

Annual Report

2019 — 2020



Our vision

To reduce the incidence and impact of road trauma.

Our purpose

Road Trauma Support Services Victoria (RTSSV) is a not-for-profit organisation contributing to the safety and wellbeing of Victorian road users. We provide counselling and support to people affected by road trauma and address attitudes and behaviours of road users through education.

Our values

- Caring** — We are committed to serving our clients with empathy and compassion.
- Integrity** — We display integrity, respect and dignity in all our dealings with clients, stakeholders and members of our workforce.
- Quality** — Our focus is on the people we serve, and we strive for excellence in service delivery, evaluation and continuous improvement.
- Accountability** — We are accountable for our actions in working to deliver our services and our mission.

Our history

RTSSV was founded in 1994 by a small group of people whose lives had been directly impacted by road trauma. These people understood the need for a specialist service where support could be offered to those who, like them, were suffering because of the injury or loss of a loved one on the roads. They joined with professionals working in the area to provide counselling and support. From this humble beginning, RTSSV has grown to offer state-wide counselling and support to any Victorian affected by a road incident. RTSSV now comprises a team of staff and volunteers who provide support and education services to more than 3,000 people annually.

Thank you to Tomorrow Agency, Wendy Bowler and Acton Print for contributing to the design, writing and printing of our Annual Report.

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We acknowledged the 25th anniversary of RTSSV in October 2019. This significant milestone was an indication of the resilience of this organisation and of our dedication to those we serve.



Chairman's Report

This is my first report to you as Chairman of Road Trauma Support Services Victoria (RTSSV). I am truly honoured to have been selected as your Chairman in October last year. I want to thank Justin Flynn for his unwavering commitment and dedication to the organisation over the previous nine years, and for leaving it in great shape for the years ahead.

It is fair to say that, when I took on the role, I did not expect the first nine months to turn out as they have done. Nobody saw COVID-19 and its impacts coming, and RTSSV certainly has not been immune to the challenges it has posed. However, I am very impressed with how Bernadette Nugent and the broad team around her have adapted and persevered, leaving the organisation in better shape at the end of the year despite the difficulties.

Unfortunately, contrary to expectations, the drop in road traffic caused by COVID-19 has not resulted in a commensurate reduction in road trauma incidents. Whereas there has been a welcome decrease in incidents since the dreadful year of 2019, sadly our road network continues to be a dangerous place, meaning the services provided by RTSSV are as important as ever.

When I took on the chair role, I indicated that I would like to see the organisation develop further in three core interrelated areas: brand and profile, funding, and organisational capability. I am very pleased to report that, although these remain longer-term objectives, significant progress has been made in each of the areas this year.

In terms of brand and profile, RTSSV is the only organisation in Victoria solely focused on road trauma support and education. Through our counselling and educational services, we make an incredible difference

to the lives of many in the community. Although we are a relatively small non-for-profit organisation with limited resources, I believe the organisation can be instrumental in further raising awareness of road trauma through raising the profile of the issue and the work that we do. As such, I am very pleased about RTSSV's submission to the Victorian Government's inquiry into the increase in the road toll, and Bernadette being asked to attend a public hearing to discuss the submission further.

In terms of funding, RTSSV continues to remain heavily reliant on the funding provided by the Transport Accident Commission (TAC) and the contributions made by participants in our education programs. These funds support the core of our services. We also continue to attract a broader number of partnership sponsors together with private donations, allowing us to invest a little extra in the organisation and the important work it does.

The third area I want to mention is organisational capability. This is Bernadette's first full year as CEO, and she has done a fabulous job at running the organisation and improving its capability. Despite the challenges of COVID-19, we have finished the year in a secure financial position. We have been able to make a number of essential investments in our people and our systems and infrastructure. The team has adapted seamlessly to working from home and delivered innovative new services such as the Road Trauma Awareness Seminar (RTAS) online program. A new three-year strategic plan is under development, and I am excited to see how we can further improve the services we provide to our community.

On behalf of the board, I would like to extend our sincere thanks to our partners, including

TAC, VicRoads, Victoria Police, and the Magistrate's Court for their continued support of RTSSV and their deep engagement in the workshops held in the development of our next strategic plan.

I would like to thank Robert Ewing, who retired from the board this year, and Justin Flynn, who will retire at the AGM, both after nine years of committed service to RTSSV. Justin was Chairman for seven years and made a huge contribution to the development and stability of the organisation. I also thank my other fellow directors for their valuable contributions and dedication to the organisation."

Finally, a huge thank you to Bernadette, her team and all the volunteers who continue to work tirelessly to make a big difference to the lives of so many people impacted by road trauma.

Xander Alpherts
Chairman

Chief Executive's Report



What an extraordinary year 2020 has been; a time of unprecedented challenge. Hearing the news has often left us feeling overwhelmed and full of concern or pessimism about the future. For people impacted by road trauma, along with those already disadvantaged or marginalised, the bushfires and COVID-19 have added further levels of challenge. Therefore, it has been imperative for Road Trauma Support Services Victoria (RTSSV) to provide hope and a sense of community.

As CEO, I am incredibly proud of all the work achieved by the team and our success in maintaining services and programs to ensure that the Victorian community has access to support, counselling and education programs. We responded by restructuring our business model and staying connected as a team.

COVID-19 presented a unique set of concerns for the wellbeing of staff and clients. Considerable planning went into ways of maintaining the core business: counselling and education services. All head office staff were set up to work from home, and counselling was offered via telephone and video conferencing. Throughout April, the education team worked tirelessly to develop an online Road Trauma Awareness Seminar (RTAS) program, which began on 1 May 2020. We can now reflect with pride on the manner in which the organisation rose to meet the challenges and continued to deliver vital services.

As the health crisis in Victoria continues, we will remain vigilant to ensure the health of staff and clients remains a priority, and that we adhere to government guidelines concerning a return-to-work.

I feel confident in saying that we continue to be well respected by our stakeholders. Most significantly, our counselling clients often say, 'I don't know how I would have coped without

you,' plus education-program participants report that what they have learnt has made them rethink their driving behaviours.

Eighteen months into my tenure as CEO, I have thought a lot about what makes RTSSV such a valuable organisation. I genuinely believe that the crux of it is that we genuinely care for people who have been impacted by road- and transport-related incidents. We want our services and programs to both prevent and reduce the impact that road trauma has on people's lives.

We acknowledged the 25th anniversary of RTSSV in October 2019. This significant milestone was an indication of the resilience of this organisation and of our dedication to those we serve. We have developed a deep understanding of why we need to be here. There is still work to do and room to keep growing, including to expand our reach across the state to encourage all people to stop and listen.

This year, with Foundstone Advisory, we began an organisational review to prepare for the next three-year strategic plan. Following many hours of conversation with internal and external stakeholders, we are clear that an integral part of the RTSSV identity is its foundational peer-support philosophy. We are in a unique position of hearing and supporting people who have been involved in crashes on both sides: those who may have caused incidents and people impacted. Our education programs are supported by people who tell stories of their road trauma experiences. If we want to explain where we are going, we use a plan, but if we want to motivate and inspire others, we use stories.

We have approximately 140 volunteers, 60 who actively tell their stories through our education programs and to the media. We are called on by the TAC and other organisations

to provide advice about how to best to train and support those who want to share their experiences. We acknowledge and support the safe systems approach to the prevention of road trauma, but also recognise that people make mistakes. Community complacency is challenged by people sharing stories of road trauma, particularly the idea that 'it can't happen to me'. We know only too well at RTSSV that it can.

At the beginning of 2020, RTSSV submitted two papers to the Victorian and federal parliamentary inquiries into the increase into the road toll. The submissions focused on the organisation's willingness to collaborate with key road safety partners, local shires and community groups. We recognise the importance of being a part of all the community's main initiatives, significantly by supporting people to tell their stories, and ensuring that conversations about road trauma do not have negative psychological impacts.

The first half of the financial year saw a 75 per cent changeover of counselling staff. The changes were a result of staff resignations due to new employment opportunities, including the Manager of Counselling moving into the CEO role. Despite these significant changes, the counselling team has managed to provide an uninterrupted service.

RTSSV has continued to maintain and develop its relationships with the TAC, VicRoads, Victoria Police, and corporate partners. We finalised a partnership agreement with three legal firms: Maurice Blackburn, Zaparus Lawyers and Henry Carus. The agreement aims to provide clients with information about each firm, without recommendation, to ensure access to accredited firms specialising in personal injury.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions on public gatherings, our annual Shine a Light on Road Safety campaign in May went online. Although we were unable to hold the walk, a significant number of people connected with the campaign. Many reported that they did family walks on the day. The Hon. Jaala Pulford, Joe Calafiore, TAC, Libby Murphy, Victoria Police and myself shared road safety messages in a video produced with the TAC. Our campaign sponsors, Maurice Blackburn Lawyers, Henry Carus and Zaparus, also made videos. The campaign allows people whose lives have been changed by road incidents to do something positive, and to help raise the profile of RTSSV.

