



“A Word from the CEO”

Leigh Garrett

As I reported in June, I think everyone in South Australia felt such relief to see how our country has navigated the COVID-19 Pandemic and so far has been able to avoid the infection, separation and devastation experienced by so many others around the world. Since June, there have been a few set-backs that have required restrictions to be re-imposed, but as I write this, we are all hoping for most of these to be removed and looking forward to a much more ‘normal’ Christmas break. Again, I would like to thank our Pandemic Response Team who continued to oversee the ever-changing arrangements for operation and service delivery, enabling services to change to meet the needs of clients. At the moment, some services requiring group interventions are still operating ‘virtually’ but most other services are operating normally.

Amidst the chaos, there have been some significant achievements and a highlight of the year was our **Accreditation Review** in June 2020. The feedback from our stakeholders and clients was not only uplifting, but moving. My thanks go to Louise Kelly, Deputy CEO, who coordinated the review. I am delighted to report that we have now received accreditation for a further three years in the Quality Improvement Council **Health & Community Services Standards** and **National Standards for Mental Health Services (NSMHS)**. OARS is also now a registered provider for specific registration groups under the **National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)** in South Australia.

We have been successful in achieving new funding to assist with the difficult problems in our communities, including DV, mental health and affordable accommodation. These of course have been exacerbated by the Pandemic.

Our AGM in November was quickly moved to an online event following a temporary shut-down in SA, and I am pleased to provide some of the operational highlights for 2019/20 in this newsletter.

Our Programs and staffing requirements are expanding and I am delighted to advise that I have just signed a Lease on a property at **Level 1, 336 South Road, Richmond, and will be moving our Head Office to this address in the next few weeks.**

I would like to thank our staff and volunteers for their incredible dedication and client focus, and my management team for growing and changing with me as the environment became more complex and demanding. We wish you all a happy and relaxing Christmas.

Leigh

Statement of Purpose

Enhancing community wellbeing by reducing offending and victimisation

Strategic Directions

Reintegration Services
Clinical Services
Advocacy
Victims & Crime Prevention
Organisational Excellence

Our Guiding Principles

Social Justice
Restorative Justice
Community Participation
Continuous Improvement
Prison as a Last Resort.

Our Services

Home Detention Integrated Support Program
NDIS
Reintegration Accommodation Services
Assistance with Care and Housing
Aboriginal Post Release Program
Drug & Alcohol Counselling
Gambling Support Service
Gambling Intervention Program
Therapeutic Diversion Courts Services
Counselling, Health and Substance Management (CHaSM)
Pre-Release Alcohol & Drug Program
Circles of Support & Accountability
Support for individuals and families, Including:
Advocacy & Referral
Centre for Restorative Justice
Cadell Bus Service
Yatala Family Centre

New Head Office located at:

Level 1, 336 South Road, Richmond SA 5033

Ph: 08 8218 0700

or on the web at

www.oars.org.au



Newsletter December 2020



The purpose of this newsletter is to keep members and supporters updated on the events at OARS Community Transitions.

We have many experiences to tell you about and have selected a few to share with you.

We also want to take this opportunity to ask you to consider making a donation, to support our services during this Christmas season and throughout the year.

The OARS SA Board comprises:

Annabel Shinkfield (Chair)
Robin English (Deputy Chair)
Chris O'Grady
Greg Pattinson
Peter May
Jessie Byrne
Leigh Garrett (CEO)



Annabel Shinkfield, Chair

Dear Members and Supporters

What an extraordinary year we've experienced! How the world has changed. In view of the pandemic, we have again had to do things differently. Fortunately, for OARS, doing things differently has been a strength and it has enabled us to tap into key opportunities. It has required three key things: **adaptation, responsiveness and the need for innovation.**

At the beginning of this year, with the confident assumption of business as usual, OARS planned for the year ahead. I am pleased to say, that despite the disruption the pandemic has caused, OARS thrived to achieve **maximum capacity in its existing programs** and our sister organisation, Community Transitions, commenced an innovative domestic violence program called **'Don't Become that Man'**.

We have been able to achieve **significant outcomes with clients** because of the **culture** of high performance that our CEO has driven. Hard to achieve in commercial organisations; it's even rarer in organisations such as ours, but is evident in our client focus, strategic orientation and alignment, and our capacity to innovate. The Board has appreciated the impact OARS has within the sector, evidenced in our recent **quality accreditation** where stakeholders and clients gave feedback that was both heartwarming and gratifying.

