



QPASTT
Queensland program of assistance
to survivors of torture and trauma

Annual Report 2018–2019

*The hope
to heal.*



Governance and Leadership

QPASTT Management Committee

- Professor Emeritus Keithia Wilson, President
- Luis Melgar, Treasurer
- Dr Lyndall Kleinschmidt, Secretary
- Robin Lonergan, Exec Committee Member
- *Committee Members:* Dr Pamela Douglas, Raziq Qasimi, Dr Ian Mannion, Fraser Power

QPASTT Leadership Team

- Tracy Worrall, Chief Executive (until April 2019)
- Co-CEOs: Ignacio Correa-Velez and Jamila Padhee, (from February 2019)
- *Senior Managers:* Amy Burkett - Clinical Services Manager, Fernanda Torresi - Manager Community Relationships & Capacity Building, Stephanie Long - Direct Services Manager and Vickie Pastellas - Manager People & Systems
- *Team Leaders:* Ana Pocrnjic, Farah Suleman, Naomi Brown, Kerry Nesbitt, Vedrana Jovicic and Elham Rezaei
- *Clinical Supervisors:* Liz Gordon, Tanya Van Bael and Ulrike Krauss



Tracy Worrall – Our Chief Executive 2007 to 2019

The success of the FASSTT Scientific Conference hosted by QPASTT in March has been noted elsewhere. It was also an appropriate marker of the closure of Tracy's Worrall twelve-year tenure as CEO of QPASTT. And what a fitting salute it was. The execution of the conference was emblematic of the leadership that Tracy brought to QPASTT. She dared to think that QPASTT could do something that had not been done before. She took that risk. She sold the idea to her team and brought them along for the ride. The consequences were variously bumpy, gratifying and spectacularly successful. She recognised the strengths of the people around her and encouraged them to tap into the full possibilities of their creativity. She brought personal resources to the project – patience, wisdom, humour and a capacity to step aside or inject extra energy as required. Tracy was unfailingly cognisant of, and empathetic with, the lived realities of clients' experiences and was committed to ensuring that experience was honoured. She showed QPASTT to the nation and to the wider world to great acclaim. In similar fashion, Tracy's leadership at QPASTT grew the organization from a small Brisbane-based agency to a state-wide organisation more than double the original size. She recognised that this was not a solo show. Tracy built such a rich team around her that she was able to take advantage of opportunities presented, to take calculated risks at times, and to work strategically and with compassion. She remained grounded at all times in the experiences of clients and communities from refugee backgrounds. As QPASTT now heads into its 25th year, it is a recognised leader in the field both nationally and internationally. Tracy was able to bed down and then augment the foundations of QPASTT and hand on to Jamila and Ignacio an organization ready and able to face the challenges of its next phase. We owe Tracy a huge debt of gratitude and wish her a richly rewarding transition to retirement.

Contents

Governance and Leadership	1
2018-19 in Numbers	3
President's Report	5
Treasurer's Report	7
Co-CEO Report	8
Counselling	9
Group Work	11
Child and Youth Work	13
Community Relationships and Capacity Building	15
Clinical Services	17
Sector Development and Training	18
Acknowledgments	19
2018-19 Photo Highlights	20

Acknowledgement of First Peoples

QPASTT acknowledges the First Peoples of Australia and their leaders past, present and emerging. We recognise the continuing trauma caused by loss of children, language, lore and land and the impact that this continues to have on physical and spiritual wellbeing. We recognise since time immemorial, that First Peoples have nurtured communities of belonging and thriving and we work in solidarity towards a future of healing and justice.

2018–2019 in Numbers



1598 Clients



78
Countries of Origin

Top 10 countries:

- Iran
- Iraq
- Syria
- Afghanistan
- Congo (DRC)
- Somalia
- Sri Lanka
- Burma (Myanmar)
- Eritrea
- Ethiopia