At last year's AGM, Xander Alpherts was voted Chair of the Board. Xander has shown his passion and commitment to the organisation, and we are delighted with his appointment. We also welcomed three directors: Robin Bowerman, Sue Hansford and Merryn Wallace. The new directors have brought many skills to the Board, involving corporate affairs, strategy, and business and marketing development. We also welcomed a new Manager of Counselling and Support Services, Lorraine Flannery, and three counsellors: Connie Boglis, Claire Mann and Leanne Hyndman. We now have a full complement of counselling staff, and look forward to the structure and stability this will bring.

Our 19th Time for Remembering ceremony was held at Queen's Hall, Parliament House, on 17 November 2019. About 140 people attended, including senior politicians and representatives from the TAC, Victoria Police, SES and CFA. The annual ceremony is a significant event for many clients, allowing people to remember loved ones killed in a crash or reflect on the life-long impacts of road trauma.

I want to acknowledge the ongoing financial support of the TAC, which funds our core counselling services, and the positive and growing relationship that exists. We are grateful for the support of Victoria Police, VicRoads and Jaala Pulford (until recently, the Minister of Roads and Road Safety).

Thank you to our Shine a Light on Road Safety sponsors Maurice Blackburn, Zaparus, and Henry Carus legal firms; Narva; EastLink; and Transurban. Your willingness to work with us is genuinely appreciated. I would personally like to thank our Directors for working closely with me over the past 18 months. I have had the pleasure of getting to know you all. Your support certainly makes a difference to the organisation.

Finally, to the staff and volunteers, I congratulate you for your dedication and commitment to RTSSV. You have dug deep to develop new capacities, and I sincerely thank you for walking alongside me, especially in recent months. A good idea isn't worth much if it doesn't reach the people who can benefit. Each person's voice matters, and together I know we make a difference.

As we move forward, we can capture the lessons we have learnt in 2020 to develop our skills and capacities to the maximum, ensuring that this organisation grows and thrives.

Bernadette Nugent
Chief Executive

Counselling and Support Services

As each person affected by trauma faces ongoing difficulties, they are forced to consider a “new normal”. Never have these two words been so significant as we deal with the COVID-19 situation as a state, nation and global community. It has made us think about our daily rituals, personal space and loved ones in ways that imprint on us the need to consciously work together as a collective.

At the same time, I reflected on the continuing impact of road trauma on families, friends, colleagues, and the community, such as when four police officers failed to return home after a traffic incident on Melbourne's Eastern Freeway on 22 April 2020. The ripple effect of the officers' deaths was a powerful reminder of everyone's susceptibility to road-related tragedy. It reminded all of us at Road Trauma Support Services Victoria (RTSSV) of the importance of the free counselling, support and information services that we provide to people impacted.

As one of the new members of the team, I drove to work – one of thousands of people in transit – with a greater determination to be present and mindful of my driving. I realised that, whether someone was in a vehicle, on public transport (buses, trams, trains), riding a bike or using the roads as a pedestrian, one moment of distraction was all that it would take to potentially change a life. Our clients are drawn from all of these forms of road use. What causes people to make contact and decide to enlist the support that our counsellors are trained to deliver is the trauma of traffic events.

Staff changes

The past year has presented many challenges for a small but effective counselling team, including staff changes. We have had a change in the counselling manager, counsellors leaving and new staff members coming on board. We are proud to say that, while we have had to train and integrate new counsellors (including myself) into the team, the process has been largely seamless. Each new team member has brought a wealth of knowledge and sense of cohesion and stability.

The organisation farewelled the much-loved Jane Phillips, who had been acting in the manager's position before returning to her professional roots in the mental health sector. I started in late August in the position of Manager of Counselling and Support

Services, having worked in the health sector for many years in nursing, counselling and management positions. We were grateful to receive the help of a locum, Claire Mann, in late November, who by June had become a permanent staff member, bringing with her experience in trauma and PTSD counselling/ social work. Connie Boglis joined in January, with a background in counselling and youth services, and Leanne Hyndman came on board to provide skills in education and working with children. The new counsellors joined Mustafa Kouklan, who has worked for the organisation since 2018.

We now look forward to providing the Victorian community with a balanced group of professionals well able to continue the incredible work of trauma support.

The year in counselling

Throughout the year, the staff has had the fantastic support and knowledge of Dr Rob Gordon, a psychologist and trauma expert with years of experience in helping people find pathways to recovery. It is an ongoing relationship that provides a safe platform for staff to discuss various challenges and to remain current in their work. In a year of disruption and change, the counselling team was able to record 1,827 new referrals and provide a total of 3,684 interventions, including referral intakes and counselling contacts. A total of 1,857 client contacts were provided, including 1,369 telephone sessions, 364 face-to-face sessions, and 108 further forms of communication via email, text, video and letter. These interactions were conducted predominantly at our Blackburn office in the first half of the year, and then by working from home in accordance with COVID-19 restrictions.

We had requests from several schools to support their communities; we provided a counsellor to speak at one school plus distributed information. Victoria Police sent most of our referrals, totalling 1,423, via the electronic referral (VPeR) system. The team continued to make use of the SMS system set up last year to allow contact with all new VPeR referrals via text responses. These advised clients of the referrals and provided contact and crisis phone numbers to help with the intervening period, before followups could be made. Once engaged, clients accessed our services for an average of 3.3 sessions. This financial year we added another counselling

intervention through video sessions via Skype, assisting country clients and people not wishing to come to the office. This option also allowed us to stay connected during the COVID-19 restrictions.

The counselling and support services team has been actively involved in other aspects of the organisation. This year we have worked closely with the education program, supporting clients involved with the prison program who have opted to receive counselling. It is an initiative that has been rewarding for both counsellors and clients, and one we plan to continue. It provides a conduit of support as prisoners become reconnected with the community.

A final word

The counselling team would like to thank the volunteers, education team, other staff, CEO Bernadette Nugent, and members of the board for supporting us in the work that we do. We would particularly like to acknowledge the work done by Office Manager Virginia Cummings to help the counselling staff and clients who phone or visit. The first point of contact is so important in making a good first impression of the organisation's culture. It conveys a sense of, 'Your presence is acknowledged, and you are in the right place to be heard and to start your journey of healing'.

We are proud to belong to RTSSV and to deliver a state-wide professional service that many people have recognised and recommended to others. It is appropriate that we give the final word to the community of clients which uses our services (words taken from 2019-2020 feedback forms):

"The strategies that you gave me (worry time, letter to self and psychotherapy/mindful breathing) helped the last session, and since then I have been able to use them to manage any emotions that come up."

"Touching-in every week – phone calls [were helpful], as I was ... assured my reactions were 'normal' and not me feeling sorry for myself."

"I'm two hours from Melbourne, so phone counselling was my only option – and it was/is great! Someone might prefer to see someone in person, and Melbourne can be a long way away sometimes. Maybe one [an office] in Ballarat, Bendigo or Geelong – one just isn't enough."

Lorraine Flannery
Manager, Counselling and Support Services

Art Therapy Group

Team members also facilitated the monthly art therapy program. The Art Therapy Group used clay during therapy sessions. Group members observed the clay's transformative characteristics, and this became a metaphor for representing the group's inner transformations. A heavy solid slab of clay became malleable. It could be moulded and rolled out and imprinted with a texture. It was wet and sticky and then became dry over a month and ready for painting with beautiful colours.

These creative skills paralleled the feelings in the group. Through trusting companionship around the table, the insurmountable challenges of life seemed to soften, and the oneness of the group brought comfort. Members often expressed gratitude at the end of the sessions. Painting colours onto the clay pieces, allowed for another level of metamorphosis, as did the glazing process. We attended the Time for Remembering ceremony in November, at which the Art Therapy Group distributed beautiful ceramic discs to all participants as mementoes.

As members of the group worked, they reflected on their feelings, and their words were brought together in a form of haiku poetry at the end of the year.

During the stay-at-home period, we offered Zoom sessions to keep the group connected and encourage good physical and mental health.

Barbara Joyce
Art Therapist

“

Counselling with RTSSV has been more relevant and effective for me. It has taken me beyond a state of being consumed by grief and anger to where I have much greater acceptance of my position in a new life, with greater peace of mind. I still have lapses and still have dark patches in my life, but I can cope with them reasonably well.

1,857

Client contacts

1,369

Telephone sessions

364

Face-to-face sessions

3.3

Average sessions per client

Mustafa Koukklan

Counsellor



There is a voice that does not use words. Listen. – Rumi

I joined the counselling team as a locum, shortly after counsellor Lynne Irving and her husband were involved in a car crash in June 2018. A few months later, I had the enjoyable experience of working with Lynne during her return-to-work program and was able to benefit from her practice, wisdom and collegial camaraderie.

I much appreciated the opportunity provided by Bernadette Nugent, as Manager of Counselling Services and then CEO, to work with RTSSV – as a locum counsellor for 10 weeks turning into a contract and ultimately a permanent position.

My passion for grief and trauma counselling originates from many years of employment as a social worker in rehabilitation for people with vision impairment, and subsequently as the Northern Metropolitan Region Multi-Disciplinary Rehabilitation team leader for five years.

