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# ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024

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ASeTTS acknowledges the Wadjuk Noongar people as the original custodians of the land on which our head office and satellite offices sit. We acknowledge their enduring connections to land, waters and community and pay our respects to them and their cultures, and to Elders past and present and emerging.

We are committed to ensuring every person that interacts with us, and works with us, feels safe and is welcomed with equity, dignity, and respect. We work alongside people from refugee-like backgrounds with expansive sexualities, genders and bodies, and celebrate their diverse and rich experiences and lives. To be a safe place for all people and cultures we understand the importance of building trust, connecting with, partnering with, and including others. All people are welcome at ASeTTS.





ASeTTS is a quality accredited mental health service provider.

# **ABOUT US**

Since 1992 we have provided a range of counselling services, complementary therapies, group programs, and community development and capacity building services and supports to people from refugees and asylum seeker backgrounds who have experienced torture and other forms of trauma in their home country, during their journey to Australia, or while in detention.

We support people of all ages, from very diverse backgrounds, experiences, countries of origin, ethnic and language groups, sexualities, and genders through individual, family, group, intergenerational, or community services. Our services adapt and flex to meet the different needs and expectations of our clients. We meet people where they are in their journey and pride ourselves on partnering with our clients, their families and communities to co-design tailored, meaningful and culturally-safe services.

We believe all people who have experienced torture and other forms of trauma have a fundamental right to access supports that facilitate their healing and recovery and reconnection with their innate strengths. We recognise the strengths and resilience of the people we support and are privileged to play a part in supporting their healing and recovery and adjustment to life in Australia. Our team works with people who have a range of experiences, countries, ethnic and language groups, sexualities, and ages, providing support through individual, family, and group interventions, programs, and projects.

ASeTTS is a member of the Forum of Australian Services for Survivors of Torture and Trauma (FASSTT), and of the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT). We are one of eight accredited torture rehabilitation providers in Australia, and one of around 160 centres worldwide who support the recovery of survivors of torture and other forms of trauma.

We have no political affiliation and provide support to survivors of torture and trauma across the lifespan, without distinction of any kind, such as race, gender, language, religion, age, sexuality, or political or other opinion.



### **Our Vision**

Our vision is for a just and peaceful world where human rights are recognised, and the dignity of refugees is advanced and protected.



**Our Purpose** 

Partnering with refugee survivors of torture and trauma to restore hope and dignity, and support individuals, families, and communities to rebuild lives, thrive, and enrich Australia.



#### **Our Values**

Respect Client focus Teamwork

Inclusion us Accountability Ethics



# **CHAIR REPORT**

The ASeTTS' Board has had another busy year. Soon after the last AGM ASeTTS commenced strategic planning through workshops and consultation with the Board and staff to update our vision and purpose. Because of the hard work of the Executive and staff, the Board is confident that the organisation has successfully delivered the Strategic Plan for 2021-2025 and I feel we are now moving forward as a mature organisation. The current Strategic Plan will be on the ASeTTS' website once consultations have been finalised.

A major decision made this year was to invest in a new Client Information Management System in the 2024-25 financial year. This necessary expenditure will ensure that from 2025 the organisation can more efficiently keep records in line with the complex, changing national data requirements and meet the reporting expectations of funders and donors. My thanks to the CEO and the Executive staff for the many hours they spent scoping the organisation's reporting and system needs in consultation with staff, assessing vendor options, and preparing information for the Board to consider.

Last year in my annual report, I noted that ASeTTS' reputation had continued to improve across governments and the community. The value of our standing was demonstrated this year by an invitation to provide submissions to the 'Parliamentary Inquiry into support for children and young people who have been directly or indirectly exposed to trauma associated with migration to Australia due to humanitarian crises'. ASeTTS was mentioned very positively and repeatedly in the resulting 'Parliamentary Committee report - Pathways to Thriving: Enhancing support for humanitarian children and young people in Western Australia'. We understand the report and its recommendations are being considered by leaders within key government agencies, and we are hopeful that the report will result in improved recognition of the needs of young people from refugee-like backgrounds and additional resourcing for critical services.

ASeTTS has been a recipient of regular donations from the Krishna Somers Charitable Trust over the past 5 years. The donations actively contribute to several ASeTTS programs, including an art program. In June, ASeTTS hosted the excellent Krishna Somers Art Exhibition showcasing art by participants who benefitted from the funding. It was a great evening, part of which was an address by one of the Trustees on the work of Dr Krishna Somers.



Being on the Board is one of many ways that the ASeTTS' community and its supporters can engage with the organisation.

While some annual turnover of Board members is a fact of life, my thanks go to all who have participated in the complex process of overseeing the governance of the organisation.

The work of the Board could not happen without the dedication and hard work of the CEO, the Executive Managers and the staff for all the work they have passionately and successfully undertaken this year.

Gail Green Board Chair



# **CEO REPORT**

Welcome to our annual report for the 2023-24 financial year. This report is a celebration of our achievements in supporting our clients, their families, and communities, and promoting understanding and positive discussion about the experiences and rights of people from refugee-like backgrounds. This report captures highlights from the past year only - we would require a much larger report to cover all activities and achievements.

I congratulate the ASeTTS' team - their continued dedication to supporting our clients is a source of great pride. This year we have again exceeded our service targets and delivered an enormous number of tailored services to support our clients, their families, and communities impacted by torture or trauma. Through service reviews and program evaluations our clients have told us that our approach has been impactful. 98% of annual client feedback survey respondents reported being 'happy or very happy' with services, and 96% felt 'safe or very safe'. While training and sector development represent a small component of our overall work, these activities were also very impactful and supported professionals from various sectors to improve their understanding of the needs and experiences of people from refugee-like backgrounds.

Despite the substantial volume of services delivered this year, we received a high numbers of referrals and have struggled to meet service demand. Global conflicts, violence and persecution are ongoing and have a significant impact on the people and communities we support, and while we would like to do more, time and resources are limited. As a result, there were points in this year where our waitlist and waiting time for service has been longer than desired. In response, our Counsellors have commenced interim waitlist contact for clients to maintain connection and check-in on the wellbeing and symptoms of clients while they wait for services.

Alongside our ongoing delivery of services, this has been a year of looking forward, exploring and preparing for the future. Activities this year have included:

- In collaboration with ASeTTS' staff fine-tuning our ways of working to ensure they reflect our practice and organisational maturity; this includes clarifying how clients access and engage with our different services.
- Preparing for our third comprehensive quality accreditation against national mental health standards.
- Engaging Veraison to provide a 6-month Leadership Development Program to our senior leaders; this included Team Coordinators, Counsellors with specialised functions and Executives. The program included workshops on coaching, leadership styles, managing performance, conflict resolution, and leading change.
- Establishing our formal Cybersecurity Governance Framework in consultation with Thomas Cyber and IT service support provider Accelerate to guide our approach to protecting critical data and information assets.

