



# Annual Report

## 2017





# Midlas Year at a Glance

## July 2016

- New Public Purposes Trust grant for legal service approved for 3 years
- Financial Counselling Network launch

## August 2016

- Legal cross check undertaken and passed
- Staff attended the National CLC conference held in Fremantle

## September 2016

- An intern from the McCusker Centre for Citizenship joined Midlas to initiate a project to engage Aboriginal people with our disability services

## October 2016

- Midlas Annual General Meeting and farewell to Maxinne Sclanders retiring from the Board
- Staff attended the FCAWA conference held in Perth
- Midlas Board passed a new Constitution to meet new model rules and Act

## November 2016

- Midlas welcome new directors, Millie Richmond-Scott and Joanna Riley
- Pilot tenancy walk in advice service Friday mornings at Midlas
- Initiated Outreach service to Ellenbrook Library Place for Financial counselling, tenancy advocacy and disability advocacy for Ellenbrook and surrounding residents
- New Midlas brochure developed

## December 2016

- We held a 'can drive' and volunteered our help to organise and run the fantastic Swan Aboriginal Christmas Party with Swan Alliance Communities for Children
- Inaugural Midlas newsletter sent out via Mailchimp
- The Grand opening of the People Who Care Community Centre 23 Old Great Northern Hwy by Ken Wyatt and other honoured guests
- Midlas Board and General Manager held a strategic planning workshop
- A welcome announcement from DSS that Disability Advocacy, Emergency Relief and Financial Counselling funding extended 12 months to June 2018

## January 2017

- An unfortunate 25% funding cut to our tenancy advice and education service from Department of Commerce
- Midlas disability advocates ran a successful training workshop- Advocacy in the NDIS space
- Ken Wyatt visits Midlas
- Staff volunteer at the Foodbank kitchen

## February 2017

- Youth With Disability (YWD) forum grant approved by Minister for Local Communities
- Midlas Constitution approved by Department of Commerce (DOC)

## March 2017

- Midlas wins the Richard Fletcher Award at the Department of Consumer protection awards ceremony
- Lotterywest Emergency Relief grant approved
- Midlas welcomes Rita Kleinfeld- Fowell (and her guide dog Ivy) as a volunteer lawyer restricted practice

## April 2017

- Youth With Disability forum, co-facilitated with Kalico Consulting and youth advocate Bec Dewar
- Annual stakeholder survey conducted

## May 2017

- Midlas welcomes Lorraine Taylor as new Principal Lawyer
- Our General Manager attends Law Access Walk for Justice
- NDIS Appeals funding extended to December 2017
- MP's Bill Leadbetter, Jess Shaw and Alana Clohesy visit Midlas
- Youth with Disability forum report produced
- Midlas appears in multiple media articles including Channel 7 news and in The West's Money section focusing on financial issues

## June 2017

- Team building day with cultural activities in Swan Valley
- Finalist as part of the Financial Counselling Network for IPAA awards
- Midlas thanks and farewells our long standing legal volunteer Mal Bradley
- Midlas visits Michelle Roberts MP

# Message from the Chair

**T***he 2016/2017 period for Midlas has been marked with several achievements for the efforts of those forming the backbone of our community organisation.*

Our success in winning the Richard “Dick” Fletcher Award from the Department of Commerce highlights the outstanding efforts to service and champion the rights of vulnerable members of our community. I would like to extend the congratulations of the Board to those involved.

Being an organisation that focusses on its community I would also like to offer recognition to those involved in the Youth Disability Forum. This was a great initiative to engage with youth with a disability and be able to communicate their thoughts to the sector. The efforts to set up and run this were fantastic.

Midlas as an organisation would not exist without its staff and volunteers, and on behalf of the Board I would like to thank you for your dedication, commitment and hard work in providing the services that work towards Building Resilient Communities.

The Board thanks Justine Clarke for her dedication as the General Manager of Midlas and for her commitment to successfully leading Midlas to achieve its community objectives.

I would like to acknowledge the Board of Directors of Midlas, a diverse operating group of volunteers that give their time to ensure that our organisations governance objectives are met.

Our committees continue to make a positive impact and I would like to highlight the efforts of Andrew Canion, the Chair of the Finance Committee and Danielle Bejr, the Chair of the Policy Committee.