In 2008 I was granted an Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement (ACGB) scholarship to undertake a graduate certificate in grief and bereavement counselling, followed by an intern practicum scholarship in 2009. Since

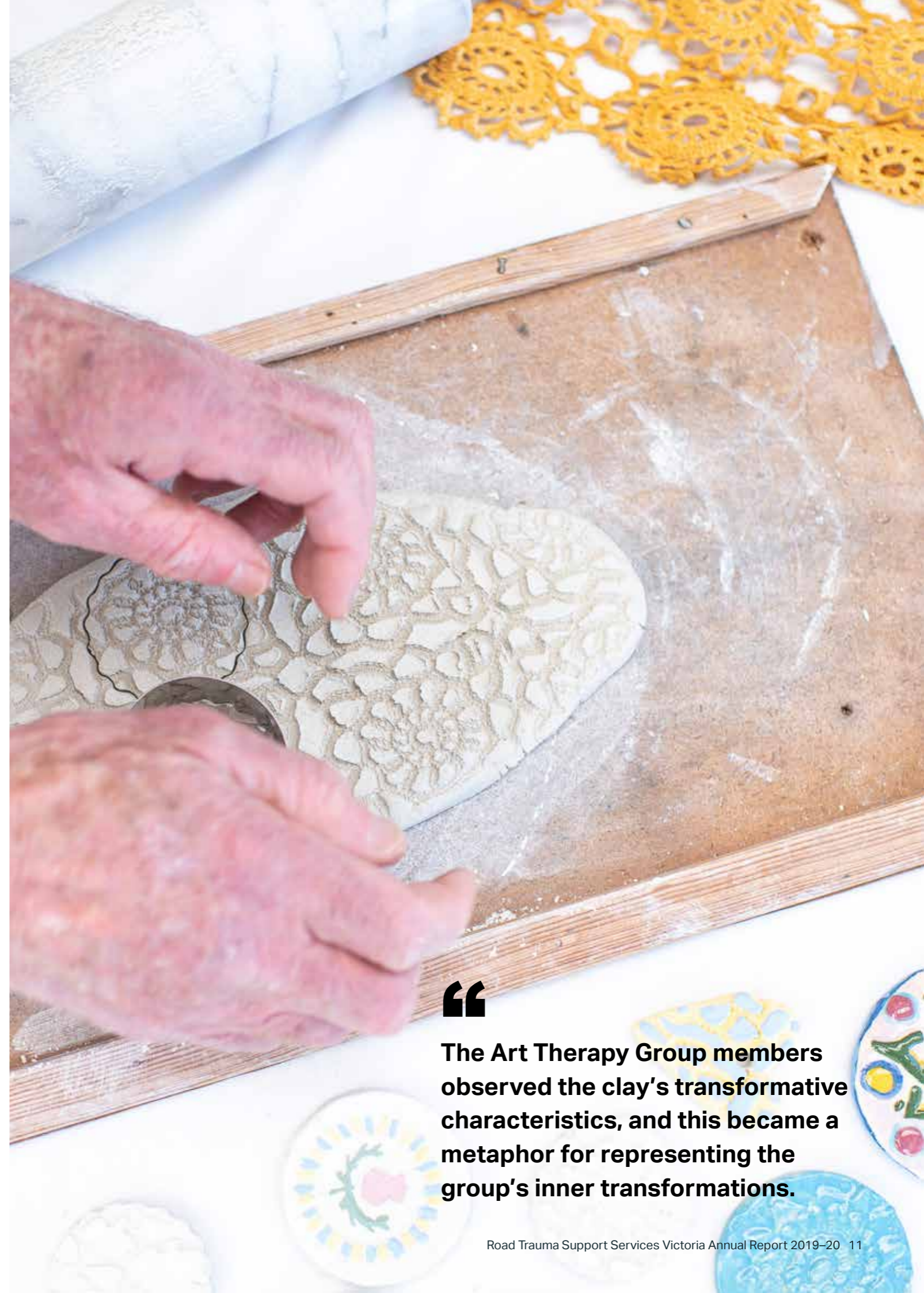
then I have worked with ACGB as a practitioner associate. I have also worked voluntarily with Jesuit Social Services, Support After Suicide Men's Program, as a group co-facilitator for suicide-bereaved men. I have been involved with the group since the program's inception in 2012.

I am continually inspired by how compassionate, resilient, grateful and forgiving people can be during their processes of self-discovery – they are such incredibly transformative journeys to witness. I have had the opportunity to meet some amazing people, hearing their pain and suffering. Walking with them on their healing paths through challenges and experiences caused by trauma, sudden loss, and bereavement is truly humbling.

My counselling practice utilises a range of theoretical frameworks, often in the form of a combined therapeutic approach: Narrative Therapy, which externalises a problem by examining the story of the person's life to enable him or her not to be identified by the problem, but to see it as a separate entity; Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, focussing on the relationship between thoughts, feelings

and behaviour; another approach that helps to identify the patterns of irrationality, and the self-destructive thoughts and behaviours that can influence emotion; and Task-centred Practice, a short-term strategy that involves working with people to establish specific, measurable goals and steps toward reaching those goals. Finally, conflict resolution and problem-solving skills encourage active listening and create an emotionally centred learning environment. This method allows people to explore their opinions and emotions in a safe environment; they can become aware of how their feelings impact their lives, learning how to monitor feelings and allow time for reflection.

RTSSV has proved to be an enriching work environment, where a holistic approach to complex trauma work has been encouraged. I am honoured to be a part of the counselling team. It has been a pleasure working with such a group of professionals, and I am grateful for the organisation's dedication to education and the promotion of road safety for all Victorians.



The Art Therapy Group members observed the clay's transformative characteristics, and this became a metaphor for representing the group's inner transformations.



Rosalie Dows

Counselling Client

The police officers who visited my daughter-in-law's home on Friday afternoon, 19 August 2016, asked if we might like some counselling support following the devastating news just delivered about the tragic death of our only son, Steven, through no fault of his own, on his way to work that morning. I said "yes" as I had no idea what the future now held for us all – what we should expect or what to do. The policemen advised us not to watch TV that night or read a newspaper for some time.

It was next morning, at the funeral home where Steve had been taken and where we were able to see him, that a kind policewoman gave us information about Road Trauma Support Services Victoria. I had never heard about this service before. Already, less than 24 hours after the crash that took away our wonderful only son, I was having problems processing the enormity of what had happened and how I – we – would survive. The depth of emotions I was feeling was way beyond anything in my experience.

Steve was 43. He was an engineer with his own business (Auscom Energy). He had a brilliant and focussed mind. I had assisted him with his bookkeeping, for tax purposes, for all of the five years that he had been self-employed. He worked so hard, and everything was coming together and promising a very successful future for himself, his wife and his daughter. He was happy. He and his wife Maggie had moved into their new home only four days before that fatal Friday. They had built in Yackandandah, North East Victoria, and were now only 'hot-soup distance' away from us. We were excited to have them so close. Joint holidays, family gatherings and adventures were already being planned. Steve's daughter, Steph, our only grandchild, adored her Dad, and they enjoyed an amazing relationship. Steph had celebrated her 13th birthday 13 days before Steve was killed – such a terrible tragedy for Steve, Steph, Maggie, and for all our family.

Steve had not expected to be involved in a crash. Steve should not have been killed. He did not

have a current Will. There were a lot of legal issues involved as a result, and also to sort through in order to end his work and close down his business. I had assisted Steve with his business. He had visited us about four times a week. He came for a cuppa, a chat, to discuss issues, to make plans and give direction, or just to be a loving son. He brought his daughter to visit as often as possible, and we enjoyed a lot of happy social activities together.

Steve was an excellent and highly experienced driver. His car was only a few months' old and had all the latest safety technologies. His business meant he was regularly driving to jobs, meeting customers, networking, and following leads. On that Friday he was on his way to his office in Wangaratta. He did everything right: the speedo registered 80 kph on impact; all the airbags went off; he had moved as far as possible to the left-hand side of the road.

The other driver was not currently licensed. He suffered complicated medical conditions, including schizophrenia, depression and cardiac arrhythmia. He had expressed that he "no longer wanted to live, that his life was hell," and felt hopeless for his future. He waited until his mother left on a walk, took her car keys and car, and drove away without a seatbelt at faster than 100kph, crossing over into our son's lane. On collision, his car was entirely in Steve's lane and halfway across Steve's car. The collision was high speed and Steve had had no chance. It was estimated he would have had only about two seconds of recognition time of the impending crash. Both drivers died at the scene.

There were no witnesses, but wonderful folk did stop soon after and tried to assist. They must have been traumatised by what they saw. Because of the nature of the crash, the Coroner became involved. There was no inquest, no court case, no victim impact statement, no charges laid, and no one was held to account for Steve's death.

I fell apart not long after the funeral. I felt broken. I became quite depressed and held little interest

in life. I was not eating or sleeping much. My heart felt like it had been torn apart and had a gaping hole that could never be mended. I wanted justice to be done. I wanted my son back and our family to be whole again. I wanted the pain to go away; I wanted to go away from the pain. It felt as though my family was falling apart. I had no energy and felt I needed a lot of help; that we all needed help. So many questions filled my head, with no answers. What to do? What to do? How could we survive this devastation?