6309 Counselling sessions and 1643 carer engagement sessions



711 New referrals for counselling



5071 Participants involved in 380 group sessions

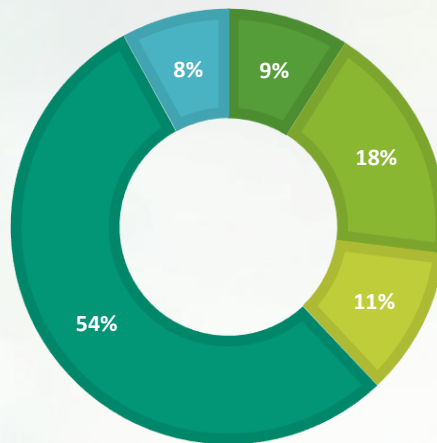


72 Staff from 29 cultural backgrounds

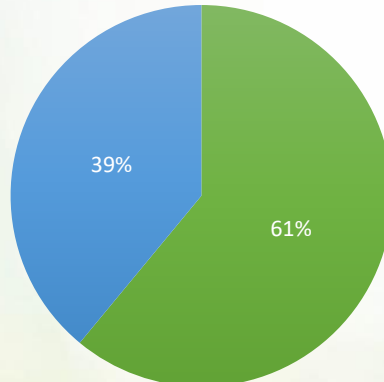
2018–2019 in Numbers

CLIENT AGE RANGE

■ 0 - 11 Years ■ 12 - 18 Years ■ 19 - 24 Years ■ 25 - 54 Years ■ 55 Years Plus



CLIENT GENDER



■ Female ■ Male

230 people seeking asylum engaged in counselling.

616 counselling sessions for people seeking asylum were unfunded.

President's Report

It is with great pleasure that I present the 2018-19 President's Report on behalf of the Management Committee of QPASTT. As you would know, QPASTT was established to provide recovery services for people from a refugee background who have experienced oppression, displacement, torture and trauma. Along with our FASSTT sister services in all of the other states, we are funded as part of Australia's commitment to the *United Nations International Convention against Torture*, providing recovery and rehabilitation services to survivors of torture and trauma. We strive to do this within culturally sensitive individual, family and community frameworks. We also strive to advocate tirelessly against the use of torture. Over the past year, QPASTT engaged with 1598 clients from 78 countries of origin.



Our Core Purpose

QPASTT continues to be committed to fostering a community which upholds human rights, honours dignity, promotes hope and inspires faith in humanity for people from refugee backgrounds. We are a specialist agency that is focused on healing-centered care for refugee survivors of torture and trauma. Our care is holistic across individual, family and community levels. We believe that intrinsic to recovery is justice and we work to ensure that trauma is not a barrier to full participation in Australian life.

The International Situation

Once again, the international statistics show an increase over the last year in the number of people forced to seek protection outside of their own country. Today almost 1% of the world's population (approximately 70.8 million people) are forcibly displaced worldwide. UNHCR estimates that 37,000 new people are forced to flee their homes every day due to persecution and conflict. Children below 18 years make up half of the refugee population. In 2018-19, 92,400 refugees were resettled into 25 countries. Of these, Australia settled 18,762 including 3,468 who became new Queenslanders.

The Queensland Context

Almost 50% of new arrival settlement in Queensland is to regional areas. QPASTT is a statewide service engaging in both metropolitan and regional communities. We provide support throughout regional Queensland (Toowoomba, Townsville and Cairns) as well as Southeast Queensland (across Brisbane, Logan, Ipswich, Gold Coast and Moreton Local Government Areas).

A highlight this year was the opening of our new Toowoomba Office by Queensland Minister Stirling Hinchliffe and Toowoomba Mayor Paul Antonio. In Toowoomba (as well as at Woolloongabba, Inala and Logan), QPASTT co-locates with Multicultural Development Australia (MDA) to ensure joined up settlement and trauma recovery services for new arrivals. We value our relationship with MDA and the opportunity to enhance our service delivery through co-location.

Our Staff

First and foremost, I would like to acknowledge and thank our staff for making QPASTT such a dynamic and responsive organisation. The political and policy environment in which the organisation operates continues to be complex. The dedication and expertise of the people within the organisation cannot be understated and are greatly appreciated.

Management Committee

I would like to acknowledge the support and dedication of all of the Management Committee members; together you form a committed group of people with a diverse range of backgrounds, skills and experience, and you have been a pleasure to work with.

Refugee Communities

Lastly, and most importantly, on behalf of QPASTT, I would also like to thank the communities from refugee background with whom we partner. We appreciate the involvement of community members and leaders in our service, and without your participation in the design and implementation of our services, we know we would not be as effective. We look forward to continuing to work with you in the coming year.

