick MP, Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services hosted an event at Parliament House on the 11th November 2015 to mark the 20th Anniversary of specialised mental health services for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in Queensland.

It proved to be a wonderful night. We were very grateful to the Governor of Queensland, His Excellency the Hon. Paul de Jersey AC who is QPASTT's patron, Minister Dick, the Hon. Shannon Fentiman and other members of the state, federal and local government for taking the time out of their busy schedules to attend this event. We were also joined by many community leaders and other service providers who helped us to commemorate this important occasion.



Guests on the night listened to inspiring speeches by a young stakeholder and a past mental health consumer who shared the benefits of the support they received from the funded organisations. Guests were also privileged to be entertained by an energetic Burundian Drumming Group, a graceful Chinese dance troupe and the official proceedings were concluded with the brilliant sounds of Tenzin Choegyal.

Whilst the theme of the night was a celebration and reflection of the past 20 years, there was also a great sense of optimism about the next 20 years of specialised mental health service delivery to people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in Queensland.



Say NO to torture

QPASTT
The QLD Program of Assistance
to Survivors of Torture and Trauma

**United Nations Day in Support
Of Victims of Torture**

When: 10 am Friday 24th June 2016
Where: Brisbane Multicultural Central,
28 Dibley Street, Woolloongabba

**SUPPORT
LIFE
AFTER
TORTURE**

26 JUNE

The United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, on 26 June, is a global campaign to support torture survivors and their families.

This date was selected because it is the day in 1987 that the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhumane or Degrading Treatment or Punishment came into effect. The International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT) is a health-based umbrella organisation that supports the rehabilitation of torture victims and the prevention of torture worldwide, and assists in carrying out the work of the UN Convention. The IRCT announces a new slogan every year to commemorate this day, and assist with campaigning. This year's slogan was "Support Life After Torture".



At QPASTT, we work every day to support survivors of torture and other refugee related trauma experiences. The International Day in Support of Victims of Torture allows us to honour these people in our local communities, whose lives, stories and experiences have been impacted by torture and trauma. Each year, we commemorate the day, along with the international community, by having a

Morning Tea. This year, the formal program included a moving talk by guest speaker, Abraham Jok Aguto. Abraham is one of the 20,000 Lost Boys and Girls who travelled to Ethiopia on foot in 1987, walking 15,000 Miles. He returned to South Sudan on foot in 1991 and continued on to Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kenya in 1992. He arrived in Australia in 2002, and became citizen in 2004. The morning also included a poetry reading by Nasteho Mukhtar, and all guests joined Aleathea Monsour in singing Let It Be. Each year, as part of the formal program, we have a reading from the Global Statement, followed by one minute's silence, after which we light candles to show our support and solidarity for this important cause.



Moving down the road in Logan ...

Over the last few years, QPASTT has expanded its services to provide support to people from refugee backgrounds throughout multiple locations in Queensland.

Up until recently, QPASTT has had a presence in Logan in shared premises on Wembley Road. Due to an increasing demand for our services in the area we decided we needed more space for our clients and the communities we work with. In late 2015, we opened the doors to our new, larger premises located at level 1/390 Kingston Road, Slacks Creek.



The new space has bright counselling rooms, a large shared work area and offices, and enjoys a light and airy atmosphere, whilst maintaining QPASTT's uniquely colourful, multicultural feel. The new location has a large meeting room to accommodate meetings as well as group activities.



On Friday, 22 April, we were privileged to have our new office officially opened by the Hon. Cameron Dick MP, Minister for Health, Minister for Ambulance Services and State Member for Woodridge. The guest list included the Mayor of Logan, Luke Smith, along with other leaders in government, non-government and the private sector who work in the area, and last but not least, members from the wonderful Logan community. Minister Dick spoke about QPASTT's role and history in providing services to refugee survivors of torture and trauma in the Logan

area, and the diversity of the Logan community and the positive contributions that people from refugee backgrounds make in Logan, Queensland and the broader Australian community.