I have been blessed with the most supportive husband and for that I am so grateful. We communicate well. My journey of healing continues. I have refocussed on moving forward, appreciating every moment, and bringing positive changes for others out of our trauma.

We do not want others to suffer the effects of road trauma unsupported when this incredible organisation has specialist counsellors available at no cost and for as long as required. As I live hundreds of kilometres from Melbourne, my counselling was conducted over the phone. It was a teary but special occasion for me to finally meet Lynne Irving, my counsellor, at the Shine a Light on Road Safety walk around Albert Park Lake in May 2017. I could at last put a face to a voice. My counselling sessions were times set aside for me when I could be who I was, openly feel my emotions and face my fears, share my journey without judgement, and hope for a new purpose. To work on your grief is hard work. Traumatic grief can affect you in so many areas – physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. Your whole being is shaken to the core.

I dread to think of where my family and I would be now, if had I not sought help from RTSSV early in the journey. One question that might help a person work out whether to make contact could simply be: "what is the worst thing that can happen to me if I make contact?" For me, I had already lost my precious son. He had loved life and certainly would not have wished for me to lose my own on account of this tragedy. Really, what do you have to lose?



Education Services

Innovation is the ability to see change as an opportunity, not a threat
– Steve Jobs.

The past financial year saw a great deal of innovation as shown by the demographics associated with Road Trauma Awareness Seminar (RTAS) participation, feedback from the work done with key stakeholders, and the responses of staff and volunteers to the changes required by COVID-19 regulations. We have had a busy but rewarding year, as the following examples demonstrate.

Trial for repeat/high-risk traffic offences

A six-month trial was delivered in the North East, North and West Metro regions of the Department of Justice and Community Safety. The trial was delivered through the regional Justice Service centres in Broadmeadows, Reservoir and Sunshine. It worked to reinforce safe-driving messages as part of an ongoing commitment to prepare and support RTAS attendees over a longer period. Following the success of the trial, the program is set to be delivered across all metro regions.

Driving – Better Choices

After a successful nine-week pilot period, we have embarked on a restorative justice program at Dhurringile Prison. The target group includes people impacted by road trauma and those who have either been sentenced for serious driving offences or who have an extensive history of traffic offending.

The program encourages behavioural change by addressing the underlying issues and causes of driving offences, with the aim of decreasing recidivism and road trauma. Participants are given the opportunity to identify how their offending behaviours have impacted both themselves and other people involved in crashes.

Participants contacted one month after the first program reported the following responses: "Realizing you are not alone"; "Being able to talk to someone else who has gone through something similar"; "We can pass the knowledge on, beyond this course"; "[It shows the] ripple affect"; "[We can] be teachers for others".

RTSSV is also working with Open Circles to introduce restorative justice conferencing pre-release and to add a peer-support component.

Road Trauma Awareness Seminar & volunteer speaker programs

This financial year saw some big changes owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. The education team met weekly in April to redevelop the program as an online seminar, beginning in May 2020. In the first month, facilitators and volunteers continued to meet weekly to review the sessions and build upon their experiences.

Although there have been hiccups, RTAS online has outdone any of our expectations. Staff, participants and volunteer speakers portray the sessions as being more relaxed, open and honest. One volunteer speaker, Martin, reports: "The RTAS online program is a fantastic way to ensure everyone has access to the seminars no matter where they may live in the state. As a volunteer, it also enables us to share our story with the broader population, and as a learning tool, we can hear other presentations ... Although we are not face-to-face, it still has that one-on-one effect."

During the year we worked with two Master of Social Work students, Ulrike Pfisterer and Alicia Omoiqui to research our volunteers' experiences. Their involvement followed a TAC-funded scoping review in 2017 by Professor Lou Harms, of the University of Melbourne, entitled 'Survivor Story-Telling in Road Trauma Education and Support Programs'. She had identified a major gap in the evidence base relating to the practice of involving and supporting road trauma survivors giving direct testimony in prevention and postvention programs, and in the impact of testimonies on audiences.

So far the researchers have found that the most common reason for starting to volunteer at RTSSV has been to educate others about the impact of road trauma and to make a positive change in the community. The study is ongoing.

A thank you note from Ulrike Pfisterer and Alicia Omoiqui: "As part of our Master of Social Work, we completed a 3.5-month placement at RTSSV, developing a mixed methods research project in partnership with the University of Melbourne. The research project aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of the experience of volunteer speakers at RTSSV who have been impacted by road trauma. We conducted an online survey and held telephone interviews to explore the motivation to become a volunteer speaker, the challenges and benefits of telling people their story, their feedback on the support provided at RTSSV, and how rewarding the overall experience has been.

"The research project took off and was due to be presented at an international social work conference in Italy this year. (Unfortunately, the conference had to be put on hold.)

"While on placement, we were also able to support Chris (Harrison) with running a Driving – Better Choices pilot program at Dhurringile Prison. During this program, we had the opportunity to work with prisoners who had offended on the roads in a group setting to develop their stories and share them in a supportive environment.

"A huge thank you to Chris and Bernadette (Nugent) for the fantastic opportunities provided and for the supportive space for us to learn and

develop our skills. Also, thank you to all the staff for making us feel ... part of the RTSSV family. We also appreciate all the volunteers who participated in the research project; we would not have been able to complete our project without your participation. Our time at RTSSV was invaluable."

Drive to Learn

Drive to Learn is an early intervention program aiming to reduce road trauma among young people aged 14-17 (pre-licensing) who are the subject of traffic-related offences. As this inexperienced and unlicensed group poses a high recidivism and crash risk, the program aims to access young people before they enter the formal youth justice system or to reduce their involvement with the system.

To date we have worked with the Children's Court and police officers mainly across the South Eastern Metro and Hume regions, with plans to expand next year. Our figures for the program are as follows: Attendance – 80% male, 60% aged 15-19 years, 47% first offence; Top 3 offences – 28% theft or interfering with vehicle; 24% disqualified, unregistered, suspended or unlicensed; 14% careless or dangerous driving.

IMPACT resource

Gateway Local Learning and Employment Network developed a new resource with Victoria Police to tackle car theft and culpable driving by young people. Funded by a grant from the Victoria Law Foundation, the resource was made available to teachers, Victoria Police, and other groups working with young people. RTSSV was asked to trial the resource with 12 cohorts in schools, youth groups, sporting groups and in the justice system. We further helped with session evaluations.

RTSSV was also employed to deliver two train-the-trainer sessions – for Victoria Police youth resource/proactive policing members, and youth workers and teachers in the Whitehorse area.

Police wellbeing sessions

These sessions are a direct result of the conversations we continue to have with police state-wide about the need for further action in the area of mental health and wellbeing. Police who are repeatedly exposed to challenging, distressing and traumatic situations may be at risk of developing vicarious trauma, burnout and/or compassion fatigue.

Members are encouraged to reflect on their experiences and ways to keep themselves well. The smaller group (unit-based) nature of the sessions provides an opportunity for people to share their thoughts and build workplace connections, thus creating a more supportive environment. It also means members can watch out for each other.

The responses received include: "The delivery by the presenters was very good, great levels of engagement"; "[It was the] first time I have seen so much participation"; "The best part of the session was looking at my situation and making me aware of my stress levels."

Looking forward

In 2020-2021 our priority will be to secure ongoing funding for our Volunteer Speakers' Program to train, support, and resource people across the state. We will continue to strengthen our relationships with key stakeholders through consistent and regular updates that maintain a theme of people working together. A key aim overall is to find further opportunities for volunteers and participants to 'speak up' and become ambassadors for change within their local communities.

Highlights from the regions

NW Metro: Notable projects have included facilitating at Community Correctional Services/ RTAS trial sessions within the region to help participants become safer, more responsible road users. Presentations on road safety to Strathmore Secondary College students, the Wyndham Ladies Probus group, and a newly arrived migrant/refugee group associated with the Migrant Resource Centre have also been rewarding. – Karen Robinson.

SE Metro: Six volunteers in the region continue to deliver RTAS online Through a team effort, we have continued to not only provide and deliver the RTAS program online, but also to produce a viable product going forward. The opportunity for volunteers to deliver their messages while working from home, without the need for night-time travel to reach venues, provides a safer, flexible option. Participants who have lost licenses, and who rely on family members driving them to the sessions, are also less stressed. We have remained dedicated and consistent in our messaging that no one should suffer from road trauma. – Gillian Scaduto.

Barwon South West – Geelong/Colac: The year began with me settling into the role of regional coordinator and facilitator of Barwon South West. The first task, while getting to know the various stakeholders, was to begin facilitator training. Highlights included workshops and the Christmas catch-up. I have continued work with the Geelong Magistrates' Court and the magistrates who have moved to Colac, plus built a relationship with the Colac neighbourhood house. Geelong Council and Victoria Police have supported emergency service events involving our organisation. I am greatly impressed by the ingenuity and commitment of all at RTSSV, and look forward to developing new partnerships. – Luke Elliot.