Leadership Change

Tracy Worrall retired from QPASTT in April 2019. Staff and the Management Committee thank Tracy for her deep commitment to justice for people from a refugee background, dedication to QPASTT staff and her invaluable contribution to refugee trauma recovery and multicultural sectors.

Dr Ignacio Correa-Velez and Jamila Padhee began as Co-CEOs in February 2019. Ignacio is responsible for enhancing QPASTT's impact through research, evaluation, advocacy, training, collaboration and partnerships. Jamila is responsible for ensuring that QPASTT services to clients and communities are responsive to need and are of high quality. Both Ignacio and Jamila jointly lead vision, strategy, innovation and culture. After thorough handover between Tracy, Jamila and Ignacio, the transition to new leadership has been smooth.

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

Professor Emeritus Keithia Wilson
President

Treasurer's Report

I am pleased to present the Treasurer's Report for 2018-19. Our 2018-19 Audited Financial Statements were 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 2019. The report is unqualified.

In this financial year, QPASTT's total revenue was \$7.37 million which was an increase of 3.7% from the previous year. A small surplus of \$121,184 from rental income was generated for the year. QPASTT remains in a solid financial position with an asset to liability ratio of 3.77:1.

In 2018-19, 97% of QPASTT income was through government funding with the remainder 3% being generated by the agency through rental income and fee for service work. In the year 72% of income was allocated to service delivery and 26% was allocated to research, training, management, operations and delivery of the 2nd Biennial FASSTT conference. Approximately 81% of expenditure was on salaries and on-costs and 16% was related to operational expenses including facilities, cars and professional development for staff. Over 4% of QPASTT's total funding is expended on use of interpreters.

On behalf of QPASTT, I thank our funders who make our work possible especially the Commonwealth Departments of Health, Social Services and Home Affairs, Queensland Health, International Health and Medical Services (IHMS), Alcohol and Drug Foundation as well as Brisbane South and Brisbane North Primary Healthcare Networks.

Luis Melgar, Treasurer



Co-CEOs Report

We are pleased to present this annual report as our first as Co-CEOs. We thank the Management Committee and QPASTT staff for their wholehearted welcome of us and our Co-CEO model.

QPASTT has had a long history of supporting the recovery of refugee survivors of torture and trauma. We exist to nurture meaningful futures by assisting people from refugee backgrounds to heal, belong and thrive in our community.



Unfortunately, the goal of persecution is to destroy people and take away their futures. This is why enabling healing is at the heart of what we do. Our healing work is across mind, body and spirit. In the past year we supported 1598 people through 6309 specialised trauma recovery counselling sessions. This included engaging in 616 counselling sessions for people seeking asylum who were unfunded.

One of the impacts of trauma is that people's faith in humanity can be lost. Therefore, we believe that true healing cannot happen without the security of belonging. In 2018-19 we combined a focus on wellness and belonging through delivering 380 group sessions involving 5071 participants. We also engaged in 165 activities with refugee communities to support their resilience in their collective journeys of recovery.

For survivors of torture and trauma to have thriving futures, we recognise that trauma recovery must also focus on the social, economic and cultural conditions that impact on the daily lives of individuals and families. In the past year, 38% of participants in our service were children or young people under the age of 18. We are passionate that for them to have a thriving future, our work reducing the risks of vulnerability and marginalisation and mitigating intergenerational trauma is imperative.

Healing from past oppression is an act of justice and we fiercely believe that it is a fundamental human right for refugee survivors. In the past year we increased our focus on research and advocacy. We also worked in collaboration with human service workers to increase their skill and capacity to support refugee survivors of torture and trauma through the delivery of 52 training sessions.

Overall, in 2018-19, QPASTT was able to meet all its targets across all funded activities. Important highlights were: re-establishing our presence in Cairns, opening our new Toowoomba office and delivering the 2nd FASSTT conference.

We make special mention of Tracy Worrall, the previous CEO of QPASTT. We profoundly thank her for the QPASTT we have inherited – an organisation driven by kindness, perseverance, optimism and a deep-seated passion for justice for refugee survivors of torture and trauma.