The Board would also like to thank our grant providers for their continued belief in our service provision as well as our new collaboration partners as we all work towards the same long term objectives.



Megan Butt and Justine Clarke receive Richard Fletcher Award from David Hillyard

**Simon Kimber** Chair

# Message from the General Manager

**W**ow, another amazingly busy year concluded! I look back at everything our staff, volunteers, directors and clients have accomplished this year and I am extremely proud of our service and grateful for all the amazing people that put their all in to supporting our community.

I would like to acknowledge each of my staff members for some amazing personal and professional achievements attained throughout the year and thank them all for their support to each other and for their untiring commitment to providing consistently high quality advocacy and education to the residents of the north east metro and hills area of Perth.

Just some of the organisational highlights for the year included: working strategically with the Financial Counselling Network to showcase the importance of financial counselling services and improve client outcome data collection; working towards improving our cultural understanding and engagement with local

Aboriginal services and clients; winning the Department of Commerce Consumer Protection Award for organisational achievement; initiating a successful weekly walk in advice service for our tenancy clients; providing an outreach service for financial counselling clients living in Ellenbrook and residing in Bandyup women's prison; producing a myriad of information sessions that included nearly 200 blogs, policy submissions and education sessions for clients and other agencies; assisting 1806 people to sort through their issues and provide them with information, support and advocacy; holding a Youth with Disability forum and producing a report on the outcomes; appearing in the media focusing on financial management issues, and producing our inaugural newsletter to our many supporters and stakeholders.

As the General Manager of a multidisciplinary service being responsible for the positive outcomes of all of our service activities I often have to put my head into many different modes and network with many different stake-

holders to pursue our strategic objectives. I have relished the opportunities that have unfolded, creating a dynamic environment of support that has allowed Midlas to grow and improve our service delivery offerings, internal systems, partnerships and governance practices whilst strengthening Midlas' profile in the community. We have had another year of juggling our

finances and services in light of the ever changing funding goal posts, but due to strong financial and risk management practices by the management team and Board we have ended the year in surplus.

Many thanks go to our partners, The Spiers Centre with whom we have a shared accounting service arrangement, Uniting Care West to whom we subcontract as part of the Financial Counselling Network, Sussex Street Community Law Service to whom

we sub contract to provide emergency relief and to Gosnells Community Legal Centre who have provided Midlas with legal service supervision.

I would also like to recognise and thank our funders, Department of Social Services, Department of Commerce, Public Purposes Trust and Lotterywest. Acknowledgement is also given to the traditional landowners and language groups of Western Australia and the wisdom of Aboriginal elders both past and present and we pay respect to Aboriginal communities of today. And without a doubt I would like to express thanks to our clients who put their unwavering trust in our service and I thank you for your honesty, knowing that you are having a difficult time but recognise that you need help.

All of this support has permitted us to have another successful year allowing Midlas to focus on our strategic and funding activity objectives and we look forward to continuing to do so in the future.



Ken Wyatt MP, Justine Clarke, Helen Creed Executive Director CLCAWA

**Justine Clarke** General Manager

# Community Development

**M**idlas staff have been very busy over the past financial year delivering over 640 hours of community education to clients, community members, organisations and government bodies.

This is an increase of over 200 hours in comparison to the previous financial year, reflecting our commitment to building on Midlas' values around partnerships and supporting our community. Each service has provided both general and targeted community education to ensure that clients and the community are aware of the support that Midlas can provide.

## Highlights

Midlas was awarded in March the Richard (Dick) Fletcher Award for the work that we do in the consumer protection space. Midlas' nomination focused on how each service promotes and upholds the consumer rights of people with disability.

In April 2017 Midlas organised a Youth with Disability forum that was held during National Youth Week. This event was made possible by a grant from the Minister for Local Government; Community Services; Seniors and Volunteering; Youth. The event was held with the aim to discuss current issues and concerns of youth with disability. The forum was an opportunity for youth with disability to share their thoughts on how services and organisations can engage more effectively with them and how best to support self-advocacy. This event was a success and a report of the outcomes was published supported by a grant from the City of Swan and is available online through the Midlas website.