Warrnambool/Portland/Hamilton: This has been a year of consolidation for the South West region. We have welcomed two more volunteer speakers and have some emergency services speakers in

the pipeline. Our volunteers have become a key component of Victoria Police's Looking After Our Mates program across four shires. Warrnambool City Council's road safety officer has given great support in local Shine a Light on Road Safety events and, in turn, RTSSV has featured at other road safety and community events such as Safe Plates Day and A Very Liebig Christmas. The sharp rise in lives lost on rural roads means our work is ongoing. However, I am confident that we can reverse the trend by continuing to work alongside crucial road-safety stakeholders. – Rhys Tate.

Grampians/Ballarat: Our region has 10 active volunteers in the education program, and the new online format has opened up further opportunities. Sadly, we had to farewell our long-time regional coordinator and facilitator, Majella Ballard. Daniel Bell continued his involvement as a facilitator plus attended both Dhurringile Prison programs, delivering powerful sessions on each occasion. – Rohan Marlow.

Loddon Mallee: The number of referrals to RTAS across the region has increased dramatically from three or four participants per program to some sessions being booked out. It has extended to include regular sessions at Echuca, with some becoming fully booked due to positive client feedback and Community Correctional Services' increased recognition of our seminars. – Mal Pollitt.

Hume: As the newly appointed coordinator, I want to recognise Denise Moseley, my predecessor in the role, who brought the team together and built some robust networks in the region. Her work led to the start of the Dhurringile prison program, and the support we receive from Community Correctional Services and the LGA. This year I recruited three new volunteers, established relationships with four regional newspapers, and provided a regular notice to 30 local community pages.

Two regional meetings were held for the Hume team of volunteers and facilitators; work with Robyn Greening, Road Safety Ambassador, was ongoing; and I supported the delivery of the second Dhurringile program. Efforts to build and strengthen stakeholder relationships included contacts with the North East Law Association. – Carmel Mayer.

Gippsland: The coordinator role passed from Lyn Bennett to myself, and I extend my thanks to her for all the support provided and work done to advance road safety in this region. Gippsland certainly presents its challenges, mainly due to the region's vast spread. Achievements included obtaining significant regional grants; representing our organisation at the Towards Zero Road Safety Forum in Sale; and presenting, with a volunteer speaker, to a large group of youth and adults at a local football and netball club. – Bruce Mapperson.

Chris Harrison
Manager, Education Services

RTAS at a glance

Attendance:
1191 people attended,
including 83% male;
66% aged 18-34;
35% worked in trades
(a further 21% selected
'other', mostly trades)

Offences leading to
seminar attendance:
47% licensing offences;
43% careless/
reckless driving;
38% speed-related
offences; 31% drink/
drug-driving offences

How many times
charged with a
traffic offence?
29% first time;
29% two or three times

How often do
participants drive?
68% drove every day

Rhys Tate

Regional Coordinator



L-R Andrew Knowles, Volunteer Speaker; Rhys Tate, Regional Coordinator; Trudy Morland, Victoria Police Youth Engagement Officer; John Keats, Victoria Police Youth Engagement Officer and Coral Robertson, Volunteer Speaker.

Aristotle told us: "It is during our darkest moments that we must focus to see the light." In this most trying of years, it is a good message to consider as an organisation and as individuals. In the spirit of Aristotle, I want to focus on a personal highlight in 2019-2020 as a regional coordinator. This was integrating our volunteer speakers into Victoria Police's Looking After Our Mates program; allowing them to spread their message to young drivers across Warrnambool, Moyne, Glenelg and Corangamite shires; and fulfilling a long-term goal of one of our veteran volunteer speakers to do.

Our local Victoria Police youth engagement officers and school wellbeing staff now recognise the raw power of volunteers' stories to encourage young people to become safe road users. I believe this cross-organisational co-operation is a key component in driving the message of RTSSV across Victoria. Everyone present at the sessions sees the value of young drivers and drivers-to-be hearing about the reality of road trauma and, more importantly, having the statistics and road-safety jargon distilled into the personal story of a local person.

My journey with this organisation began when I was referred by a friend who worked as a facilitator. I thought to myself, "Why haven't I heard about these guys before? Everything the organisation does makes so much sense." Everyone wants a sense of fulfilment in their occupation; to know what they are doing is changing lives for the better. I feel lucky that mine is one of those roles. Each time I finish a Road Trauma Awareness Seminar or other presentation, I share a look with the speakers that says, "We ended up getting through to them, didn't we?"

I was fortunate that my own serious road incident, caused by inexperience and an unmarked road hazard, was one that three people (myself and two passengers) were able to walk away from. Everyone in the country knows people who have had their lives changed forever by road trauma. The ripple effect is keenly felt in our communities. I heard the crash that marked the moment an acquaintance of mine died on the road, near my workplace. Two good friends now have quadriplegia because of crashes in rural areas. Single-vehicle accidents on high-speed rural roads are responsible for half of the lives lost in areas outside metropolitan Melbourne.

It is most often the volunteer stories that stay in participants' minds. If there is one thing I could ask for participants (for all of us) to remember, it is to be mindful every time you get behind the wheel, or travel as a passenger, or walk and cycle on the roads. Sometimes, our sense of safety is what sabotages us. We all need to develop and listen to that small voice of caution that tells us to pay attention and not be impatient.

The impact of COVID-19 is severe and has changed the way we do things, perhaps for the long term. It presents an opportunity to examine what we do and find new methods. This requires us to keep innovating as we continue to deliver our road-safety messages – the thing I am most excited about for the remainder of 2020 and beyond.



Mary Ann Russell

Facilitator

I came to this organisation via a work colleague. I already had an awareness of the RTAS seminars and their capacity to affect people's lives in a very positive way. Consequently, I jumped at the chance to be involved when that opportunity arose.

I have been impacted by road trauma more than once. The first occasion was when my cousin was killed in a single-vehicle crash in the country. I was only five years old but remember very well the impact this had on my family. On another occasion, my brother sustained an acquired brain injury in a motorbike/car collision, an event that has had a lasting (daily) impact on my whole family, including on the next generation.

The highlight this year has been conquering the challenge of moving the seminar program online. The work involved in doing this has allowed me to meet many more people in the organisation and to contribute ideas towards the new-look program. I find it amazing that we have been able to adapt and keep the program relevant and impactful using a different platform. I have seen a great passion and commitment from people to the job that we do. I have also developed a greater understanding of the organisation, the

services we provide, and the people who make up the team.

I was honoured to be the facilitator of the first online session, one I managed to run successfully. I learnt that participants were eager to have this experience and were similarly committed to contributing, sharing and learning through the new process. Volunteers have adapted also, and been willing to give up even more time to deliver their impactful stories. In this time of change, people are committed to adapting and developing skills. Through this whole process, I learnt new ways of doing things and felt that my input was welcomed and valued.

Working at RTSSV has allowed me to meet a lot of really friendly professionals. It has allowed me to bring my skills and experience to the seminars hopefully to make a positive impact on the participants – maybe even to change the course of their lives.

The fact is that since road trauma affects so many people, anything that can be done to reduce this phenomenon must be done. I hope that my contribution as a facilitator helps in some way. I look forward to improving my online presence and assisting others to work

Chris Mair

Volunteer Speaker



There was nothing like RTSSV when I needed it as a teenager. I had watched Dad lose his battle with cancer during my last two years at school – an experience that caused a rethink of my career as I had wanted to work with Dad in his business and do studies in engineering. A year later, Mum, my two sisters and I were getting back on our feet, and I was settling into life as an art student in the 'big smoke'. Then my mother and aunt were run over and killed – and my eldest sister injured – by a speeding drink-driver. They had been crossing the quiet suburban street outside my aunt's house.

My close-knit family was completely torn apart. I felt alone and adrift. Although I was living in a large city, I had few people to talk to; as a quiet and shy 18-year-old, I was still trying to establish close friends. I bumbled through and graduated but my heart wasn't in it – or in anything for many years. There seemed to be no point. I moved to Australia, back to New Zealand and returned to Australia, lacking the motivation to do, or be, anything.

Years later I saw a Facebook post from a guy I knew through being a CFA volunteer: our emergency services speaker, Mark Cartledge. He said RTSSV were looking for people affected by road trauma to become volunteer

speakers. I sent a brief message to Mark – the first time I had written down what had happened the day Mum was killed, some 40 years after the event.

As a volunteer speaker, I illustrate the ripple effect. I tell participants that the road toll of eight in New Zealand that weekend is more than a number. It represents people with family and loved ones, two of the eight being my family. Speaking at RTAS helps me make sense of two very senseless deaths. Meanwhile, for participants, it gives the road toll a human face (two faces). I stress that the choices we make as drivers can have life-changing consequences for ourselves and others. If standing up and talking to people about the worst day of my life changes one person's driving behaviour, it means fewer people will have to go through what we – and so many other families – have gone through.

The personal stories work and balance the seminars' facts and figures. It is interesting to see the change in attitude as the seminars progress. Afterwards many participants thank me for speaking, shake my hand and sometimes even give me a hug. Mark is also good for a hug, and I am grateful for his support over the years as some seminars can be hard.