OARS was able to report a healthy financial result at the AGM in November, following efficient management of its resources, and received a clean audit by auditors Nexia Edwards Marshall. But more funds are needed to meet ever increasing gaps and your assistance is always appreciated.

On behalf of the Board I wish to thank our stakeholders, supporters, and the fantastic team at OARS. The Board has appreciated their hard work throughout the year and looks forward to the challenges of 2021.

Annabel Shinkfield, Chair

UPDATE ON OUR PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

OARS COMMUNITY TRANSITIONS endeavours to provide an array of creative, compassionate and relevant services for its clients. A brief list is included on the back of this brochure. We have pleasure in providing this half-yearly update for your information.

Our 2019-20 Annual Report was presented at our AGM on 25th November 2020. Reports included:

Client Statistics: During the 2019-20 financial year OARS experienced an increase of client service in most of our programs. OARS has also provided the Keep in Touch Program inhouse, and a new Remandee Program commenced. Some clients have received services on more than one program and if counted in both programs, we serviced a total of **5,087 Program Clients for 2019-20** (compared to 2,993 Program Clients in 2018-19).

Operational highlights throughout the year, included:

- Re-Structure of the management at OARS following the appointment of **Louise Kelly as Deputy CEO** in late 2019. Louise's appointment provides a **succession plan** for OARS and as we have grown, Leigh has found Louise's support a real asset and comfort.
- **Our Reconciliation Action Plan** was finalised - we are a culturally safe organisation and we believe clients are comfortable with our services.
- Some **programs** are expanding whilst others have consolidated during the year, but all are operating at capacity and providing excellent high level, sophisticated work with people with complex needs. This includes our new National Disability Insurance Scheme, Primary Health Network Drug & Alcohol Services, the Home Detention Integrated Support Service funded by the Department of Correctional Services, and the Courts Intervention programs.
- Our **Quality accreditation feedback** from the Audit Team was the best thing that we have ever heard and we are thankful for the time that our stakeholders took to engage with them.
- We have also established a relationship with a private operator of prisons and have a new program in the **Adelaide Remand Centre**.
- A **new domestic violence prevention program** operating in our Sister Organisation, Community Transitions, is providing Internet and phone counselling for men who are pre-violent. There is also an accommodation component to this service. We are hopeful for ongoing funding for these programs.
- The **Centre for Restorative Justice** has some interesting opportunities coming up.
- **Client satisfaction surveys** and **good news stories** are published regularly on our Intranet and included in Board Reports so everyone can hear the fantastic outcomes being achieved.

Good News Story -Reintegration Services

The good news stories are evidence of how the teams at OARS work alongside our clients to create new stories - of hope, courage and achievement. In telling these stories, we can help to overcome community perceptions, and change attitudes towards ex-offenders. Here's another example of one from the Reintegration Accommodation Service:

OARS Client Worker is working with PT who recently moved into a Transitional Housing Property (THP). Since moving into his property, he has expressed that he feels grateful and motivated to continue working towards his goals. PT has expressed his gratitude working with OARS in reducing the barriers to him achieving his goals. PT has been able to find casual employment, continued with progress in drug and alcohol counselling and now has a safe a secure place where he can have positive contact with his young son. PT is eager to continue working towards long term housing.

How to Get Involved:

- We are experiencing high demand for our services and your **donation** would be appreciated.
- If you are an **Employer** and would be open to exploring the **potential of employing ex-offenders**, we would be delighted to hear from you.

New Head Office for OARS CT

Please note that our new Head Office is located at:

**Level 1, 336 South Road
Richmond. SA. 5033
Phone: 8218 0700**

Good News Story

OARS Drug & Alcohol Treatment Services

A client worker reported the following positive feedback received from a client upon completion of their counselling in Nov 2020:

"OARS supported me to stop using methamphetamines. I found it helpful to have someone to talk to that was non-judgmental, supported me and understood the difficulties I faced making a change. Since commencing counselling my life has changed heaps, I'm not using, repaired my family relationships, am living normally, in a better head space, am a better person (pay attention and am focused on what is important), obtained employment, am organised, manage my time better and set realistic goals. If I could speak to myself before I started, I would say "it's about bloody time" and making a change is possible but you just need to learn how."

This client said she intends to step down into the SMART Recovery Group for ongoing support now she has completed one on one counselling.