Midlas has been busy developing a cultural safety plan as part of the required legal accreditation for a community legal centre. The aim of the document is to ensure that Midlas is a culturally safe place for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who access the service. Many improvements have been actioned through the development of the cultural safety plan including the use of Acknowledgement of Country at every community education/staff meeting, increased engagement with Aboriginal organisations and the review of whether Midlas' current policies and procedures promote cultural safety across all services.

Within the Disability Advocacy service, the Community Development coordinator and project

officer piloted a project targeting increased engagement with Aboriginal people with disability and their families.

This project involved meeting with many Aboriginal community organisations, stakeholders and medical professionals to develop referral pathways and inform them of the type of support that a Disability Advocate can provide. A great outcome was that a successful working partnership was developed between Midlas and St John of God's Aboriginal Engagement Team at the Midland hospital.

The creation of Midlas' quarterly online newsletter has been a valuable way for clients and organisations to receive information about Midlas services, good news stories and upcoming events. Midlas has also been featured in several media outlets including newspaper articles about bankruptcy, pay day loans, debt management and the impact of the downturn within the mining sector and featured on two local news pieces on television regarding personal bankruptcy and people experiencing financial stress. Midlas staff have also contributed to many informative articles available on our website - [www.midlas.org.au](http://www.midlas.org.au).

**Megan Butt** Disability Services Senior





# Disability Advocacy

**I**t has once again been a busy and productive year for the Disability Advocacy team. We received an increase in funding to support clients to navigate the NDIS review process and this enabled the lovely Silvia Rosenstreich to join the team. We have increased our service area to cover

the Federal National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) trial site expansion areas of Northam, Toodyay, Chittering, Bayswater and Bassendean more effectively as well as provide more community education and outreach.

The majority of disability client issues that we have assisted with include those related to:

- NDIS eligibility and/or planning processes
- NDIS appeals – including the internal review and external review processes
- Supports funded through NDIS including assisting with locating suitable providers
- Centrelink Disability Support Pension (DSP) applications
- Centrelink DSP reviews and appeals
- Advocacy within the education and employment space to ensure that reasonable adjustments and supports are in place for clients to be successful
- Linking clients in with mainstream and community supports
- Assistance with accessing superannuation Insurances for total and permanent disability
- Assistance with providing feedback to government and private agencies on client's behalf regarding their experiences to ensure continuous improvement

Six clients in Western Australia have been supported by Midlas to progress to an NDIS Appeal over the last twelve months.

Two have withdrawn their applications and the other four are still in progress. At this stage, Western Australia has no precedents set for NDIS appeal outcomes with no cases having gone to Hearing.

Midlas Disability Advocates have experienced a sharp increase of internal reviews to appeal NDIA decisions, this has been mainly due to a decrease in funded supports in client plans.

An increase in reviews reflects the focus nationally on the sustainability of NDIS and the resulting reduction of funded supports in NDIS plans.

With the bi-partisan agreement being signed earlier this year, further opportunities for people with disabilities have opened

up to access the WA NDIS scheme.

Although the WA system has differences Midlas Disability Advocates remain cognisant of both Federal and State NDIS arrangements to ensure that clients are supported with all the information that they need to ensure their outcomes are priority and they do not become disadvantaged.

## Highlights

I travelled to Sydney in December 2016 to attend a national disability conference with advocacy and Legal

Aid agencies across the country who provide External Merits Review (EMR) support in the Appeals process of the Federal NDIS. It was a great opportunity to share knowledge with new providers, hear from users of the service and give and receive feedback on the EMR process and supports provided from WA.

“Very happy that the team understand my disabilities. I so appreciate you all at Midlas.”

**Nicole Hitchens** Disability Advocate

# Holistic Model of Service-Case Study

**E**leven agencies came together in a moment of crisis in the life of a client with mental health issues and provided wraparound care to ensure that the client was supported to succeed.