Being a volunteer speaker has opened the floodgates. After telling strangers my story, I have been able to talk to my sister about things we hadn't been encouraged to speak of for 42 years. No doubt some attendees think I should be "over it". You learn to live with it, but the loss is always there lurking in the background. Sometimes it's as simple as a friend I have known for 58 years posting a lovely photo of herself and her parents on Facebook. Wham, I'm that lost 18-year-old again! What my sisters and I – and the next generations – have missed out on over the years hits you smack in the face.

Being part of this organisation gives you various ways to get the road safety message out there. We have run three Ballarat Road Safety Forums and started a Facebook page. We have participated in the Shine a Light on Road Safety walk and seen Ballarat icons lit up in yellow at night. After-the-Crash cards and flyers have been given to local fire brigades to hand out at crashes so that people impacted by road trauma know where to get help. I look forward to speaking at more seminars and finding other ways to communicate our road safety message.



Graham Milner

Emergency Services Volunteer Speaker

I am an emergency service volunteer speaker at Road Trauma Awareness Seminars in North East Victoria. I have assisted in that role for some years, giving a presentation based on my 12 years of experience in dealing with road trauma as part of the Benalla Unit of State Emergency Service (SES).

Over more than 25 seminars, I have met some very remorseful candidates along with those not able to see the danger posed by their driving habits. Some have lost as much as \$100,000 in vehicle, court and associated costs; others have been supported by legal aid. My presentation is around the "choices" people make to drive under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol, driving while fatigued, the issue of distraction, and the resulting consequences and ripple effect.

I have taken part in more than 25 seminars. Since I have come to realise that most clients are distracted by their mobile phones, at the start of each seminar we ask participants to place their phones in a box. They can have access to them only during the interval. This has assisted with clients showing a higher level of interest in the seminars.

I find it interesting that when people are asked about the road toll, they often do not have a clue – it has "not affected them". The number of unlicensed drivers, drivers under the

influence of alcohol or drugs, and cases of high-end speeding leaves me astounded. However, I have noticed that the majority of candidates leave the seminars with a totally different understanding of road trauma, their chances of being involved in a crash, and the possible results of road trauma.

In my SES experience, I had believed that when a casualty was taken from an incident by air ambulance to hospital, he or she had a high chance of recovery. It was not until I heard a presentation by a person whose son had been transported by air ambulance, and who had received years of rehabilitation, that I realised how serious trauma can lead to a lifetime of disability, a need of carers, and ongoing medical issues.

Due to COVID-19, the 2020 seminars have been held online. Although I believe face-to-face seminars enable you to gain a better feeling of the participants' emotions, the Zoom-based meetings have permitted the program to achieve its goals due to the facilitator's ability to keep clients on track.

As an emergency service volunteer, I can present my experience of road crash scenes: the resulting significant injuries and fatalities; and the ripple effect on fellow emergency volunteers (SES and CFA), the police,

ambulance officers, and the public who witness crashes. Then when I hear the presentations of those impacted by road trauma, I can only feel admiration for the way they advise people of their losses or ongoing disabilities.

For me the most satisfying aspect is when the faces of clients show they have taken in the information and advice given. Then, at the end of the program, they go out of their way to come and thank you sincerely. The hardest part is discussing the traumatic events that have had a marked effect on me and are still difficult to present.

Volunteer Services

Volunteering is at the very core of being human. No one has made it through life without someone else’s help.



Road Trauma Support Services Victoria would cease to exist without the commitment and generosity of its 150 plus volunteers. These are people who give thousands of hours of time to help reduce the impact and incidence of road trauma in our community.

Giving support and comfort to people impacted by road trauma is the reason the organisation came into being over 25 years ago and remains a key focus.

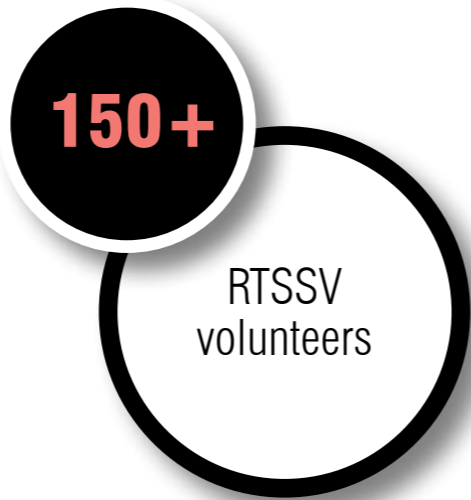
The majority of the work done by volunteers is in the Road Trauma Awareness Seminar program, an education initiative that enables people to speak about how road trauma has affected their lives. Their stories provide something that road safety facts and figures cannot convey, which is the depth and quality of people’s own experience.

The volunteer stories are what education program participants typically remembered, according to our six- and 12-month reviews. Often it had been the first time that offending drivers had realised the impact of their behaviour on loved ones and the broader community.

RTSSV also has volunteers working in fundraising, marketing, administration support and governance (board members).

Thank you to every single volunteer. Your willingness to give freely of your time makes a real difference to the work of this organisation in supporting people impacted by road trauma and helping to create a safer road network in Victoria.

Virginia Cummings
Office Manager



Volunteers

- Adrian Benson — Adrian Gervasoni — Alex Eleftheriou — Alistair Barrett — Amanda Pollard — Andrew Knowles — Andy Calder — Angela Nuss — Anna Kirpichnikov — Anthony Johns — Ben Trotter — Bernie Stanley — Bill Hodges — Caitlin Little — Carmel O’Brien — Carole Reid — Carolyn Cole-Sinclair — Catherine Gracias — Cathy Farrelly — Chris Parkin — Christian Ashby — Christine Latimer — Christine Mair — Coral Robertson — Cristine Feely — Dale McIvor — Damian Sumner — Daniel Reader — Danny Anderson — Darryl Crowley — Denise Sandford — Donna Parsons — Fiona Umbers — Francine Davy — Gail Noonan — Gemma Hargreaves — Geraldine Harley — Glenn Dunn — Glenn Heazlewood — Graham Milner — Ingrid Williams — Irene Ackland — Irene Harrington OAM — James Thompson — Jan Dilworth — Jason Naumann — Jayson Hirt — Jeanette Suhr OAM — Jessica Todd — Jo Keep — John Dows — Jonathon Van Ek — Joyce Ball — Julie Anne Metaxotos — Justin Flynn — Kajol Eagle — Karen Robinson — Karen Smith — Karina Osgood — Kat Kranz — Kate Drain-Parkin — Katrina Sumner — Kellie Bishop — Kerry Ann Norton — Kerry Bayliss — Kevin Pettit — Kristine Papworth — Kristy French — Leigh Booth — Leonie Cooke — Les Beechey — Luke Cupitt — Lynda Pottage — Lynne Glennon — Manny Marchesin — Maria Harkins — Mark Cartledge — Mark Musgrave — Mark Robinson — Martin Wrangle — Matthew Armour — Matthew Pope — Melanie King — Melinda Dine — Melissa Felton — Merryn Henderson — Merryn Wallace — Michael Hellwege — Narelle Bowden — Natalie Stanway — Natasha Cook — Padhraic Stone — Paul Illman — Paul Kefford — Paul O’Dwyer — Paul Sabo — Peter Aldersea — Peter Thomson — Phillip Behan — Reg Stott — Rhys Thomas — Richard Watkins — Robert Carter — Robert Ewing — Robin Bowerman — Robyn Greening — Roger Astell — Roni Forai — Rosalie Dows — Rosie Johnston — Russell Harley — Sally Millar — Sam Curry — Samantha Barker — Sandra Fenske — Shane Jayasinghe — Sherry Pratt — Simon Coverley — Stuart Le Grand — Stuart Morris — Susan Hansford — Tanya Lando — Tara Stark — Tim Nolan — Vaughan Wright — Wendy Bowler — Wilma Felton — Xander Alpherts — Yeksan Altun — Yvonne Upton.

Shine a Light on Road Safety

This key campaign, held in the first week of May since 2014, had to be approached differently in 2020 due to the pandemic and the government's restrictions on public gatherings. Instead of holding an annual walk, we shared on the RTSSV website video highlights of the past six years of Shine a Light on Road Safety plus road safety wishes from supporters.

Our message was clear: be careful, think about others on the roads, and make good choices. No one should have to go through the pain and grief of road trauma.

Our CEO, Bernadette Nugent, spoke about the importance of the Shine a Light campaign: "Now more than ever, it's so important to reach out and stay connected and support each other. In amongst everything that is going on, people are still being impacted by road trauma. Many lives have been lost, and thousands of people have already been injured. We would like you to continue to work with us to raise awareness in the community."

The Hon. Jaala Pulford, Minister for Roads, Road Safety, and the TAC, shared a message from the state government: "We can remember and pay respect to those who have lost everything, who have lost their lives, or their health, or a very dear member of their family on our roads ... You are not alone, please take care and stay safe."

The Assistant Commissioner of Victoria Police, Libby Murphy, and the TAC's chief executive, Joe Califiore, also promoted the vital message to stay safe on the roads.