The official proceedings included a moving talk by a QPASTT client, who has been empowered to work at QPASTT as a Youth Mentor. She talked about her life journey and achievements made throughout that journey. It is a stark reminder of how much a small contribution and support can transform a person's wellbeing, and the wellbeing of their family. This was a very moving testimony to that. Guests also enjoyed two performances by Noble Tichawona Mashawa and Velvet who performed original and traditional compositions with the colour and flavour of Africa in songs and stories, featuring unique live vocals, original compositions and traditional music. In fact, one of our own Counsellors, Mavice Hove, couldn't resist joining in with the maracas. After the proceedings, everyone enjoyed a tour of our new office space and a delicious afternoon tea.



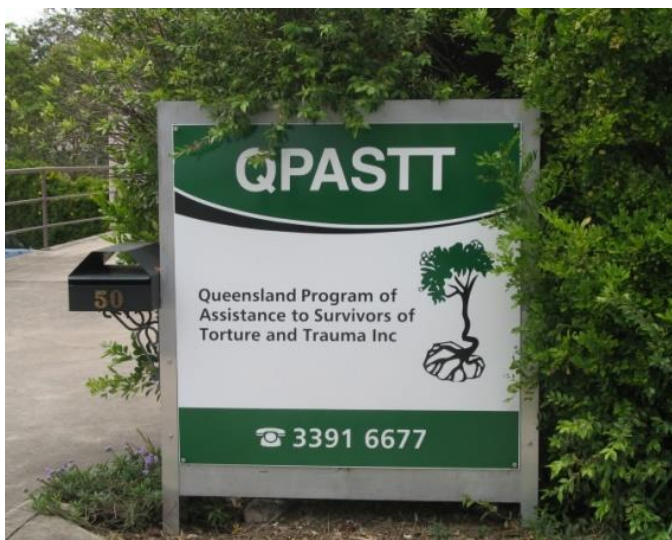
Partnerships and Funding

QPASTT works in close partnership with community organisations. Some of our key partner organisations are:

FASSTT	Child & Youth Mental Health Service
Refugee communities	Townsville Multicultural Support Group
Brisbane City Council	Diversicare
Multicultural Development Association	Queensland African Communities Council (QACC)
Centacare Rockhampton	The Queensland University of Queensland (QUT)
Centacare Toowoomba	NSW University Centre for Refugee Research
Qld Transcultural Mental Health Centre	World Wellness Group
Lifeline	The Settlement Service (Cairns)
Australian Red Cross	Mater Centre for Innovation
Community	Refugee and Immigrant Legal Service
Amparo Advocacy	ACCESS

QPASTT receives funding from both Commonwealth and State Government Departments. We would like to thank them and acknowledge their support.

- Department of Health (Commonwealth)
- Department of Immigration and Border Protection (Commonwealth)
- Department of Social Services (Commonwealth)
- Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and Multicultural Affairs (QLD)
- Queensland Health (QLD)



QPASTT Partners



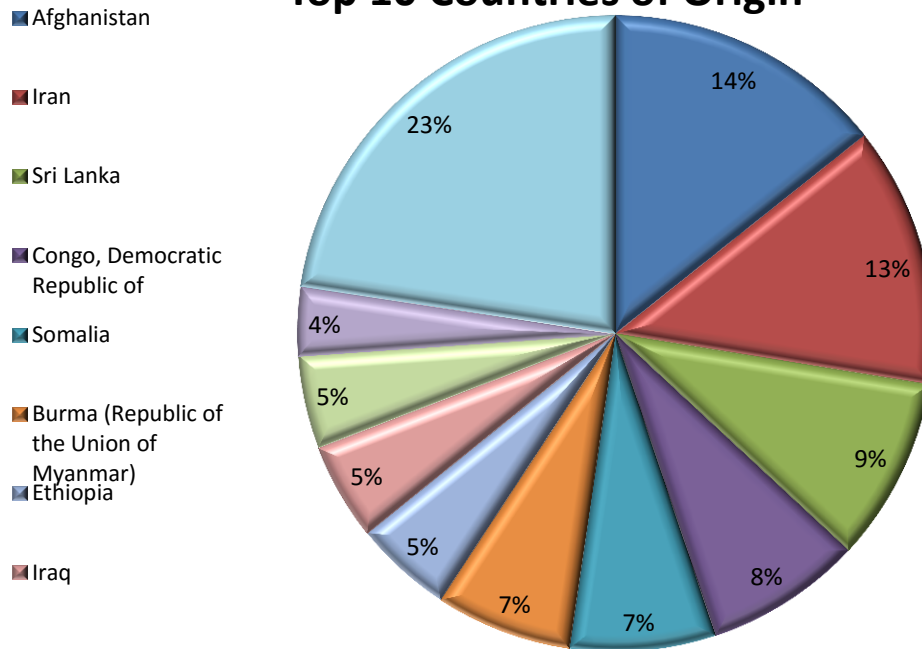
We also work closely with the following organisations:

The Romero Centre
International Health and Medical Services (IHMS)
Life Without Barriers
Mercy Family Services
The HUB Neighbourhood Centre, Inala
ACCESS Inc.
Harmony Place
Milpera State School
Southport TAFE – Gold Coast
Refugee Health Clinic Townsville Intercultural Centre
Townsville Women Centre
St. Vincent de Paul
Multilink
Salvation Army (Goodna)

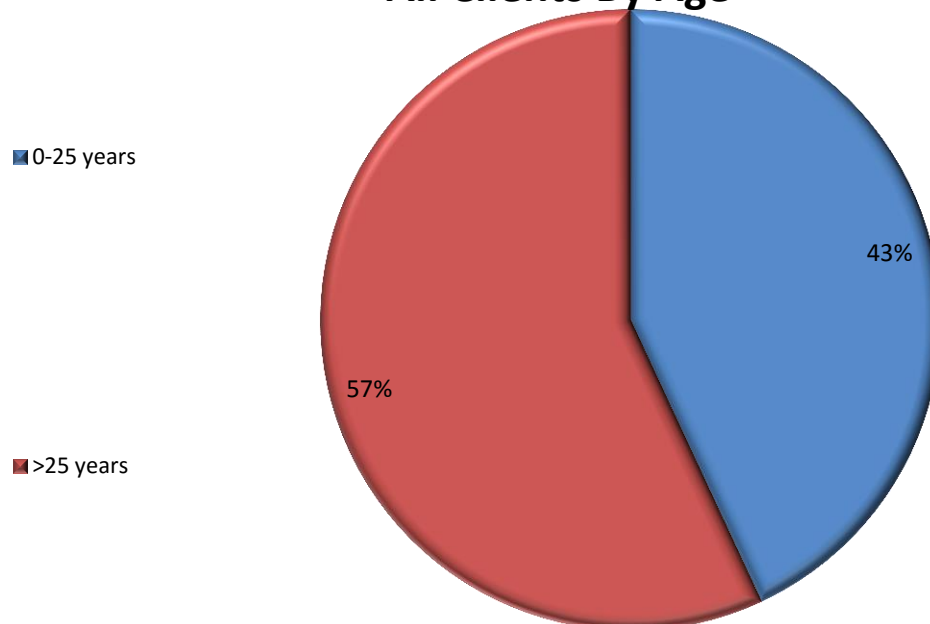


Service Data Profile

Top 10 Countries of Origin

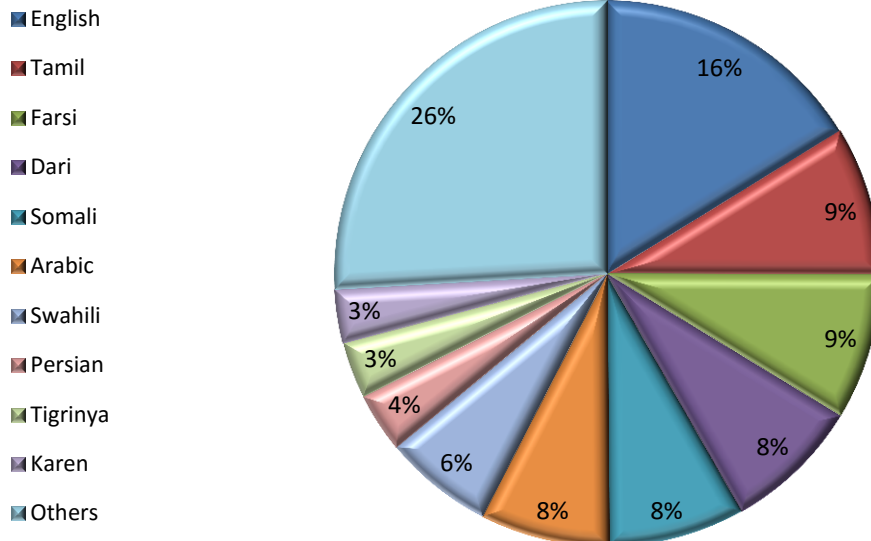


All Clients By Age

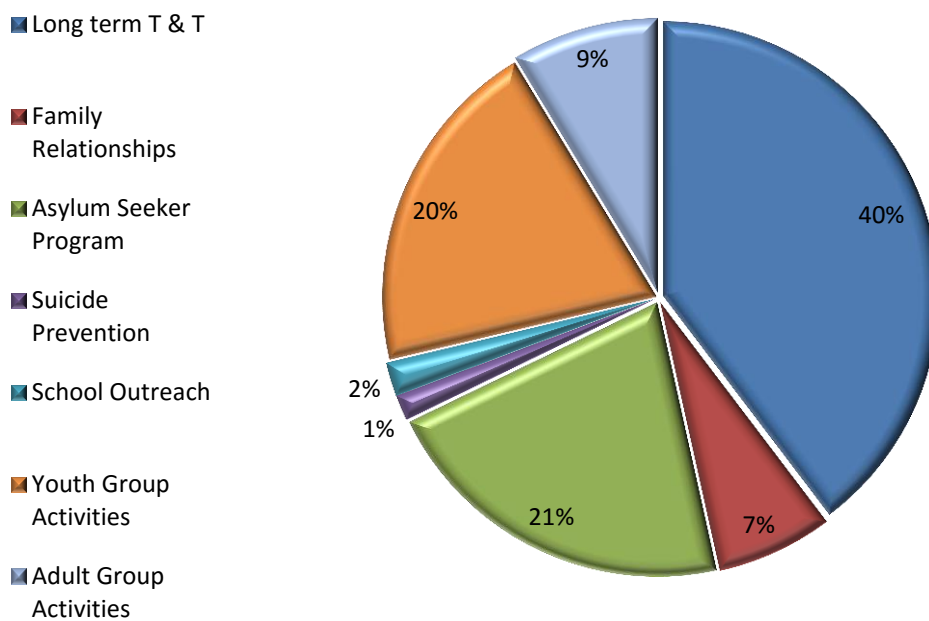


Service Data Profile

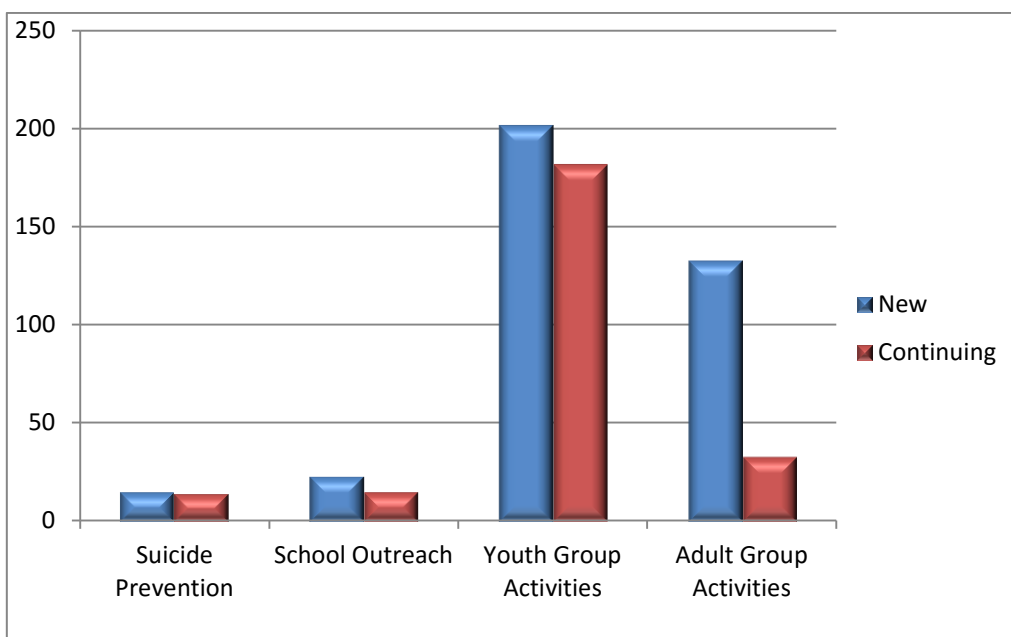
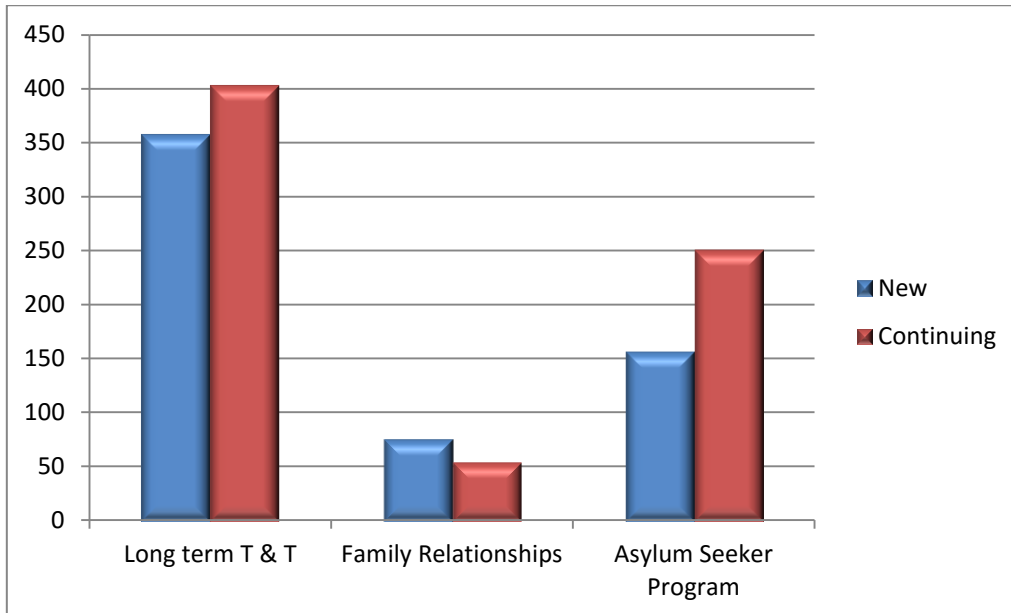
Top 10 Languages