- Contributing to the Board's review of ASeTTS' vision and purpose which was facilitated by Blue Helix Consulting and finalised in consultation with staff.
- Working with colleagues across the FASSTT network to review and develop nationally consistent data and reporting requirements. The FASSTT Data Capability Project has involved countless meetings (in person and online), across the network with support from the Social Research Centre.
- Undertaking a detailed review of our data and reporting needs with support from Tango IT, and in consultation with staff scoping our future client information management system needs. This resulted in our interviewing vendors and proposing a detailed business case to the Board for significant IT investment in FY 2024-25.
- With the Board, defining our future aspirations, strategic priorities and objectives. The resulting Strategic Plan highlights our focus on further developing our expertise in torture and trauma counselling and community development services and building our reputation as a centre of excellence. The team and I are excited by the direction the new plan will provide.

Finally, I thank my colleagues Vanja Tandaric (Executive Manager Corporate Services) and Fiona Reid (Executive Manager Client Services) who I have worked very closely with this year to deliver a sizeable volume of work. I deeply appreciate our ability to leverage our different skills, experiences and perspectives to navigate change and prepare for the future. I also extend my thanks to the Board Chair and Deputy Chair who have been a constant source of support, kindness and guidance during this very busy year.

### Merissa Van Der Linden Chief Executive Officer

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# **OUR BOARD**

The ASeTTS Board sets our strategic direction and ensures our organisation is well governed, and successfully achieves our purpose. We are governed by an experienced Board of Directors who volunteer their time and expertise to lead the association.

### **Office Holders**

**Chair: Ms Gail Green** Elected to the Board 18/12/2019 Appointed to position of Chair 25/11/2020

Deputy Chair: Mr Kevin De Souza Joined the Board (Interim Director) 06/09/2021

Elected to the Board 24/11/2021 Appointed to position of Deputy Chair 12/10/2022

#### Treasurer: Mr Vince lanni

Joined the Board (Interim Director) 23/09/2019 Elected to the Board and appointed to position of Treasurer 18/12/2019 Resigned 26/10/2023

Interim Treasurer: Mr Wade Scott

Joined the Board (Interim Treasurer) 27/11/2023

#### Secretary: Ms Amanda Gillett

Elected to the Board and appointed to position of Secretary 24/11/2021

### **Ordinary Directors**

Mr Tony McRae Elected to the Board 18/12/2019

Mr Ray Loh Elected to the Board 24/11/2021

Ms Jumana Jasim

Joined the Board (Interim Director) 06/09/2021 Elected to the Board 24/11/2021 Resigned 26/10/2023

#### **Ms Paradee Thorensen**

Elected to the Board on 12/10/2022 Resigned 26/04/2024

#### Ms Wildaliz De Jesus

Joined the Board (Interim Director) 24/04/2023 Elected to the Board 26/10/2023

### Ms Ming Wang

Joined the Board (Interim Director) 27/11/2023

#### Attendance

During FY 2023-24 the Board met on six occasions, including one strategic visioning workshop. The attendance of Board Members relative to the number of meetings during their time on the Board is as follows.

Gail Green6 of 6 meetingsKevin De Souza6 of 6 meetingsVince Ianni0 of 2 meetingsWade Scott4 of 4 meetingsAmanda Gillett5 of 6 meetingsTony McRae4 of 6 meetings

s Ray Loh S Wildaliz De Jesus S Ming Wang S Jumana Jasim Paradee Thoresen 6 of 6 meetings 5 of 6 meetings 4 of 4 meetings 0 of 1 meetings 2 of 4 meetings

### **Board Committees**

Board Directors and Executive Management have contributed to two key committees across the year.

#### **Finance and Performance**

Purpose: To act as a monitoring and review forum for financial, accounting, performance and reporting practices of the Association. The Committee met on five occasions in FY 2023-24. Committee members have included: Vince Ianni, Wade Scott, Gail Green, Ming Wang, Ray Loh, Paradee Thorensen, Wildaliz De Jesus, Merissa Van Der Linden (CEO) and Vanja Tandaric (Executive Manager Corporate Services).

#### Governance and Risk

Purpose: To act as a monitoring and review forum for governance, risk and compliance matters impacting ASeTTS. The Committee met on five occasions in FY 2023-24. Committee members have included: Amanda Gillett, Kevin De Souza, Tony McRae, Jumana Jasim, Wildaliz De Jesus, Merissa Van Der Linden (CEO) and Fiona Reid (Executive Manager Client Services).

# SECRETARY'S REPORT

The Governance and Risk Committee (GRC) is responsible for monitoring and reviewing issues and matters that relate to the overall integrity, safety and compliance of ASeTTS, and to bring matters to the attention of or make recommendations to the Board, as appropriate.

The GRC includes membership of four Board members which for this reporting period has included Deputy Chair Kevin De Souza, Tony McRae, Wildaliz De Jesus Arocho, and myself as Chair of the Committee. ASeTTS' CEO, Merissa Van Der Linden and Executive Manager Client Services, Fiona Reid, are ex-officio members and Executive Assistant, Tracy Worthington provides the Committee with administrative support.

During the 2023-24 financial year the Committee met a total of five times. In July, September and November 2023 and in March and May of 2024.

The Committee has covered a range of matters over the course of this year including the scoping of a new Client Information Management System (CIMS), ongoing review of the Organisational Risk, Legal Compliance and Continuous Improvement Registers, a reassessment of ASeTTS' position on Lived Experience membership of the Board, cyber security, review of Board position descriptions and preparation for the 2024 quality accreditation against the National Standards for Mental Health Standards.

I want to highlight two of these areas of work the CIMS and cybersecurity governance and policies which have required considerable time and effort of the CEO and other ASeTTS' staff. Scoping of a new CIMS was deemed essential as it became increasingly apparent the existing system is not capable of providing the increased level of data that will be required by funders into the future. This includes data that demonstrates service quality, and clinical and cost effectiveness. The current system is cumbersome to use and poses technical risks. Identifying an alternative system and then managing the process of data transition and staff training will be a lengthy and complex process, which is still ongoing. The GRC acknowledges the significant effort this has required from the CEO, Executive Managers and all members of the ASeTTS' team. The CEO developed a Cybersecurity Governance Framework for ASeTTS in consultation with external cybersecurity experts from Thomas Cyber and IT Support Service Provider Accelerate. The Framework and associated policies have addressed ASeTTS' cybersecurity governance needs. Again, this was an important piece of work as organisations are legally obliged to ensure all reasonable steps are being taken to protect sensitive and personal identifiable information about clients and staff.