Our very special thanks to the Bowler-Bowerman family – Robin, Wendy and Peta – who made a video and spoke about the impact of losing a son and brother, Jesse, in a car crash that took three young men's lives in May 2012.

Thank you to everyone who has supported Shine a Light on Road Safety – our sponsors, staff, volunteers and community participants. You have shown the power of communities coming together. Your courage and commitment to road safety is changing lives. We are proud to walk with you and look forward to seeing you in 2021.

Campaign highlights

- Six years of Shine a Light on Road Safety (from 2014).
- More than \$200,000 raised for vital road trauma prevention and support.
- 3,000-plus people have walked together.
- Each year, two million motorists have seen "turn on your headlights for road safety" messages and four million people have connected with our social media campaign.
- Ten corporate partnerships gained: EastLink (inaugural sponsor), AAMI, Maurice Blackburn Lawyers, Civilex, Grainger Legal, Skills Training, Henry Carus Lawyers, Narva, Shine Lawyers, Slater and Gordon, Stillwell Motors, Transurban, Zaparas Lawyers.
- TV coverage achieved on 7, 9 and 10 News, reaching more than two million viewers.
- Illumination of iconic landmarks, including Parliament House, AAMI Park Stadium, Bolte Bridge, Melbourne Town Hall, Melbourne Spire, Melbourne Star, Royal Exhibition Buildings.

Dates for 2021

- Shine a Light on Road Safety Walk: Albert Park Lake, Melbourne, Sunday 2 May
- Headlights on: Friday 7 May
- Illumination of landmarks: Monday 3 to Sunday 9 May.

2M+

Reach
of our
stories this
year

7

Years
of Shine a Light
on Road Safety

2M+

Motorists
reached
by VMS





Bernadette Nugent, CEO, Jeanette Suhr OAM, road safety ambassador and Robin Bowerman, board director



Kajol Eagle, road safety ambassador



Jeanette Suhr OAM, road safety ambassador



Hume region catch up



Ulrike Pfisterer and Alicia Omoiqui



Kerry Ann Norton, road safety ambassador



Melinda Dine, road safety ambassador

Time for Remembering

Since 2001, we have come together on the third Sunday in November – the United Nations' World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims – for our Time for Remembering ceremony. It is an occasion to commemorate the lives of loved ones lost and people injured on the roads, to give thanks for survivors and carers, and to pay tribute to all those who work tirelessly to reduce the road toll.

The 2019 ceremony was opened by Xander Alpherts, chairman of RTSSV, and Jaala Pulford, Minister for Roads, Road Safety and the Transport Accident Commission (TAC), shared a message from the Victorian Government. Jeanette Suhr OAM, one of the founders of RTSSV, spoke about the experience of losing her daughter Tanya in December 1991, and how over time she found herself able to reach out to others impacted by road trauma.

Many people contributed to this special day including leaders of emergency service and road safety agencies, representatives of health, legal, and faith organisations, and members of the community.

We thank everyone who contributed, including community speakers, the wonderful women of the Organised Water choir, and talented harpist Michael Johnson. We are very grateful to the TAC and the Parliament of Victoria for their ongoing support of Time for Remembering.

A special thanks to Reverend Dr Andy Calder.

Below are some reflective pieces of writing that we encouraged people to take away:

As we have remembered with love, let us leave with renewed hope to support and care for each other, and with the determination to make our roads safer for all who use them.

– Closing message.

Hold on to what is good, even if it's a handful of earth. Hold on to what you believe, even if it's a tree that stands by itself. Hold on to what you must do, even if it's a long way from here. Hold on to your life, even if it's easier to let go. Hold on to my hand, even if I've gone away from you.

– Pueblo Indian prayer

May you find tender shelter and healing blessings whenever you are called to stand in the place of pain. May you know that absence is full of tender presence and that nothing is ever lost or forgotten. May you be blessed with good friends and may you learn to be a good friend to yourself.

– John O'Donohue, Celtic Blessings

**Again, again we come and go, changed, changing.
Hands join, unjoin in love and fear, grief and joy.
The circles turn, each giving into each, into all.**

– Wendell Berry

**Earth brings us into life
And nourishes us.
Earth takes us back again birth and death
are present in every moment.**

– Thich Nhat Hanh



Board Members



Xander Alpherts
Chairman



Ingrid Williams
Deputy Chairman



Mark Musgrave
Treasurer



Richard Watkins
Secretary / Public Office



Justin Flynn



Merryn Wallace



Robin Bowerman



Stuart LeGrand



Sue Hansford

Subcommittees

Financial and Risk Management

The Financial and Risk Management subcommittee meets every two months to discuss the organisation's financial management and any risks identified that could cause issues impacting on RTSSV's service delivery and financial security. The outbreak of COVID-19 initially caused significant concerns; therefore, the meetings were increased in frequency to minimise and improve issues identified.

Members:

Chair: Mark Musgrave, Treasurer
Xander Alpherts, Chairman
Justin Flynn, Director
Bernadette Nugent, CEO

Research and Evaluation

Prior to the outbreak of COVID-19, the research and evaluation committee met every quarter.

The committee's purpose of exploring the way the organisation manages client/participant feedback to ensure that we are collecting relevant and valuable information.

The committee also identifies new research opportunities that may help the organisation to justify the efficacy of our work, as well as plan for the future.

Members:

Chair: Chris Harrison, Manager of Education Services
Bernadette Nugent, CEO
Richard Watkins, Director
Lou Harms, Melbourne University
Belinda Clark, Monash University Accident Research Centre
Samantha Barker
Tim Nolan, Volunteer
Dimmity O'Donnell, Facilitator

Time for Remembering

The Time for Remembering subcommittee is responsible for the overall planning of the services each year. The committee meets once every two months.

Members:

Chair: Reverend Dr Andy Calder
Fiona Elliot, Community Engagement and Partnerships Coordinator
Bronwyn Saville, Marketing and Communications Coordinator
Lorraine Flannery, Manager of Counselling and Support Services
Barbara Joyce, Art Therapist
Bernadette Nugent, CEO
Counsellors

Treasurer's Report



	2018-2019	2019-2020	Change	% change	5 year average
Melbourne	123	98	-25	-20%	116
Regional Victoria	141	133	-8	-6%	138

The 2019-2020 financial year has been extraordinary. Our CEO, management team, staff and volunteers have all done a fantastic job in response to the challenges of COVID-19. As a result of the rapid and effective move to remote working, we were able to continue to offer both counselling and education services using phones and video-conferencing.

Due to the Jobkeeper support, a reduction of office rent, and careful financial management, Road Trauma Support Services Victoria (RTSSV) achieved a profit for the year ended 30 June of \$86,337. As expected, our Road Trauma Awareness Seminar (RTAS) program income fell from an average of \$43,600 per month in the eight months to the end of February 2020 to \$23,100 per month for the remainder of the financial year. It is a credit to the education team that they managed to convert these sessions to an online program in record time.

Indeed, like many organisations, there is much that we have learnt over the past months, which from a management team and Board perspective we intend to embed in the future operations of our organisation. Given the uncertainties that exist in the coming year, especially after the Federal Government ceases to pay Jobkeeper, we will be continuing a strong focus on prudent financial management aligned with our strategic vision and plan.

Focusing on the key variances to budget, the lower than anticipated RTAS revenue of \$425,000 (compared to budget of \$490,000) was offset by "additional revenue" of \$102,000 from Jobkeeper, and lower-than-budget salary costs of over \$74,000 (\$908,000 budget – \$834,000 actual).

We are increasing our dialogue with the TAC regarding opportunities to broaden the range of services in line with the TAC's strategic objectives, including the Towards Zero vision.

Despite the considerable reduction in traffic as a result of the lockdown in March 2020, for the 12 months to midnight on 2 July 2020, Victoria lost 230 lives (down 12.9%) compared to the 264 lives lost during the same period in the previous year. The statistics for metropolitan versus rural areas were as follows in the table above. Source: <https://www.tac.vic.gov.au/road-safety/statistics/lives-lost-rolling-12-month>

When considering these statistics, it is sobering to think that for every fatality, there are approximately 20 people who will be hospitalised with serious and life-changing injuries.

We are currently undertaking an update to our Strategic Plan. A key objective is to establish new services focused on preventative initiatives, including building on the learnings from the RTAS program, which is designed to

provide training and behavioural change in drivers.

Our balance sheet at 30 June 2020 has strengthened, resulting in total members' equity of \$392,107. Our cash at bank at 30 June 2020 has also increased by \$86,337 compared with the same time last year – an essential measure of the improving financial health of the organisation. We want to thank our auditors, LDAssurance, and Theresa Cocking, our Accountant, who as always has done an excellent job.

I would also like to thank our CEO, staff, volunteers, Board, and the finance and risk subcommittee for the ongoing support and dedication. This year we have held additional meetings in response to the challenges of the pandemic. We look forward to another successful year where we can continue to make a valuable contribution to transport safety .

Mark Musgrave
Treasurer

Auditor's Report

Independent auditor's report to the members of Road Trauma Support Services Victoria (RTSSV) incorporated.