The focus for the agencies was the imminent termination of the client's supported accommodation. Without supported accommodation the client was considered to be at elevated risk of re-offending or suffering from a mental health episode. A number

of issues in this situation made it complex. Firstly, the client was on a Leave of Absence Order (LOA) from prison and their situation was monitored regularly through the Mentally Impaired Accused Review Board (MIARB). The eviction notice put at risk the client's LOA conditions. Secondly, the client had signed the Resident's Accommodation Agreement and a Service Agreement with the provider without a representative and without a clear understanding of what was being signed. There

were issues with the accommodation prior to this crisis that negatively impacted on the client's wellbeing and capacity building. The client was abiding by the terms of the Resident's Accommodation Agreement.

Midlas became involved at the point when the client had just received the notice of eviction. The Disability Advocate and Tenant Advocate met with the client and a couple of the supporting agencies to discuss the circumstances. Following that meeting the group met with the service provider to negotiate a halt to the eviction. The Tenant Advocate ensured that the meeting with the provider remained collaborative rather than confrontational. It was agreed that the provider would not evict the client until further discussions with those attending the meeting.

Midlas' involvement brought attention to issues with the wording in the Resident's Accommodation Agreement, the lack of 'rights' of the client and that the client's accommodation was contingent on the NDIS funded support hours remaining the same in the NDIS plan.

The client's NDIS plan was reviewed late January 2017 and the funded supports were reduced in the plan. As soon as the service provider was aware of the reduced funding they sent the client a letter terminating the

accommodation. The client had no control over the breach of the accommodation agreement and there was nothing that could be done to prevent eviction.

The breach was entirely due to the decision by NDIA to reduce the funding in the client's plan.

The Disability Advocate attended the MIARB case review in early February to ensure the client's situation and the issues involved



I have been a client at Midlas on issues relating to tenant advocacy, financial counselling and DSP. At all times the case workers have been immensely helpful in the face of insufficient budget provided by the government for these services. For what it is worth Midlas deserve more funding! Thank you to all Midlas staff.



were clarified. The Disability Advocate provided a detailed summary of the events that had transpired, issues involved in the matter and how the client was honouring the conditions of the LOA. The Board was satisfied that the issues with the client's accommodation were not the fault of the client and decided not to stipulate further conditions on the client's release order that would have been detrimental to the client and their mental health. In addition, the Board wrote stern letters to both the service provider and the NDIA to censure their actions in this matter.

The agencies involved with the client worked together to transition the client to supported accommodation that was better suited to the client's needs. Midlas contributed funds for a fridge for the client's new accommodation. A good outcome for all ...

**Silvia Rosenstreich** Disability Advocate

# Tenancy Advocacy

**T***he tenant advocates have assisted many clients over the past year who have found themselves in difficult situations in their tenancies.*

We have assisted a number of clients to successfully appeal their tenant liability debts with the Department of Housing, assisted clients in sustaining their tenancies and understanding their general rights and responsibilities



“ Absolutely dedicated staff who I am so grateful to have in my corner. ”

ties under their tenancy agreements and assisted many clients presenting with termination notices and those who have fallen into rent arrears.

We have successfully continued to sustain and develop relationships with the Department of Housing state wide, particularly the departments in Midland and Mirrabooka, local community organisations and local real estate agents. This enables us to advocate for our clients and

work towards getting them the best outcomes possible.

The positive results we achieved for our clients can also be attributed to our ongoing court support work at the Midland Magistrates Court.

One scenario where we successfully advocated on a client's behalf with the Department of Housing was when a client came in presenting with a congenital heart defect and rapidly deteriorating health. She needed to transfer properties urgently to be closer to a hospital and her specialist as she suffered from severe health issues.

She was a sole supporting parent and was receiving the Disability Pension due to being unable to work as a result of her health issues. The client was using public transport to get to and from her many medical appointments which just wasn't practical as she required oxygen around the clock and was waiting for a wheel chair. We assisted the client in completing a transfer application and met with the Department of Housing to deliver the application. We followed up with the Department when the client had not heard for over a month and asked for the application to be considered urgent. The Department then signed off on an immediate transfer and agreed to reduce her costs where they could and assisted in providing the client with a skip bin when she moved.

This client was offered a suitably located property which reduced the difficulties she had commuting to and from medical appointments substantially. She was able to receive medical assistance with minimal hassle at a cost she could afford. This also benefited the client's son immensely who now gets to spend more quality time with his mother.

It is cases like this that highlight the meaningful work the Midlas team carry out. Our tenancy advocates strive to ensure the best service possible for our clients and to achieve the best outcomes.