I would like to thank other members of the GRC for their input and support over the past year, and thank the CEO, Executive Managers and other ASeTTS staff who do the hard work in preparing matters to be considered by the GRC.

#### Amanda Gillett

Chair ASeTTS' Governance and Risk Committee and Board Secretary September 2024

# **OUR SUPPORTERS**

Without the generous support of our funders, donors and key partners we would not be able to deliver the compliment of services we provide our clients. We thank and acknowledge our supporters for their ongoing commitment to our clients and our work.

#### **Our funders and donors**

Department of Health and Ageing (Cth) Department of Home Affairs (Cth) Department of Social Services (Cth) International Health and Medical Services Mental Health Commission (WA) Office of Multicultural Interests (WA) Krishna Somers Charitable Trust managed by Hall Chadwick Benmark Fund Anonymous donors

#### The FASSTT Network

Companion House – ACT Foundation House – Vic. Melaleuca Refugee Centre – NT Phoenix Centre – Tas. QPASTT – Qld. STARTTS – NSW STTARS – SA FASSTT National Coordinator, Jamila Padhee

#### **Our Partners**

Accelerate Group Adult English Migrant Program (AMEP) Aha! Consulting Amity Health Aranmore Catholic College Arthritis WA Aunty Freda Olgilvie Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators (Ausit) Australian Red Cross Balga Senior High School Blue Helix Consulting

**Brendan Pang Breast Screen WA Cannington Community College Carers WA** Centre for Asylum Seekers Refugees and Detainees (CARAD) Child and Adolescent Health Service (CAHS) Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) **Circle Green Community Legal Centre City East Community Mental Health Services** City of Canning City of Stirling City of Swan **City of Vincent Curtin University** Cyril Jackson Senior Campus **Department of Communities: Child Protection Department of Education Department of Health Diabetes WA Diversity Focus** East Metro Multicultural Network Edith Cowan University Edmund Rice Centre WA Encounter Eritrean Community of WA Freedom from Torture (UK) Gosnells Women's Health Service (GWHS) headspace Cannington Hepatitis WA Humanitarian Entrant Health Service (HEHS) International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT) Interpreters WA Ishar Multicultural Women's Health Services Kalico Consulting Kent Street Senior High School **Koondoola Primary School** Law Access Legal Aid WA LotteryWest LUMA for Her Health and Wellbeing

Lynwood Senior High School MercyCare Midlas **Mission Australia Multicultural Futures** Multicultural Services Centre of WA (MSCWA) Murdoch University National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) Nollamara Primary School Northern Suburbs Community Legal Centre Northlake Senior Campus Notre Dame University Parkwood Primary School Peninsula Australia (formerly Employsure) Perth Children's Hospital Refugee Health Clinic RecLink Refugee Council of Australia (RCoA) Royal Life Saving Society WA Services Australia Settlement Council of Australia (SCoA) Seven Oaks Senior High School Sing n Grow State Library of WA Sudbury House Mirrabooka Surf Life Saving WA Tango IT **Thornlie Primary School Thornlie Senior High School** Umbrella Multicultural Community Care Services United in Diversity Uniting WA University of WA (UWA) UWA Student Guild UWA Students for Refugees Veraison WACOSS WA Interpreters WA Police WA Refugee and People Seeking Asylum Network (WARPSAN) WA Refugee Health Action Group (WARHAG)

West Australian Ballet West Cycle Willetton Senior High School Wilson Primary School Youth Affairs Council of WA (YACWA) Youth Futures (Inc.) Yule Brook College 54 Reasons



# **DR. KRISHNA SOMERS EXPRESSIVE ART PROGRAM**

With the generous ongoing support of the Krishna Somers Trust, and administrators Hall Chadwick, in FY 2023-24 ASeTTS expanded its suite services and introduced the new Dr. Krishna Somers Expressive Art Therapy Program. Across the year our new Art Therapist facilitated two adult art therapy groups, several open studio sessions and worked with Community Development Team members and UWA Guild Volunteers to deliver a program for young people aged 11 to 17-years-olds.

29 adults participated in three open studios and 16 clients attended 12 fortnightly group workshops as part of the Dr. Krishna Somers Expressive Arts Adult Program.

40 young people attended five expressive art workshops as part Dr. Krishna Somers Youth Arts Program, with support from UWA Guild Volunteers.

The new programs provide clients with different avenues through which they can express feelings that are challenging to voice, develop healthy coping and self-care skills, develop creativity, reduce social isolation, and nurture supportive social network.









What I liked best was the conversation and the communication among the group members throughout the session while putting our emotion on the piece of art.

# **OPENING NIGHT ART SHOW**



On 2024 International Day in Support of Victims of Torture ASeTTS opened an exhibition of work created by participants of ASeTTS new Dr. Krishna Somers Expressive Art Program.

The artworks exhibited were acknowledged as a reflection of each client's highly personal journey. For most participants this was their first time exploring creative or expressive outlets and the first time exhibiting their work.

Ms Leanne Peacock, Principal with Hall Chadwick and friend of the late Dr. Krishna Somers formally opened the exhibition. Ms Peacock provided insights into the life and interests of Dr. Somers, including his concern for migrants and refugees, and a desire to reduce the isolation and suffering of displaced people.

ASeTTS is grateful for the support of the Krishna Somers Trust, and proud to deliver a program in the name of Dr. Krishna Somers.





# **OUR REACH**



### 4,559 clinical sessions

delivered to 886 individual clients, this includes intake, counselling services, counselling in Immigration Detention Centres, and youthwork



# 14 psychoeducational groups

to 129 clients, this includes sessions with newly arrived people, and in community development programs



2,714 hours in case management



5,867 direct hours of counselling



### 2,002 out of session

appointments/activities to support counselling clients



#### **43 individuals** in immigration detention were supported, and accessed 323 sessions of counselling



543 hours in travel to sessions

### 49 young people accessed youthwork



**123 clients** accessed 323 Consultant Psychiatrist sessions

666 clients accessed social and therapeutic groups, community

7% were engaged in consultation - this included one consultation

with newly arrived Latin American speaking community

281 were engaged in four unique community projects, this included

exploring the needs of children and young people and another

projects with newly arrived Afghan, Al-Noor, Eritrean and Latin

development and capacity building activities

American communities.

