

# Newsletter

December 2023

The purpose of this newsletter is to keep our 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 donating to support our services during this Christmas season and throughout the year.

## Donations

A donation slip can be found on our website (Under the 'Get Involved' section), that provides details on the various ways you can donate, or you can simply make an online deposit to:

Bank Account:

Name: Community Transitions  
BSB: 065-006  
Account: 10172898  
Ref: Xmas Don & Your Name

## Contact Details

Community Transitions  
Head Office located at:  
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## Website:

[www.communitytransitions.com.au](http://www.communitytransitions.com.au)

## Social Media:



<https://www.linkedin.com/company/oars-community-transitions/>



<https://www.instagram.com/communitytransitions/>



## The Board comprises:

Annabel Shinkfield (Chair)  
Kelly-Ann Tansley (Deputy Chair)  
Peter May  
Jane Zadow  
Christopher Lines  
Katherine McLachlan  
Richard Stanley  
Leigh Garrett (CEO)



*Annabel Shinkfield, Chair*

Dear Supporters

I am pleased to advise that from 1 July 2023, OARS has merged into **Community Transitions**. At the CT AGM in November 2023, the Directors acknowledged our 137-year history, birthed as Prisoners Aid Association in 1886. We proudly claim the heritage of OARS and will continue to add to it as Community Transitions. We will continue to operate under the trading name 'OARS Community Transitions' in SA, and 'Community Transitions', elsewhere. This merger has already resulted in enhancing our focus, improving administrative efficiencies and, at board level, we have now refined to a single board instead of two, seeing us consolidate meetings and align under a single strategy.

Our end of financial year result was within expectations and we saw some excellent client outcomes. Prudent management of expenditures has allowed us to secure working capital; our balance sheet supports our growth and gives us scope for developing and piloting new initiatives. The Board constantly seeks to balance the needs of clients and the requirements for organisation sustainability - we want to ensure that CT thrives for many years to come.

The Board recently met to discuss the future Strategic Directions and a new Strategic Plan has been developed to guide our activities until 2026.

We were delighted to welcome Kelly-Ann Tansley, CEO of the Zhara Foundation, as a new Director in November 2023. Kelly-Ann brings valuable experience in Family and Domestic Violence Prevention Services. We look forward to her contribution.

As I write this, we are aware of the surge in family and domestic violence, the increased cost of living expenses, and the housing crisis - all potentially devastating for our clients and their families. As Christmas nears, I would ask that, if you can, you consider giving to our Christmas Appeal. With your donation, we can provide support to families. (For details on how to give, see the 'Donations' section on this page, or visit our website).

Thank you for your ongoing interest, partnership and support.

Wishing you and loved ones a safe and happy festive season.

**Annabel**

## Community Transitions

One of Australia's most innovative non-government Crime Prevention Agencies

### 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

Client Centred approach within a family context  
Restorative Justice as a foundation of services  
Minimising indigenous over-representation in justice systems  
Respecting Diversity  
Acknowledging and embracing Victims' Rights.  
Continuous Improvement  
Client Advocacy  
Promotion of alternatives to custody  
Early Intervention  
Working in strategic partnerships  
Ethical and financial responsibility



## "Update from the CEO"

Leigh Garrett

With the merger of OARS and Community Transitions now bedded down, the last six months has been a hive of activity of forward-thinking.

### Family/Domestic Violence Prevention.

We continue to meet with the Government regarding the ongoing development of new initiatives for FDV services and on 11<sup>th</sup> October, I was invited by the **Hon Katrine Hildyard to a Roundtable re FDV Financial Burden & Real Estate for Women.**

With the escalation of family and domestic violence in South Australia, in September I decided to create a new position. The appointment of **Michael McCabe, into this new role of General Manager, Domestic & Family Violence Prevention Services**, has proven to be timely, as during one week in November, four women lost their lives due to DFV. I have therefore just received approval from our Board to release funds to reinstate our **Don't Become That Man (DBTM) Counselling Service.** We are now in a major crisis in FDV in SA and there are few services available for men. This funding will need to come from our reserves. It will allow us to employ two counsellors, start the website, media, and phone counselling line. The Office for Women and Minister Hildyard and are keen to see expanded services operating, including DBTM.

We also stand with other agencies and support Embolden's (the peak body for FDV Services in SA), call for a Royal Commission.

### Australian Crime & Violence Prevention Award for HISSP Program

A highlight during October was to attend the Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) Conference in Canberra and accept a **Bronze Award for our HISSP Program.** The Australian Crime and Violence Prevention Awards recognise and foster better practice in the prevention and reduction of violence and other types of crime in Australia. They encourage public initiatives and assist governments in identifying and developing practical projects that will reduce violence and other types of crime in the community. The winning projects were selected as they had successfully reduced violent or other crime in their community or show evidence-based promise of reducing crime and violence. It was an honour to see one of our programs again recognised, and we thank the Dept for Correctional Services in SA for continuing to fund our HISSP Program.

### Accreditation

Following the NDIS Accreditation in February 2023, in June we received our 3-Year re-accreditation against the broader **QIC Health & Community Service Standards**, with an on-site assessment process. We passed with no non-conformities. Feedback from the review highlighted our strengths in engaging with the sector, nurturing relationships and stakeholder engagement and networks, along with exemplary direct client service delivery, commitment and competence of frontline staff and service leaders, which were life-changing for many clients.

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## Update continued

Leigh Garrett

### Strategic Planning and Risk Management

As mentioned by the Chair, a new Strategic Plan has been developed, which will be implemented soon.