**Anne-Marie Ricciardi** Tenant Advocate



# Emergency Relief

**E**mergency Relief (ER), also known as Crisis Relief,

*is a service that Midlas provides in support of people receiving case management.*



Intended as an emergency stopgap measure, Emergency Relief is never something that can be lived on for long but which can make the difference in a moment when everything is falling apart.

Having no money and no food, and no way to change that, is a terrifying and demoralising event that most of us have never experienced and hopefully never will. Basic food security, even in the short term, can help to quieten that fear and better enable people to focus on their options and hopefully change their



circumstances in the long term. A single petrol voucher can make the difference between losing a job and thus a car. A phone voucher can help people reach out and connect with services, potential employers and personal support networks. Food vouchers can free up money needed for medical costs, registration or other expenses that would otherwise destroy a delicate budget. Pharmacy vouchers alone could be life-saving. During the financial year, Midlas assisted over 490 individual clients and referred over 387 to ER-only agencies. 80% of the clients assisted by Midlas were completely new to our service which may be related to the far-reaching effect of the economic downturn and mining bust. Midlas works with other local

services in Midland that offer emergency relief and meet on a regular basis to share information and work towards improving the outcomes for clients in need of this help.

We assisted on the Swan Aboriginal Xmas party committee and helped on the day, wrapping presents and setting up the party. Midlas staff also visited and helped out at Foodbank to get a better understanding of how this vital service can assist our clients.

Midlas offers a number of emergency support options dependent on the person's situation, which can range from food, pharmacy or petrol vouchers; support with purchasing whitegoods or rent arrears; swags and blankets for those experiencing homelessness. We also continued to act as an assessor for Power Assist for overdue electricity accounts, Alinta Care for overdue gas and the City of Swan's Access All Areas passes. Seasonal ER has also continued, with Midlas acting as an intermediary for back-to-school backpacks and Christmas food and toy hampers.

Midlas is proud to have become a distributing agency for WESNET's & Telstra's 'SafeConnections' program: an award-winning project that provides free, safe mobile phones to survivors of domestic and family violence, sexual assault, and other forms of violence against women. Survivors of such abuse often have their phone usage restricted or monitored and we are glad to be part of helping them regain the basic right to private and safe communication. We also received a generous donation of 'Dignity Bags' for women dealing with or escaping from domestic violence.

**Siobhan Meerman** Financial Counsellor

# Financial Counselling

**T***he Midlas financial counselling service has continued to provide a valuable service to the community by assisting more than 500 clients. It has been a year of change with new staff coming into the service and others departing.*

There has been a spike in unemployment in WA to 6.7% being the highest rate in Australia. This is reflected in the types of cases we are dealing with. Not only has there been an increase in unemployment but also in underemployment, and those employed casually with sporadic income finding it difficult to manage regular expenses and commitments.

The type of households to generally experience severe hardship are those with a single person and/or income. The dominating trends leading to hardship stem from terminal illness, injury and trauma in the family, redundancy, business failure and relationship breakdown and separation. An emerging issue that we have faced is 'predatory lenders' offering finance to vulnerable debtors, after accessing public Supreme Court records, for details of Writs that have been served with regards to foreclosure.

Cases have become increasingly complex and we are finding small business owners experiencing high levels of debt stemming from non-compliance with the Australian Taxation Office. We are also finding that those making attempts to deal with their issues independently are being turned away by hardship departments and referred to financial counsellors for information and education on their rights and options as consumers.

Due to the increase in the number of persons experiencing hardship, we have recognised a change as to how financial service providers are dealing with clients in hardship and the types of arrangements considered seem to be varied and inconsistent. On a positive note and in the area of domestic and family violence, the Australian Bankers Association Inc. has recognised that financial abuse can impact a person's ability to become

financially independent, thus introducing an Industry guideline for financial abuse and family and domestic violence to better support their customers. This has proven a useful tool in negotiations.