79% in social and therapeutic groups.

13% in youth group activities.

members.



36% of clients accessed more than one service type

### 246 group sessions were delivered in total:

- 3 Families in Cultural Transition programs were delivered to Arabic, Burmese and Latin American speaking clients – 55 clients benefited by accessing 5-6 education sessions that supported their building participant knowledge of, and confidence to access services and resources to help them transition to life in Australia.
- 45 adult clients benefited from the Dr Krishna Somers Expressive Art Program, open studio events and the end of FY exhibition (this is featured on pages 10 and 11).
- 50 men participated in targeted men's activities, this included 16 social group meetings, and 12 cooking and swimming sessions each.
- 7 women and young children participated in eight Sing and Grow activities.

# **OUR REACH**

### FASSTT Conference

20 staff (two-thirds of ASeTTS team) attended the 3rd ANZ Refugee Trauma Recovery in Resettlement Conference in Adelaide.

- 8 x staff chaired sessions,
- 5 x staff delivered oral presentations,
- Community Development Team delivered half day pre-conference workshop, and
- 3 x Poster presentations

Staff who attended the conference provided very positive feedback reporting that they acquired new learnings that they can apply to their roles and felt connected to their colleagues across the FASSTT Network.

### Student placements

ASeTTS student placement program remains highly sought after, as such we have exceeded student placement

targets. This year we have supported the placements of:

- 3 ECU Master of Counselling students,
- 1 Curtin University Social Work Undergraduate,
- 1 Murdoch University Art Therapy Masters student,
- 2 UWA Health Student short placements,
- 1 UWA Masters of Social Work student, and
- 1 North Metro TAFE AMEP lecturer through the College Lecturer Industry Placement (CLIP) Program.



### Referrals

Referrals numbers remained high across the year, with a total of 405 counselling referrals received.

While we strived to manage referrals in a prompt and effective manner, resource limitations resulted in our waitlist climbing to a challenging level, and counselling clients being asked to wait up to 6-months for services. Actions were taken during the year to implement waitlist checkin supports for clients, and to take steps to discharge clients who had benefitted from services to provide opportunities for waitlisted clients. **Performance** The discussions were helpful and relatable. I could connect the training to my practice.



### **Training and Professional Development**

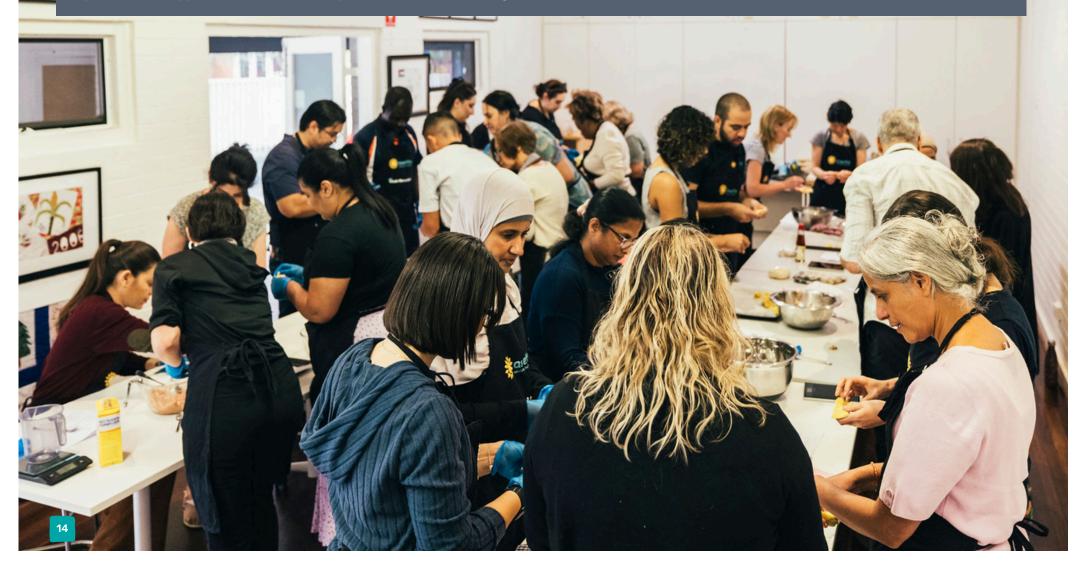
This year ASeTTS staff delivered 18 bespoke training and PD sessions to 464 professionals from Child Protection, TAFE AMEP, State Library of WA, Department of Health, Social Workers, Community Mental Health, Law Access and Legal Aid, UWA, and regional service provider Amity Health. Training delivered included session on the impacts of torture and trauma on refugees, working with people from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds, working with interpreters, vicarious trauma, cultural competency and Co-Designing and Co-Producing Community Development Programs with Refugee Communities. Participants provided rich feedback on how training improved their understanding of working with people from refugee-like backgrounds.

# **OUR PEOPLE**

Our greatest asset is our people.

We are privileged to have a team of thoughtful and experienced staff, who are passionate about supporting the healing and recovery of individuals, families and communities that are impacted by torture and other forms of trauma.

Our workforce represents a diverse range of perspectives, experiences, cultures, languages, ages, and genders. Many of our people have first-hand understanding of the challenges our clients face; having themselves come from a refugee or migrant background. They use their lived and professional experiences to support our clients with compassion and understanding.