Dr Ignacio Correa-Velez and Jamila Padhee
Co-CEOs

Counselling

QPASTT has provided specialised counselling services to refugee survivors of torture and trauma since our inception in 1995. While individual and family counselling can provide an integral role in healing from refugee trauma, it is an intervention that sits alongside community-based healing. Counselling at a minimum seeks to provide some relief and ease of trauma symptoms and may include processing of trauma memories and experiences to heal the intentional harm of persecution.

“Each counselling session helps me to build my confidence and feel that I am a human being.”

QPASTT’s therapeutic framework is based on a tri-phasic model of trauma recovery that includes stages of establishing safety, carefully exploring past trauma, and building connections to people and place now. QPASTT counsellors use a range of modalities and techniques in therapeutic work, while prioritising the unique needs of their clients.

QPASTT regularly collects feedback from counselling clients to monitor client satisfaction with our service. A sample of our clients indicated that 97% are satisfied with the support they received through counselling.

“I found someone I trust to share my past trauma with. These are problems I have never been able to share with anyone else. For that I am grateful.”

QPASTT provides counselling to people from refugee backgrounds including people seeking asylum in Queensland. People seeking asylum require a further specialised approach to counselling. For many people seeking asylum, their daily life can be dominated by prolonged uncertainty of their visa status as well as financial precarity. QPASTT works closely with a range of agencies to holistically meet the needs of people seeking asylum.

Recovery Goals

- To restore safety and enhance control and reduce the disabling effects of fear and anxiety.
- To restore attachment and connections to other human beings, and a sense of belonging.
- To restore meaning, identity and justice.
- To restore dignity and value and reduce shame and guilt.

Source: Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture.

Counselling at a Glance

Client Need	18+ Years			
	Severe	Moderate	Mild	Absent
Mental Illness	4%	14%	9%	73%
Anxiety	35%	51%	13%	1%
Depression	24%	53%	19%	4%
Disabilities	2%	10%	6%	82%
Family Difficulties	32%	33%	21%	14%
Interpersonal Difficulties	27%	39%	21%	13%
Pain/Somatic Symptoms	24%	30%	23%	23%
Social Isolation	19%	42%	32%	7%
Substance Abuse	2%	6%	8%	84%
Traumatic Grief	35%	37%	17%	11%
Traumatic Stress	40%	46%	12%	2%

Client Need	<18 Years			
	Severe	Moderate	Mild	Absent
Mental Illness	11%	19%	8%	62%
Anxiety	42%	42%	13%	3%
Depression	12%	38%	32%	18%
Disabilities	2%	4%	5%	89%
Family Difficulties	44%	35%	18%	3%
Interpersonal Difficulties	44%	36%	15%	5%
Pain/Somatic Symptoms	8%	16%	23%	53%
Social Isolation	18%	37%	26%	19%
Substance Abuse	2%	2%	6%	901%
Traumatic Grief	31%	32%	20%	17%
Traumatic Stress	44%	45%	6%	5%

Suicide Risk	18+ Years		<18 Years	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
	14%	86%	9%	91%

Group Work

A goal of persecution is to disconnect people from trust in humanity. A feeling of safety with others is critical for recovery. Safety is nurtured by a sense of belonging. Therefore, there is tremendous power and liberation in the healing that being part of a group offers.

Group work is integral to our recovery model. Our group work is focused on nurturing:

- healing
- wellness
- belonging.

QPASTT delivers a range of therapeutic groups that incorporate psychoeducation and storytelling to enable healing. An important outcome of these groups is often kinship and connection amongst survivors and reduced stigma and feelings of isolation.



Trauma impacts on mind, body and spirit. Because of this, QPASTT considers a focus on wellness as important for recovery. We enable wellness by supporting survivors to nourish their mind, body and spirit, move through physical activity, focus on their sleep and relax through deep breathing and yoga. An important aspect of group engagement is providing opportunities for discovery and new experiences. Over the past year this has included swimming lessons, trips to Parliament House, learning new crafts, engaging in yoga, hip hop classes, lawn bowling as well as men shed activities.

The combination of trauma and settlement in a new country can impact on parenting. Over the past year, QPASTT continued to offer a range of parenting group programs including delivery of a program in partnership with Townsville Multicultural Support Group.