There has been a significant increase in the number of clients seeking assistance with council rates and referrals from these departments for financial counselling assistance. We have found there is a lack of understanding as to the consequence of non-payment of rates i.e. legal action after 3yrs of non-payment, and so in seeing a financial counsellor the client is made aware of the legal ramifications if arrangements are not put in place. As it becomes known, early access to superannuation is an option explored by those needing to access funds before retirement age. It can be seen as a short term saviour for those experiencing severe financial hardship or where legal action for mortgage or rate arrears is imminent. There appears to be a general lack of awareness about superannuation in the community, and in the area of the types of insurance cover under these funds. For those clients attending for the purpose of accessing their superannuation early, we have assisted in identifying whether they have insurance cover under their fund, and the benefits and consequences of applying for this cover. In working towards obtaining the best outcomes for our clients, we have mostly had success. This comes in the form of lifetime arrangements, debt reductions and waivers and short term arrangements for those whose circumstances are unlikely to improve. The past year has shown that hardship is becoming more of a long term experience.

**Aimee Lehner** Financial Counselling and  
Tenancy Services Senior



# Legal Service

**I** joined the team at Midlas in May of this year and I have felt a really warm welcome from everyone. I have practiced mainly in family law for a number of years and it is good to come to the Midlas legal service where we are able to assist clients in several areas of law relating to the family violence they are experiencing.

This can include advice and representation in a restraining order matter as well as family law issues that arise because of the family violence. In more serious cases where clients are victims of crimes we can advise and assist with criminal injuries compensation.

It was great to spend time with Mal Bradley who worked 4 days a week as a volunteer lawyer and even though it was just a short time of knowing him, I want to pay tribute to the enormous passion and energy he brought to his advocacy for his clients. Mal left at the end of June to take up paid employment at Gosnells CLC and we wish him well for his future career. Many thanks also to Lizzie and Maddie who were volunteer law students during the past year.

I continue to be so grateful for our volunteer lawyer Rita who works with me 3 days each week. Rita only started at the centre in March this year so we are learning together about how things work at Midlas. It is always a joy to welcome Rita's special guide dog, Ivy to the office each morning!

A new challenge for me this year is being the Principal Lawyer of the centre and I am growing into that role and the responsibilities that come with it.

I am committed to forming strong relationships and referral pathways with local community agencies. In particular, we are developing relationships with the Family Violence Service at the Midland Magistrates Court and the Koolkuna Domestic and Family Violence Services. In the coming year we hope to be able to deliver community legal education in the areas in which we provide our legal services.

Although the legal service is constrained by having only 2 part time lawyers, we now have 3 very enthusiastic volunteer para legals – all law students. Thank you to Jenee, Mitchell and Anastasia and I hope that together we will grow as a team in providing strong advocacy for the clients who need our assistance to resolve some very difficult issues in their lives.

**Lorraine Taylor** Principal Lawyer



# Our Volunteers Experience at Midlas

**I** *thoroughly enjoyed working as a student volunteer at Midlas over the last year and I am grateful for the opportunity.*

I enjoyed that Midlas was not a typical student volunteer experience, where you might be stuck out the back filing but rather it was hands on and engaging. I got to try out a variety of tasks and skills, everyday learning something new! The lawyers I worked with supported my learning by offering me advice and direction while challenging me to try things I hadn't attempted before. I especially enjoyed being able to accompany the lawyers to the magistrate's court, the police station and networking events out of the office. Midlas was also flexible with my university commitments which allowed me to balance my volunteering across the year which I greatly appreciated. It was also great to be in an environment with such experienced practitioners and thus be able to observe how they managed difficult situations, skilfully communicated with clients and tackled complex legal questions. Midlas is a dynamic community centre with all different practice areas working together. Therefore, I got a glimpse into not just the legal side of things but got to appreciate how intertwined problems are between areas and the need for a wholesome package of service delivery such as Midlas provides to clients. The empathy and hard work of the people that work at Midlas struck me and I am glad I got an opportunity to help out in what small way I could. It was a rewarding experience and I would encourage other students to jump on the opportunity to volunteer at Midlas.

**Elizabeth Phillips** Legal Volunteer

**I** *started my volunteer experience at Midlas in February this year.*

To begin I volunteered within the disability service to assist in organising the inaugural *Youth with Disability Forum* held in April. This experience was thoroughly enjoyable and enabled me to develop my skills within the community development sphere. I was truly impressed with the continuing support of the disability advocacy team, and admire their devotion to ensuring people with disabilities voices are heard.