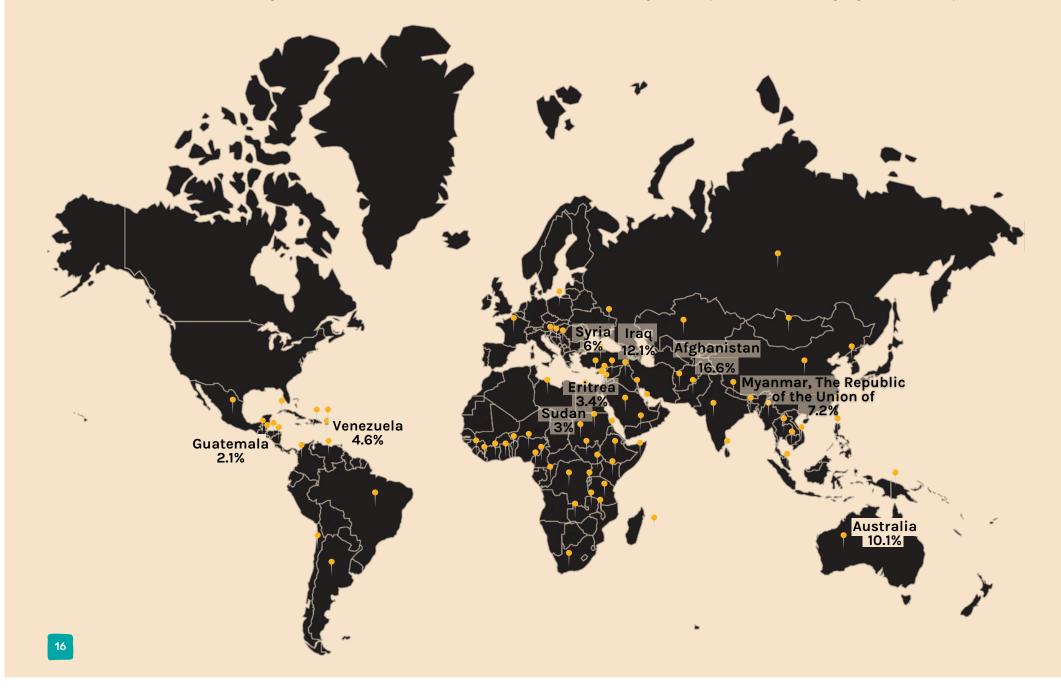


# **OUR PEOPLE**

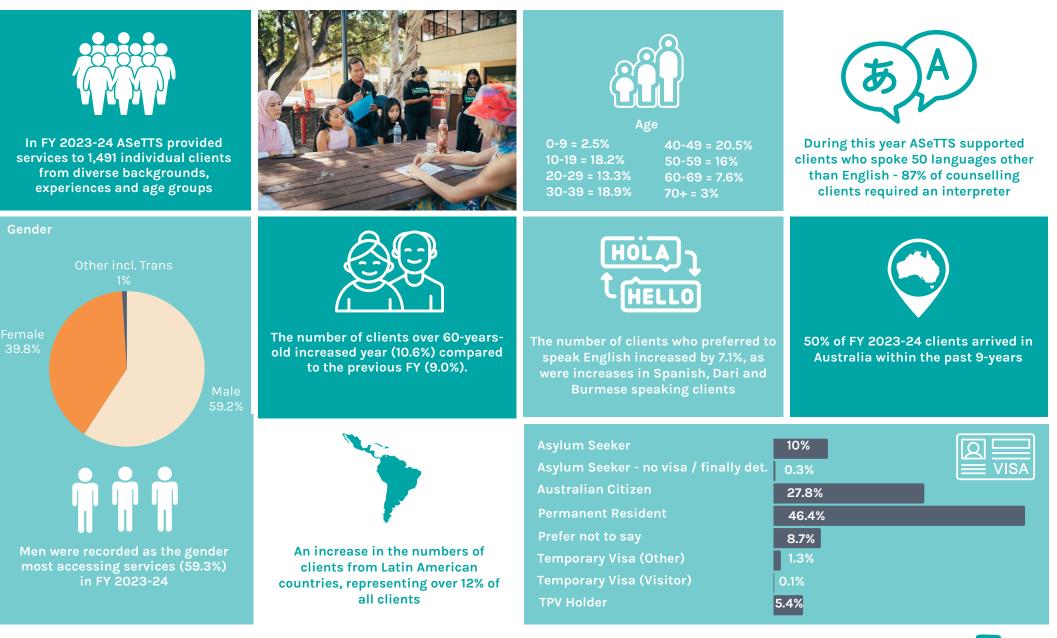


# **OUR CLIENTS' COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN**

Our clients come from across the globe. In 2023-2024, our clients came from 84 countries of origin.. The top 10 countries are highlighted in the map.



# **OUR CLIENTS**



# **CLINICAL SERVICES**

Clinical services are a core component of ASeTTS suite of supports to refugee survivors of torture or trauma.

Our 2023 Internal Client File Audit showed continued improvement across all areas.

There were significant improvements to immediate risk factors or alerts, client preferences regarding family, friend, carer or advocate involvement, and in emergency contact details being documented.



100% of files included evidence of individual goals, strengths, needs and wishes being identified at assessment, and had documented treatment plans.

Active client participation, input and decision making in assessment and planning was seen in 100% of files.

Case notes were again noted as of high quality.

am very happy as there is someone to listen to me and understand my situation.

### A Journey of Freedom and Healing

Abdul\* worked for the government in Afghanistan prior to the Taliban taking control of the country. He was accused by the Taliban of working for international forces, which resulted in threats upon his life, male family members being killed, his house and all his money being taken and ongoing persecution. With his life in danger he fled Afghanistan and sought safety in the United Arab Emirates, Indonesia and finally Australia, where in 2013 he was granted asylum.

Upon arrival on Australia, he had limited support, language and resettlement barriers, uncertain Visa status, faced challenges finding employment, and experienced social isolation with no family or significant relationships.

When referred to ASeTTS for counselling in 2018 he was experiencing severe and persistent symptoms of post-traumatic stress, anxiety and depression, and a range of symptoms associated with significant experience of trauma and the shame and guilt associated with leaving his family in Afghanistan. His initial counselling goals were to: improve mental health and sleep, reduce isolation, reduce pain from somatization and reduce nightmares and fear.

Slowly and with assistance of ASeTTS and other community organisations, Abdul managed to find employment and stable rented accommodation. His asylum seeker status remained until the beginning of 2024, when he attained permanent residency status. With permanent residency he was finally able to travel to Pakistan to see his family for the first time in 11 years and apply for his wife and children to come to Australia.

With regular engagement in ASeTTS services Abdul has experienced significant improvements in his wellbeing and sense of safety. He has made friends, reduced his isolation, and has felt a reduction and stabilisation of his PTSD, depression and anxiety symptoms. He has developed skills to talk about his experiences and new strategies to cope with his symptoms and triggers. He no longer has thoughts of ending his life and is currently waiting for his family Visa to be granted.

\*Names have been changed

### A Journey from Chaos to Peace

Following the attempted kidnapping of her children, threats of death to her immediate family and the assassination of a member of her extended family, Beatriz and her husband made the decision to flee from Venezuela to Ecuador. As refugees in Ecuador life was extremely difficult, this triggered memories of childhood trauma.

Beatriz was in her mid-30's when she arrived in Australia as a refugee with her husband and children in April 2023. She was referred to ASeTTS in May 2023.

At the beginning of her counselling journey, Beatriz presented with lack of sleep, feeling overwhelmed and anxious, experiencing chronic suicidal thoughts, and other symptoms of depression and traumatic stress.