Group Work at a Glance



Women's 'Tree of Life' Groups

After feedback from participants, storytelling was added to psychoeducation. This allowed sisterhood to develop beyond cultural differences.

Wangara Men's Group

The Wangara Men's Group continued in its 6th year. The group is focused on men's wellness. Some of the highlights this year included: canoeing down a tributary of the Brisbane River, yoga classes, swimming lessons and a trip to Queensland Parliament.

Sewing Groups

Women and men from many backgrounds came together and produced the FASSTT Conference bags. Much connection and many laughs were shared culminating in the group from Toowoomba making a much-desired trip to Brisbane for a CityCat ride and picnic on the river.

Townville Parenting Group

QPASTT partnered with Townsville Multicultural Support Group (TMSG) to deliver a *Families in Cultural Transition (FICT)* parenting program.

Group Work Highlights

Child and Youth Work

Many children and young people from refugee backgrounds have experienced trauma as a result of persecution and conflict. For some young people this includes witnessing injury and death to family and close others. For the young people who were engaged with counselling at QPASTT, over 80% have experienced traumatic grief and continued stress.



The goal of our child and youth support is to enable young people to recover from trauma so that it does not become a barrier to their growing, learning and thriving in Australia. Our recovery work with children and youth includes counselling, group work, youth work in schools and activities such as Homework Club which support learning and thriving.

QPASTT has a team of counsellors who support children and young people. Many refugee children have escaped persecution and conflict and QPASTT counsellors support them to heal through play-based and creative modalities. We also work to stop the cycle of intergenerational trauma by supporting children and young people whose parents are survivors of trauma.

Our work in schools is critical for holistic support of children and young people. In the past year, students were supported in 37 schools. Additionally, 206 teachers and guidance counsellors engaged in training delivered by QPASTT. QPASTT staff are trained to deliver *Rock and Water* and *Drumbeat* which are evidence-based group programs aimed at building resilience through fun and creative activity.

A highlight of the year was the continued partnership with Inala PCYC to deliver the Inala Multicultural Family Fun Day with a record 7000 children and their parents and caregivers enjoying rides, games, crafts and performances from local artists.

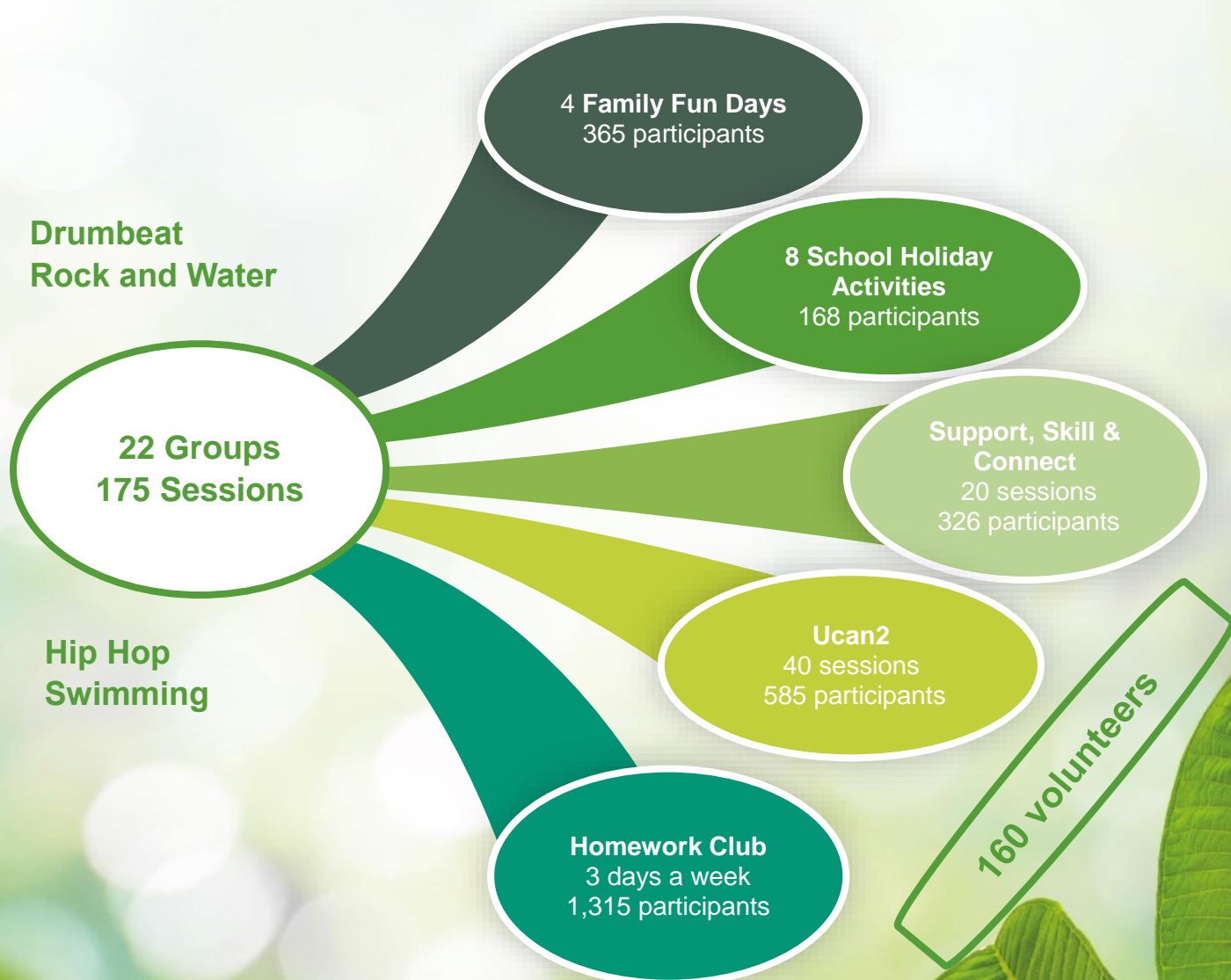
Refugee Youth Rock and Water Facilitators