Opinion

We have audited the financial report, being a special purpose financial report of Road Trauma Support Services Victoria Incorporated ('the Association'), which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2020, the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, the statement of changes in equity and the statement of cash flows for the year ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies, and statement by members of the board.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial report of Road Trauma Support Services Victoria Incorporated has been prepared in accordance with the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012* and *Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*, including:

- giving a true and fair view of the Association's financial position as at 30 June 2020 and of its financial performance for the year then ended; and
- complying with Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013*.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described as 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 Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* and the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants* ('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.

Emphasis of Matter – Basis of Accounting

We draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting.

The financial report has been prepared for the purpose of fulfilling the Association financial reporting requirements of the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012* and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose. Our opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

Responsibilities of the board for the Financial Report

The board is responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view and have determined that the basis of preparation described in Note 1 to the financial report is appropriate to meet the requirements of the *Australian Accounting Standards*, the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012* and Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*. The board's responsibility also includes such internal control as it determines is necessary 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. In preparing the financial report, the board is responsible for assessing the Association's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the board either intends to liquidate the Association or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with 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 the 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:

- 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.
- 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 the Association's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the board.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the board's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Association's 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 the Association to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with the board 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.

LDAssurance Chartered Accountants



Stephen O'Kane Partner
Dated: 12 October 2020

Financial Report

Income	2020	2019
Fees and charges	412,927	516,732
Grants	553,711	533,863
Fundraising	36,897	116,417
Donations	67,770	84,951
Interest	10,438	10,038
Government assistance	178,094	-
Total	1,259,837	1,262,001
Expenses	2020	2019
Advertising, branding and business development	388	3,628
Accounting and audit fees	4,400	4,200
Bank charges	6,368	6,519
Cleaning	2,860	3,153
Minor equipment, service and maintenance	24,373	36,515
Client support projects	13,047	5,020
Postage and stationery	23,298	26,402
Depreciation	7,447	9,105
Amortisation - right-of-use assets	49,192	-
Interest expense - leases	4,501	-
Entertainment and gifts	543	1,087
Fundraising expenses and commissions	2,857	7,788
Insurance	9,237	8,934
Legal expenses	6,104	-
Office/business consultancy expenses	10,211	12,667
HR recruitment, meeting and other expenses	30,884	40,346
Office rent, rate and body corporate fees	7,963	48,851
Education venue hire	17,977	28,645
Salaries and wages	804,396	828,086
Superannuation	69,299	72,640
Time for Remembering	9,461	10,626
25th anniversary celebrations	4,009	-
Security expenses	444	444
Telephone and communication	21,119	18,932
Support groups and memberships	3,373	3,395
Training and development	7,753	3,369
Travel, accommodation, parking and motor vehicle expenses	12,739	22,254
Volunteer expenses	2,041	6,274
Utilities and permits	2,869	11,587
Work cover	14,347	17,182
Total	1,173,500	1,225,647
Profit/(loss) for the year	86,337	36,353
Other comprehensive income	-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year	86,337	36,353

Current assets	2020	2019
Cash and cash equivalents	589,922	462,403
Trade and other receivables	52,466	26,745
Other assets	6,379	8,168
Total current assets	648,767	497,316
Non-current assets	2020	2019
Property, plant and equipment	29,631	19,954
Right-of-use assets	106,154	-
Total non-current assets	135,785	19,954
Total assets	784,552	517,269
Liabilities	2020	2019
Trade and other payables	98,604	65,121
Lease liabilities	49,827	-
Employee benefits	133,865	140,633
Other financial liabilities	47,661	5,747
Total current liabilities	329,957	211,501
Non-current liabilities	2020	2019
Lease liabilities	58,349	-
Employee benefit	4,139	-
Total non-current liabilities	62,488	-
Total liabilities	392,445	211,501
Net assets	392,107	305,770
Accumulated funds	2020	2019
Retained earnings	392,107	305,770
Total accumulated funds	392,107	305,770

Supporters

We are very grateful to the Transport Accident Commission who have supported our services since 1999.

We thank our generous supporters who raise funds and awareness to help us reduce the impact and incidence of road trauma. We are especially grateful to those who have supported our work in memory of a loved one – your kindness and generosity has touched the lives of many others.



Our major donors and community fundraisers — Barb Bleicher in memory of John Wilson — The Bowler Bowerman family in memory of Jesse — Belgrave Heights Christian School, Year 11 VCAL — Ben Andrew Esther Raworth in memory of Freya — Callum McIntyre in honour of John Wilson — Chantelle Portelli & family in memory of Jeremy Portelli — Chathuri Hettiarachchi — The Currie family in memory of Jarryd Currie — Frankston Connect Christian Church community in memory of Adam Beardsmore — Iain McHaffie in memory of Margaret — Jack Whelan — Jarrod Castles — Kelly Beardsmore, Corey Gardiner and Locky Gardiner in memory of Adam Beardsmore — The Marchesin family in memory of Claude and Jack — Moama Bowling Club — Rosalie and John Dows in honour of Steven John Dows — Ruyton Girls' Junior School — Serco Traffic Camera Services — Simon Bolles in memory of Wayne Trebilco — Woori Junior Footy Club.

Our road safety partners and supporters — Community Correctional Services — Magistrates' Court of Victoria — The Transport Accident Commission — The Victorian Government — VicRoads — Victoria Police.

Our major corporate partners — EastLink — Henry Carus Lawyers — Maurice Blackburn Lawyers — Narva — Transurban — Zaparas Lawyers.

Supporters — ABC Ballarat local Radio — Acton Print — Ambulance Victoria — Angella Davis, Teacher & Head of Health and PE, Strathmore Secondary College — Anne Wicking Consulting — Ararat SES unit — Archie Graham Community Centre, Warrnambool — Bairnsdale RSL — Bass Coast Shire Council — Belinda Clark, MUARC — Bendigo Advertiser — Bendigo Bank, South Melbourne — Bendigo SES — Broadmeadows Justice Service Centre — Bunnings Nunawading — CBD Water Tower in Wodonga — Chris Gill, Sentencing Advisory Council — City of Ballarat — City of Greater Geelong — City of Melbourne — City of Port Phillip — City of Whitehorse — Colac Neighbourhood House — Collingwood Neighbourhood Justice Centre — County Fire Authority — Dandenong YSAS — Dave Bunn — Deng T Yong Deng and Jessica McArdle, Settlement and Community Project Workers, Migrant Resource Centre, St Albans — Department of Justice and Community Safety — Dr Rob Gordon, Clinical Psychologist — EV Youth Centre, Croydon — Fletcher Jones Silver Ball, Warrnambool — Foundstone Advisory — Frank Amato Photography — Frankston Arts Centre — Golden Square Bowls Club — Grace Kithikii, Model Development Lead-Support Recovery, TAC — Heathcote Rotary — Horsham Rural City Council — Horsham SES Unit — Hume City Council — Hume Global Learning Centre — Hume Youth Services Development Broadmeadows — Integrated Rehabilitation — Jan Webb & Jessica McArdle, Road Safety/Active Transport Officers, Road2Zero Steering Committee, Melton City Council — Jane Nolan & Anne Black, Dhurringile Prison — Jean Tusler, Hume Volunteer Coordinator, Community Development & Learning Hume City Council — Jennie Oxley, MUARC — Jim Giddings, Chairman, Road Safe Westgate Community Road Safety Council — Knox Grill'd — La Trobe Regional Hospital — Leongatha and District Community Foundation — Margalit Injury Lawyers — Malvern Town Hall, City of Stonnington — Marilyn Johnson, Monash University & Amy Gillett Foundation — Maroondah Federation Estate — Melbourne Fire Brigade — Melbourne Star Observation Wheel — Melton City Council — Mental Health Advisory Group — Metec — Monash Regional Health — Moonee Valley City Council — National Road Safety Partnership Program — Notice Board Systems — Phillip Island Visitor Information Centre — Portland Library — Professor Lou Harms, The University of Melbourne — Reservoir Department of Justice and Regulation — Rotary Club of East Warrnambool — Royal Exhibition Building — RT Edgar, Albert Park — Serco — Seymour SES Unit — Sharon Rainsbury, Strategic Communications Manager, Melbourne Magistrates Court — Sharon Wishart, VicRoads — Sophie Owen, insync Surveys — South East REM RoadSafe group — South Gippsland Shire Council — Stan Winford, Centre for Innovative Justice, RMIT University — Stawell SES unit — Stewart Newstead, MUARC — Strathmore Secondary High School — Sunshine Justice Service Centre — Susan Ward, Ladies Probus Wyndham Group — Swan Hill Club — Swan Hill Rural City Council — Tamer Sahin North West Metro Region, Department of Justice and Community Safety — Tomorrow Agency — Veronica Pradel, Community Strengthening Officer-Community Development & Social Policy Unit, Moreland City Council, Moreland — VicRoads Bendigo — Victorian State Emergency Services — Volunteering Geelong — Volunteers Victoria — Warrnambool City Council — Warrnambool's Silver Ball — Yallourn, Yallourn North Football and Netball Club — Youth Justice.



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