Attending weekly counselling she established a number of therapeutic goals:

- Creating a safe therapeutic relationship and space in which to express her feelings and thoughts.
- Developing and practicing strategies to assist emotional regulation, manage negative thoughts and reduce overthinking.
- Developing mental health literacy to better understand trauma, depression, and enhancing self-care.
- Feeling empowered by focusing on her strengths and validating her experiences and feelings.

Beatriz reports that she has had undergone a life changing experience through counselling. Initially, she was unable to sit calmly and was always 'fidgeting' during the session, and was feeling hopeless. She was encouraged by her counsellor to share her symptoms with her GP, and they prescribed her antidepressants. She also had assessment with ASeTTS' Consultant Psychiatrist, who made recommendations on her ongoing care while she integrated the strategies and skills learned in counselling.

Currently Beatriz is feeling much calmer, safer and hopeful for the future. She is sleeping better, has not experienced suicidal thoughts for many months and is focused on the present.



\*Names have been changed

# **CHILDREN AND YOUTH**



# Cultural and recreational activities

48 clients and their families participated in four cultural and recreational activities within the community, including accessing the ballet ('Nutcracker' and 'La Bayadère'), Beach Safety and Aboriginal Cultural Walk.



### **CICT** program

Three Children in Cultural Transition (CICT) group programs were delivered to 30 newly arrived primary school aged children.



**Outreach Counselling** 

Outreach Counselling was provided to students at 16 Intensive English Centre and mainstream Primary and Senior High Schools, including Northlake Senior Campus, Parkwood Primary School, Seven Oaks Senior High School, Thornlie Primary School, Thornlie Senior High School, Willetton Senior High School, Wilson Primary School and Yule Brook College.



### WOW program

Three 8-week Warriors of Wellbeing (WOW) psychosocial group programs were delivered at two schools with 30 primary school children under 11 years old.



### Youth School Holiday program

The 2023-24 school holiday program delivered seven activities to 38 young people, including:

- Games day (in collaboration with headspace)
- Equine Therapy
- Sailing, and
- 'Minute it to win it' facilitated by Be Challenged

### ASeTTS Reconnect Specialist Youth Services

47 clients (50 Cases) and their families were supported by ASeTTS Reconnect Specialist Youth Services; and 100% reported overall positive improvements in their circumstances and 72.7% of young people reported improved Family Functioning.

We are lucky that we have service like ASeTTS that provide useful [information and activities].



### Cross-Cultural Expressive Art program

10 children, transitioning from Primary to High School, attended the two-day Cross-Cultural Expressive Art program, with the majority going on to participate in the Dr Krishna Somers Expressive Art Youth Program.

# **CHILDREN AND YOUTH**



### **Camp of Courage**

Camp of Courage was held in the January school holidays this year, across four days and three nights, with 14 young people (12 to 24 years of age). In the lead up to the camp a parent information session was conducted with the aim of increasing parent's involvement in young people's engagement with ASeTTS youth holiday programs; and provide information to reduce parent's anxiety when young people go away on camp.

Each camp day commenced with a drum beat session, as an uplifting and connecting activity, and activities for each day focused on a Circle of Courage theme:

- Day 1: Courage and Belonging (crate climb and flying fox)
- Day 2: Independence (canoeing/swimming and expressive art)
- Day 3: Mastery (drama, raft building and talent show)
- Day 4: Generosity (Kanyana Wildlife Park)



### **Youth Peer Support Pilot**

In May, six young people (18-24) participated in our Youth Peer Support Pilot. This pilot initiative invites young people who have previously participated in our School Holiday Program and have turned 18 to take on a volunteer peer support/mentoring role to support younger participants who may not have these types of relationships available to them.

Peer Mentors attended an information session and in keeping with National Child Safe Principles, were provided basic training in Circle of Courage, cultural competency, boundaries and self-care, access to online child safe training and support to attain a volunteer Working with Children's Check.

To read more information about these programs and activities scan the QR code



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# **CHILDREN AND YOUTH CONSULTATION FINDINGS**

This year our Community Development and Children and Youth Teams partnered to undertake ASeTTS first youth consultation. The consultation was driven by our desire to better understand the problems, needs and interests of the young people we work with and using these findings partner with young people to design meaningful youth projects.





24 young people between 12 and 25-years-old were engaged across two consultation groups (based on age)

Using participatory community appraisal tools ASeTTS staff supported participants to recognise the priorities, identify the problems they face and explore possible solutions

The findings of the consultation are strongly aligned with the Parliamentary Committee report - Pathways to Thriving: Enhancing support for humanitarian children and young people in Western Australia. Participants identified a range of shared issues:

- Racism and cultural discrimination
- Age and power differentials
- Sexism
- Bullying and harassment
- · Isolation and interpersonal conflict
- Conflict within the family
- Language barriers
- Barriers to accessing services, and
- Barriers imposed by visa restrictions.

Solutions included practical ways for young people from refugee-like backgrounds to seek support from trusted people and services, ideas for new programs, actions to prevent conflict, improved access to services and systemic advocacy relating to visa restrictions and bullying and discrimination.

In the FY 2024-25 ASeTTS is responding to the feedback provided by young people and progressing new programs and service responses.



To read the report scan the code below





# **INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY**

ASeTTS International Women's Day (IWD) Sundowner event took place in March 2024. Launched by Hon. Ayor Makur Chuot MLC., the event provided opportunities for ASeTTS clients, staff, members and allies to network, share food, and discuss actions that can be taken to promote the inclusion of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. ASeTTS IWD event was a powerful celebration of women's resilience and leadership, especially those from culturally diverse backgrounds. The event showcased posters highlighting the women's rights movements in countries such as Iran, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Australia, and Egypt, reflecting global struggles and victories in the fight for gender equality. Attendees had the chance to learn about the unique challenges women face in different regions while recognising the interconnectedness of these movements.

Attendees were also asked to reflect on the women who have influenced their lives and celebrate the inspiration and honour the women who shaped their journeys. The event's combination of reflection, awareness, and gathering made it a meaningful occasion for all who attended.



# **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND CAPACITY BUILDING**



**CIVAL Alumni and Mentoring Program** A total of 23 Alumni participated in the mentoring circles and masterclasses, and 45 attended each of the networking events. The 2-year pilot, was funded by the Office of Multicultural Interest (OMI).



# Families in Cultural Transition (FICT)

Three programs were delivered to newly arrived humanitarian entrants from Burmese, Arabic and Latin American backgrounds.