In July 2017, I started as a student paralegal volunteer within the legal services. As an undergraduate law student, my experiences in assisting the legal team has been invaluable. I have particularly enjoyed the hands-on experience Midlas has provided through being able to draft affidavits, sit in client interviews, and assist in the preparation of criminal injury compensation claims. I have appreciated the expertise the lawyers have provided me in both assisting my learning and challenging me professionally. Midlas have been extremely supportive and flexible with my university commitments, which has been greatly appreciated. I have been very grateful for the friendly and welcoming environment the whole Midlas team have provided me.

I am proud to be part of a team that provides such important services to people within the Midland community.

**Anastasia Causton** Disability Project Officer  
Legal Volunteer



# Treasurer's Report

**I** *It gives me pleasure to report that Midlas has managed its resources admirably over the past financial year to achieve a surplus of \$54,946. This is an excellent outcome given the external environment that has featured policy uncertainty and doubt as to the amount of government funding to be granted to the organisation.*

I commend the employees and management of Midlas for their commitment to cost reductions; cutting down on administrative and overhead expenses wherever possible. This effort has helped deliver the annual operating surplus. This in turn grows retained earnings which insulates Midlas and puts it in a position to continue delivering on its mission into the future.

Wages and superannuation represent the largest cost for our organisation. Increases in award rates saw wages as a proportion of all costs increase to 78 percent, up from 73 percent in the prior year. This cost impact was effectively offset through a management focus on productivity, ensuring that staff had the tools, resources and capability to deliver services effectively.

To support diversification of revenue and reduce reliance on grant funding, Midlas has carried on with its strategy of offering accountancy support services to other not for profit organisations. This helps the sector and provides an additional revenue stream.

In our current low interest environment, interest returns on our cash at bank is low, however the Board has appropriately determined not to risk loss of principal through any higher risk investment activity.

Attracting sufficient government funding to deliver on our mission continues to present a challenge, and so advocacy to government has been a key focus for the past year. It is pleasing to see the new WA Government has reinstated support for Financial Counselling Services with an extra \$7.4 million committed in the 2017-18 State Budget. It is our desire for Midlas to have the opportunity to deliver improved services to our community through accessing a portion of that funding package.

The financial position of Midlas is sound. I thank Midlas' management team for their careful and diligent stewardship of the organisation's finances throughout the year.

**Andrew Canlon** Treasurer

# Independent Audit Report



T (08) 6165 4090 F (08) 6165 4067  
A 3 Alvan Street Mt Lawley WA 6050  
P PO Box 42 Mt Lawley WA 6929  
E mtlawley@armada.com.au

*strength in numbers*

## INDEPENDENT AUDIT REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF MIDLAND INFORMATION DEBT AND LEGAL ADVOCACY SERVICE INC.

### Opinion

We have audited the financial report of Midland Information Debt and Legal Advocacy Service (Inc.), which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2017, the statement of income & expense, the statement of cash flow and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies, and the declaration by committee members.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial report of the Entity is in accordance with Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*, including:

- a) giving a true and fair view of the Entity's financial position as at 30 June 2017 and of its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended; and
- b) complying with Australian Accounting Standards to the extent described in Note 1 and 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 in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of our report. We are independent of the Entity in accordance with the auditor independence 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 confirm that the independence declaration required by Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*, which has been given to committee members, would be in the same terms if given as at the time of this auditor's report.

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



## Responsibilities of Committee members for the Financial Report

Management is responsible for the preparation of the special purpose financial report that gives a true and fair view in accordance with the relevant Australian Accounting Standards in accordance with the *Australian Charities and Not-for Profits Commission Regulations 2013* and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error. In preparing the special purpose financial report, management is responsible for assessing the Entity'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 management either intend to liquidate the Entity or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Committee members are responsible for overseeing the Entity's financial reporting process.