All Clients By Program



Service Data Profile



Service Data Profile

Length of Assistance	Long term T & T	Family Relationships	Asylum Seeker Program	Suicide Prevention	School Outreach	Youth Group Activities	Adult Group Activities	TOTAL
<1 year	508	82	242	17	26	235	166	1276
1 - <2 years	136	30	137	10	7	98	0	418
2 - <3 years	54	15	23	0	3	51	0	146
3 - <4 years	28	1	5	2	1	0	0	37
4 - <5 years	15	3	1	0	1	0	0	20
5 - <6 years	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	11
6 - <7 years	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
7 - <8 years	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
>8 years	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Total	761	131	408	29	38	384	166	1917

Client Count	Long term T & T	Family Relationships	Asylum Seeker Program	Suicide Prevention	School Outreach	Youth Group Activities	Adult Group Activities	TOTAL
New	358	76	157	15	23	202	133	964
Continuing	403	55	251	14	15	182	33	953
Total	761	131	408	29	38	384	166	1917

Group Related Activity 2015-2016

Activity Type	Blocks	Number of Sessions	Average Attendance
ASST Parenting Group	2	15	7
Family Fun Day	4	4	92
Girls Group	4	4	9
Homework Club	4	97	17
Karate Group	4	34	5
Logan Yoga Group	2	11	3
Peer Mentoring Group	1	2	5
Richlands East SS Group - Adult	1	8	8
Richlands East SS Group - Children	2	15	5
School Holiday Activities	4	13	14
UCAN2	3	18	15
Women's Fellowship Group	3	23	12
X-Men	2	13	4
Young Men's Group	4	17	7
Young Women's Group	2	2	9
Youth Space	3	48	5
Total	45	324	11

Where to find us



QPASTT Brisbane

28 Dibley Street
Woolloongabba 4102

QPASTT Toowoomba

166A Hume Street
Toowoomba 4350

QPASTT Logan

390 Kingston Road
Slacks Creek 4127

QPASTT Townsville

410 Ross River Road
Cranbrook 4814

QPASTT Rockhampton

C/- Centacare
10 Bolsover Street
Rockhampton 4700

QPASTT Cairns

120 Hoare Street
Manunda
Cairns 4870