### Community Innovators Volunteers and Leaders (CIVAL) Leadership Program

35 current and emerging community leaders from 21 different countries of origin completed the 7th round of CIVAL.

### "I have always thought cooking is for women, though after I came home from the first session, I instantly told my wife to rest as I will cook for her and our four kids tonight and they really loved it."



### Women's Swimming Project

30 women from diverse cultural backgrounds and language groups learned basic swimming skills in a safe women's only space. Delivered in partnership with Royal Life Saving and Balga Leisure Centre.

### **Cook Like a Chef**

We were privileged to partner with celebrity chef Brendan Pang, who developed and facilitated six interactive cooking sessions with 13 men.

# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND CAPACITY BUILDING



### **Eritrean Community Project**

In collaboration with the Eritrean Community of WA, ASeTTS delivered 33 sessions to 166 participants to improve community unity, belonging, confidence, mental wellbeing and physical health.

"It's the first time in the community that we've had so many programs for women. They forget to look after themselves because they're looking after everyone else in their family and community. It's [programs for women] had a massive impact."



### Al Noor and Afghan Community Projects

Over 120 participants accessed activities and sessions about settlement supports, legal information, improving physical health and wellbeing, and psychoeducation workshops along with community and cultural excursions.

### Latin American Community Project

12 activities were delivered to 52 participants – all Spanish speaking humanitarian entrants from Central and South America to improve their wellbeing and form sustainable connections.



To read more information about these programs and activities scan the QR code

".... I was isolated from the Latin American community for various reasons, and this project helped me integrate back into our community."





# **2024 ASeTTS Client Feedback Survey**

10% of current ASeTTS clients completed 2024 ASeTTS Client Feedback Survey, with over half of the respondents (58%) completing the survey in a language other than English. The largest proportion of responses in languages other than English were in Spanish (21%) and Arabic (16%).

### Statistics for FY 2023-24



The most common theme reported was that ASeTTS provides a safe, trustful, and welcoming space, with clients highlighting:

- That staff are considered respectful, engaging, and understanding; and services can be trusted to be confidential and offer flexibility.
- That counselling sessions are valued for assistance with emotional regulation, psychological health, and strategies for managing stress and distress.
- The value that community development activities (e.g., groups, outings, and social events) provide, particularly with regards to meeting new people and reducing social isolation.
- That they valued ASeTTS' information sessions, and programs that focused on skills building and community connections, and
- The positive impact of opportunities for individual support and connection with others. The support received provided both psychological and social benefits.

"I like the feeling I'm being listened to and understood,"

"I am very happy as there is someone to listen to me and understand my situation."

"My counsellor give me better understanding of my own feelings and I'm forever grateful."

"I like counselling and the programs where they take you to excursions and camp, and I like talking to my counsellor because after I feel relaxed."

"Beautiful team giving lots of love and care."

"I would just like to say I'm blessed I'm part of this help program and give me hope for my happier future."

# **TREASURER'S REPORT**

The Association for Services to Torture and Trauma Survivors Inc. (ASeTTS) is pleased to present its financial performance for the year ending 30 June 2024. This report reflects our commitment to maintaining stable operations and effectively managing resources to support the essential services we provide.

ASeTTS achieved a net profit of \$442,597, a significant increase compared to last year's net profit of \$154,646. This positive outcome was driven by stronger investment returns, generous untied donations from the Dr. Krishna Somers Trust, and careful expense management.

Total revenue for the year reached \$5,293,726, marking an increase of \$452,032 over the previous financial year. This growth was primarily driven by an increase in grant funding, up by \$228,375, and robust investment performance, which generated \$231,957 in interest income, compared to \$121,096 in 2023. In addition, revenue from donations, Medicare rebates, and training income grew to \$359,824, up from \$247,028 in the prior year.

Critical funding from both Federal and State Governments remains the foundation of ASeTTS' revenue, whilst diversified streams such as donations and investments play a vital role in sustaining and expanding our services.

Total expenses for the year were \$4,851,129, up from \$4,687,048, reflecting controlled growth amidst inflationary pressures and increased staffing costs due to the SCHADS Award requirements. Employment costs, including wages, superannuation, and staff benefits, amounted to \$3,396,024. Program costs rose to \$505,305, enabling ASeTTS to meet the increasing demand for services. Administrative and operational costs were carefully managed, contributing to the overall positive financial performance. As at 30 June 2024, ASeTTS held total assets of \$5,415,245, up from \$4,860,677 in the previous financial year. This increase includes the recognition of new long-term lease agreements and right-of-use asset leases, in accordance with the Australian Accounting Standards.

Liabilities saw a modest rise to \$1,221,338, primarily due to employee benefits and lease liabilities. Net assets increased by \$442,597, bringing total equity to \$4,193,907, up from \$3,751,310 in 2023.

ASeTTS continues to maintain a strong liquidity position, with cash and cash equivalents totalling \$4,934,654, as of 30 June 2024. This robust cash reserve ensures the organisation can comfortably meet its short-term obligations, whilst also providing a buffer for unforeseen expenses. It also allows ASETTS to invest in future programs and maintain financial flexibility to respond to evolving service delivery needs.

Overall, ASeTTS remains in a strong financial position, with a continued focus on strategically reinvesting in programs, services, and staff development. Our financial statements were audited by Crowe Australasia and received an unqualified audit opinion, affirming the accuracy and reliability of our financial records.

We extend our sincere gratitude to the Board, management, staff, and funders for their unwavering dedication and support, which enable ASeTTS to continue its mission of supporting survivors of torture and trauma.

Wade Scott Interim Treasurer

# **AUDIT REPORT LETTER**



## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR SERVICES TO TORTURE AND TRAUMA SURVIVORS INCORPORATED

#### Report on the Audit of the Financial Report

#### Opinion

We have audited the Financial Report of the Association of Services to Torture and Trauma Survivors Incorporated ('ASeTTS'), which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2024, the statement of income and retained surplus, the statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies, and the Board of Directors' declaration.

In our opinion, the Financial Report of ASeTTS has been prepared in accordance with Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) Act 2012, and the Associations Incorporation Act 2015 including:

- (a) giving a true and fair view of ASeTTS' financial position as at 30 June 2024 and of its financial performance for the year then ended; and
- (b) complying with Australian Accounting Standards Simplified Disclosures and Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulations 2022.

#### Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report section of our report. We are independent of the Association in accordance with the auditor independence requirements of the ACNC Act 2012 and the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (including Independence Standards) (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the Financial Report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Responsibilities of the Board of Directors for the Financial Report

The Board of Directors of ASeTTS is responsible for:

- I. Preparing the Financial Report that gives a true and fair view Financial Report in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards – Simplified Disclosures and the ACNC Act 2012.
- II. Preparing the Financial Report in accordance with the Associations Incorporation Act 2015.
- III. Implementing necessary internal control to enable the preparation of the Financial Report that gives a true and fair view and is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.
- IV. Assessing ASeTTS' ability to continue as a going concern and whether the use of the going concern basis of accounting is appropriate. This includes disclosing, as applicable, matters relating to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless they either intend to liquidate ASeTTS or to cease operations or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

Our objective is:

- I. to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the Financial Report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error; and
- II. to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion.

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# **AUDIT REPORT LETTER**



Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit.

We also:

- I. Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- II. Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of ASeTTS' internal control.
- III. Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Board of Directors.
- IV. Conclude on the appropriateness of the Board of Directors' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial report. We also conclude, based on the audit evidence obtained whether a material uncertainty exists related to events and conditions that may cast significant doubt on ASeTTS' ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report, or if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause ASeTTS to cease to continue as a going concern.

V. Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with the Board of Directors regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

We also provide the Board of Directors with a statement that we have complied with the relevant ethical requirements regarding independence, and to communicate with them all relationships and other matters that may reasonably be thought to bear on our independence, and where applicable, related safeguards.

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**Crowe Perth** 

Sean McGurk Partner

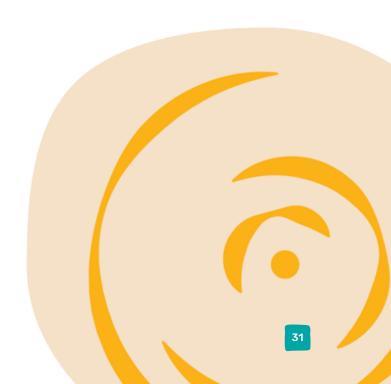
Signed at Perth, Western Australia

14 October 2024

# STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2024

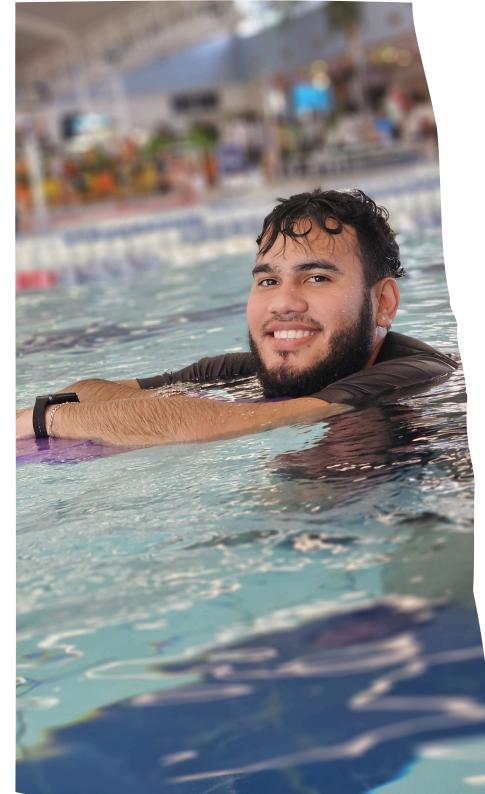
	2024 \$	2023 \$
INCOME		
Revenue	4,701,945	4,473,570
Interest income	231,957	121,096
Other Income	359,824	247,028
TOTAL INCOME	5,293,726	4,841,694
EXPENSES		
Employment	3,396,024	3,190,118
Consultants & Contractors	253,601	267,102
Staff Development	43,267	60,071
Programs	505,305	484,004
Administration	314,696	392,940
Premises	55,350	97,972
Insurance	124,315	100,222
Travel	51,334	30,734
Depreciation	53,844	30,624
Depreciation Leases	15,140	-
Interest Lease expense	3,768	-
Finance Costs	574	454
Other	33,911	32,807
TOTAL EXPENSES	4,851,129	4,687,048
SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR	442,597	154,646
Other comprehensive income	-	-
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR	442,597	154,646



### STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2024

	2024 \$	2023 \$
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash & Cash equivalents	4,934,654	4,450,307
Trade & Other Receivables	207,961	248,794
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	5,142,615	4,699,101
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Property, Plant & Equipment	174,218	161,576
Right-of-use Assets	98,412	-
	272,630	161,576
TOTAL ASSETS	5,415,245	4,860,677
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Trade & Other Payables	386,403	289,203
Grant Income in Advance	35,000	177,050
Provisions	531,579	531,410
Lease Liability	3,769	-
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	956,751	997,663
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Provisions	166,318	111,704
Lease Liability	98,269	-
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES	264,587	111,704
TOTAL LIABILITIES	1,221,338	1,109,367
NET ASSETS	4,193,907	3,751,310
EQUITY		
Accumulated Funds	4,193,907	3,751,310
	4,193,907	3,751,310
		• • •



### STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY

FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2024

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	Accumulated		
	Funds \$	Reserves \$	Total \$
BALANCE AS AT 1 JULY 2022	3,596,664	-	3,596,664
Net Surplus for the Year	154,646	-	154,646
BALANCE AS AT 30 June 2023	3,751,310	-	3,751,310

BALANCE AS AT 1 JULY 2023	3,751,310	-	3,751,310
Net Surplus for the Year	442,597	-	442,597
BALANCE AS AT 30 June 2024	4,193,907	-	4,193,907

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### STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2024

	2024 \$	2023 \$
CASHFLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES	·	·
Receipts from Operations	5,448,713	4,834,475
Payments to Suppliers and Employees	(5,121,732)	(5,114,303)
NET CASH (USED IN)/PROVIDED BY OPERATING ACTIVITIES	326,981	(279,828)
CASHFLOW FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES		
Acquisition of Property, Plant & Equipment	(66,486)	(117,613)
Interest Received	239,134	95,549
NET CASH FLOWS USED IN INVESTING ACTIVITIES	172,648	(22,064)
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES		
Lease payments	(15,282)	-
NET CASH FLOWS USED IN FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES	(15,282)	-
NET DECREASE IN CASH HELD	484,347	(301,892)
CASH & CASH EQUIVALENTS AT BEGINNING OF YEAR	4,450,307	4,752,199
CASH & CASH EQUIVALENTS AT END OF YEAR	4,934,654	4,450,307





Association for Services to Torture and Trauma Survivors (ASeTTS) ABN 83 460 231 835

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