Our risk management processes and reporting have also been refined, providing a much better framework for managing our risks in future.

### Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)

I am really pleased to announce that we have received conditional approval from Reconciliation Australia on our RAP. This is great news and I really appreciate the excellent work that the RAP Working Group has put into the document. It only remains for us to finalise the design and graphics and we can submit for final approval. The new artwork has been commissioned and should be finalised soon.

### Information Technology

Quite a lot of development work and significant changes have been made to strengthen our IT infrastructure as staff location, flexibility, and cyber security is now required.

We also developed a new client database to a more streamlined web-based system, which went live in July 2023.

### Centre for Restorative Justice (CRJ)

Deb Black has continued to lead the developments of the CRJ. With the success of recent submissions, we hope to commence providing services soon as Restorative Engagement Facilitator for the Commonwealth Defence Force, the National Indigenous Australians Agency, and Redress Facilitation Services for the Dept for Child Protection.

A **Restorative Justice Workshop** held on 9th November, was organised by UniSA and the CRJ, and was opened by the Hon Kyam Maher, Attorney-General SA. It brought together a number of key people to discuss ways of **improving RJ provision in SA**. We hope it will be a platform for CRJ to go deeper into the criminal justice arena. We also continue to provide Restorative Practices training in Schools.

### Involvement in other Important Initiatives

- **Homelessness Review.** The Auditor General is reviewing the effectiveness of the current structure and services. We hope to have input into this.
- I attended **Presentation for Flinders University Criminology students** as part of our involvement in our industry project program, and
- Participated as a Panel Member in a **webinar about justice and the NDIS interface** organised by Whitney Lipman, at Housing Hub, Summer Foundation (Vic).

I thank Louise Kelly, Deputy CEO, who has continued to be involved in supporting me in many of these projects, and now oversees the Client Services at both a State and National Level, and all staff and volunteers who continue to work with challenging clients with great skill and commitment. A short report on new initiatives is below.

Wishing you all a peaceful, safe and happy Christmas.

Leigh

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## Community Transitions Services

Louise Kelly, Deputy CEO

### Services

#### Client Reintegration Services

Ex-Custodial Accommodation Services  
Home Detention Integrated Support Program (HISSP)  
Adelaide Remand Centre  
Cadell Bus

#### Client Treatment Services

Intake & Assessment  
Counselling, Health and Substance Management (CHaSM)  
Therapeutic Diversion Courts Services  
Pre-Release Alcohol & Drug Program  
Drug & Alcohol Counselling  
Gambling Support Service  
NDIS Positive Behaviour Support  
Circles of Support & Accountability

#### Family/ Domestic Violence Prevention Services

Don't Become That Man, DV Phone Counselling Service  
Crisis Accommodation for DV Perpetrators  
Men's Domestic Violence Therapeutic Community – Time Out for Treatment

#### Specialised Client Services

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)  
Exception Needs Unit  
Care Finder Program  
Community Connections (Western Adelaide)

#### Acacia Prison (WA) Real Support Network

#### Centre for Restorative Justice

### Client Services

In addition to the focus on Family/Domestic Violence Services reported by Leigh above, during the past six months, we have been involved in supporting some **new developments and programs**:

- **SMART Recovery.**  
We have been contracted by SMART Recovery Australia to review and further develop their Inside Out (prison based SMART Recovery) Program. Given our expertise and knowledge in both the criminal justice space and addiction interventions, this is an exciting partnership.
- **Southern Women's Hive**  
We have created a Women's Community Transition Centre – 'Women's Hive' in the southern suburb of Christies Beach. Women remain the fastest growing population within the criminal justice system, and reintegration as a gendered phenomenon, where women's exposure and response to life-circumstances post release are distinct from men and emphasises the importance of doing something different - working collectively with the whole community. Women's successful reintegration is linked, in part, to developing positive networks, suggesting the importance of relationships in providing support and information necessary to survive in the free world.  
We have been working with the Department for Correctional Services (DCS) to establish this pilot program and finalising the service model, including referrals for the Home Detention Integrated Support Service Program packages, to ensure a sustainable space.
- **Songs Inside**  
OARS CT has been supporting the Songs Inside Project taking place at Adelaide Women's Prison (AWP). Nancy Bates has been working with an ensemble of women inside AWP, learning to play the ukelele and write songs, culminating in the largest musical performance ever held inside an Australian Prison.  
Leigh and I were fortunate to receive an invitation to the final performance with the AWP Songbirds Ensemble and the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra inside AWP in September. 8 songs were performed by the ensemble, each introduced with a personal story from each of the women performing and participating in the project. The whole project is being filmed for a documentary, directed by Shalom Almond, which will premiere at the Adelaide Film Festival in October 2024, with a nationwide release to follow.

We also want to acknowledge our **appreciation of our funding bodies** continued support of all our existing services that bring about great outcomes from our clients. Here is one of our recent **good news stories**.

*MP was referred to HISSP while residing at The Arches bail accommodation. MP engaged well with the case manager and AOD counsellor, and reported during an AOD session that he was currently without a residence. An internal referral was made to OARS Crisis Accommodation Program [DV Perpetrator] and he was accepted and housed almost immediately. MP continued to engage with HISSP Case Manager & AOD counsellor. As a condition of our Crisis Accommodation Program, participants are required to attend Time Out For Treatment (TOFT). MP has continued to engage with the counsellor to address his past abusive behaviours. At MP's exit from HISSP, MP provided the following feedback about the AOD counsellor "his chats help me more than he knows sometimes, it's nice getting stuff off my chest without judgement".*