Five young people from refugee backgrounds were trained in 'Rock and Water'. They co-facilitated group programs in their communities with QPASTT staff. Five programs were delivered with youth in Brisbane, Inala, Logan and Toowoomba.

Child & Youth Work at a Glance



- 37 schools received weekly support
- 206 teachers and counsellors received training
- 14 schools were provided with information sessions about QPASTT services and referral pathways
- 52 schools were supported through meetings, phone advice or sharing of resources



Community Relationships and Capacity Building

“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 four elements of community” (Youth Voice Volunteers)

At QPASTT we understand that recovery happens at all levels - individual, family and community. QPASTT's community capacity building is focused on promoting healing, belonging, thriving and justice through:

- Increasing community bonding social capital internally within individual communities
- Increasing community bridging social capital with a focus on building bonds between communities and within the Australian community
- Increasing strengths and capabilities of communities with a specific focus on community leaders and their roles as change agents for trauma recovery and stigma reduction
- Increasing self-reliance within communities with a specific focus on recovery, community-based healing and trauma risk mitigation.



Highlight: Karen Employment Partnership with HELP Enterprises

Over the past year, QPASTT has worked closely with the Karen Community, HELP Enterprises and Centrelink to develop a modified employment program for the Karen community. QPASTT played a facilitative role in linking the community to HELP and also provided advice on engaging a bilingual staff person to ensure a smooth transition. The outcome was 20 people employed.

Community Relationships and Capacity Building at a Glance

165 community capacity building activities, 125 face to face meetings, 40 refugee community events

4 Community Leaders Dinners in partnership with Multicultural Development Australia involving 452 participants

QPASTT staff attended 386 interagency meetings with Federal, State and Local government representatives and community agencies.



QPASTT Volunteers

In the past year 160 volunteers supported us in our work. They were involved in Homework Club as well as the delivery of our Support Skill and Connect and UCan2 group programs. Their contribution to the wellbeing and thriving of young people and families is especially valued.

Clinical Services

The clinical services work within QPASTT has the purpose of ensuring that clients, families and communities receive safe and high-quality services to support refugee-related trauma recovery. This is achieved through the Professional Supervision Team delivering clinical supervision, internal education and training, risk management support, external capacity building, input into the electronic database and providing up to date internal policy and procedural guidance.



**912 hours of
direct clinical
supervision to
QPASTT Staff**

Over the past year, the Professional Supervision Team has provided 912 hours of direct clinical supervision to QPASTT staff. They have provided 36 hours of training and capacity building to external agencies. Internal training that has been delivered through a combination of QPASTT staff and external presenters with the aim of improving the skills and capacity of staff covered the following topics, child safety, working with dissociation, navigating NDIS, report writing within the asylum seeker context, supporting LGBTIQ+ clients, and overview of clinical policies and practice.

Additionally, the clinical services work has continued to support the wider FASSTT network with participation and collaboration within several national working groups with the aim of achieving national consistency across various projects.

This year has continued to see complex trauma presentations in both newly arrived and established clients, with particular complexity in children and young people engaged in counselling. The impact of offshore immigration detention continues to bring challenges to the work with asylum seekers and counselling support provided. The Professional Supervision Team continues to strive towards supporting staff to be able to maintain their meaning and connection with the work in order to mitigate the associated challenges.

**36 hours of
specialised
training and
capacity
building to
external
agencies**

Sector Development & Training

Supporting the recovery of survivors of torture and trauma is everyone's responsibility. Survivors have the right to access trauma-informed and culturally responsive services across all sectors including health, social, welfare, education and justice. QPASTT aims at empowering the sector environment and local communities through engagement, training, and community promotion.



In March 2019, QPASTT, on behalf of the Forum of Australian Services for Survivors of Torture and Trauma (FASSTT), organised the 2nd Australia and New Zealand Refugee Trauma Recovery in Resettlement Conference – ‘Healing in Exile: Current and Future Challenges’. The conference was very well attended with 489 national and international delegates. There were

9 keynote speakers, 160 workshop presentations and 46 posters. Additionally, 396 high school students participated in a one-day conference side event. Feedback from students indicated that their highlight was listening to 5 QPASTT Youth Voice representatives talk about the refugee experience.

“I went into today thinking I was aware of all that happens behind the media reporting on this issue. It wasn’t until I heard the personal stories from people with first hand experiences that my eyes were open to a whole new perspective.” Student

“The content discussed was nothing less than heart-breaking, yet, surprisingly, I leave today inspired to make a change. To be better. To do better.” Student

This financial year, QPASTT staff delivered training to agencies across the health, education, community welfare, settlement, legal and other sectors. These included a training session delivered by our Manager of Community Relationships and Capacity Building to Equitas in Colombia. Equitas is a NGO that provides forensic and psychosocial services, and promotes inclusion of marginalised communities.

We look forward to continuing supporting the sector environment so that individuals, families and communities from refugee backgrounds can heal, belong and thrive in the Australian community.

885
conference
participants

52
training
sessions

1054
training
participants

Acknowledgments

Supporting survivors to recover from trauma does not occur in isolation. QPASTT works in collaboration with numerous community leaders, government and stakeholder agencies. We are very grateful for the shared dedication and mutuality of our relationships.

QPASTT gratefully acknowledges funding from the following agencies which enabled our work in 2018-19.

- Commonwealth Department of Health
- Commonwealth Department of Home Affairs
- Commonwealth Department of Social Services
- Queensland Department of Health
- Queensland Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs
- International Health and Medical Services (IHMS)
- Brisbane South and Brisbane North PHNs
- Alcohol and Drug Foundation
- Local Governments throughout Queensland.



2018-19 Conference Highlights



QPASTT Contact Details



Main Office

28 Dibley Street,
Woolloongabba Q 4120

Phone: (07) 3391 6677

Logan

Unit19/390 Kingston Road,
Slacks Creek Q 4127

Phone: (07) 3089 4310

Toowoomba

15 Snell Street
Toowoomba Q 4350

Phone: (07) 3556 7700

Inala

c/- Inala PCYC
37 Swallow Street
Inala Q 4077

Phone: (07) 3391 6677

Townsville

C/- Centacare North Qld
410 Ross River Rd
Canbrook Q 4814

Phone: (07) 4772 9000

Cairns

c/- Boland's Centre
14 Spence Street
Cairns Q 4870

Phone: 0409 574 925

Website: www.qpastt.org.au

Email: admin@qpastt.org.au

Fax: (07) 3391 6388

Postal: PO Box 6254, Fairfield Q 4103