## 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 this financial report.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial report is located at the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board website at [http://www.auasb.gov.au/auditors\\_responsibilities/ar1.pdf](http://www.auasb.gov.au/auditors_responsibilities/ar1.pdf). This description forms part of auditor's report

## ARMADA AUDIT & ASSURANCE PTY LTD



**Graeme Wovodich**  
**Registered Company Auditor Reg.No. 13421**  
**Dated 27<sup>th</sup> day of October 2017**

TAX & ACCOUNTING | AUDITING | BOOKKEEPING | BUSINESS CONSULTING | FINANCIAL PLANNING | LENDING

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## Midland Debt and Legal Advocacy Service (Inc)

# Statement of Profit or Loss and other Comprehensive Income

*As at 30 June 2017*

	2017	2016
	\$	\$
<b>Continuing Operations</b>		
Revenue and funding	1,035,167	908,393
Expenses for charitable activities	(980,221)	(905,517)
Surplus/(Deficit) from continuing operations	54,946	2,876
Surplus/(Deficit) from discontinued operations	-	-
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	54,946	2,876
Other Comprehensive Income for the year	-	-
Total Comprehensive (Deficit)/Surplus for the year	54,946	2,876

## Midland Debt and Legal Advocacy Service (Inc)

# Statement of Financial Position

*As at 30 June 2017*

	2017 \$	2016 \$
<b>ASSETS</b>		
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	378,872	280,887
Other receivables	1,568	100,066
Prepayments	11,073	7,772
Total Current Assets	391,513	388,725
<b>NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Property, plant and equipment	21,827	15,896
Total Non-Current Assets	21,827	15,896
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>413,340</b>	<b>404,621</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Provisions	33,880	32,062
Deferred income	37,885	115,964
Other liabilities	69,490	49,784
Total Current Liabilities	141,255	197,810
<b>NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Provisions	31,737	21,409
Total Non-Current Liabilities	31,737	21,409
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>172,992</b>	<b>219,219</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>240,348</b>	<b>185,402</b>
<b>EQUITY</b>		
Retained surplus	240,348	185,402
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>	<b>240,348</b>	<b>185,402</b>



## Midland Debt and Legal Advocacy

# Statement of Cash Flows

*As at 30 June 2017*

	2017 \$	2016 \$
Cash flows from operating activities:		
Grant Receipts	1,130,482	983,214
Other income	13,610	4,540
Payments to suppliers and employees	(1,051,162)	(982,805)
Interest received	6,467	6,026
Net cash inflows/(outflows) from continuing operating activities	99,397	10,975
Net cash inflows/(outflows) from discontinued operating activities	-	-
Net cash inflows/(outflows) from operating activities	99,397	10,975
Cash flows from investing activities:		
Profit/(Loss) on sale of property, plant and equipment	-	1,500
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	(18,000)	-
Net cash inflows/(outflows) from investing activities	(18,000)	1,500
Cash flows from financing activities:		
Proceeds from borrowings	16,588	-
Net cash from financing activities	16,588	-
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	97,985	12,475
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of period	280,887	268,412
Cash and cash equivalents at end of period	378,872	280,887

# The Board of Management

## *Simon Kimber* Chairperson

Simon has over 20 year's management experience in business operations, marketing and general management in the private sector. This is Simon's first position in a non- for –profit sector and he brings to the team an approach based on service flexibility and exceeding customer requirements. Simon's interests are diverse and include international political economy, geopolitical risk, resources and energy sustainability, business innovation, policy and governance. Simon holds a Masters of Business Administration. Simon also chairs the Partnership and Collaboration committee and sits on the Finance committee.

## *Danielle Bejr* Vice Chair

Is employed by Woodside Energy in a People and Capability Graduate role, where she applies her learning from her double degree in Psychology, Human Resources and Industrial Relations. Prior to this role, Danielle worked and volunteered in community based roles with the Department of Child Protection, Curtin University and Enactus. Danielle brings knowledge about current Indigenous issues, and through a secondment at AMMA an up to date view of employee relations. Danielle has previously held the role of Secretary for the Midlas Board, and is currently the Vice Chair of the Board, Chair of the Policy Committee and sits on the Partnership and Collaboration committee.

## *Andrew Canion* Treasurer

Andrew is employed by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry WA to deliver the Federal Government's Entrepreneurs' Programme. In this role, Andrew works with firms to help them grow and improve. Andrew's prior experience includes business ownership, being an Advisor to both former State Premier and State Government Minister, and management at CBH Group. Andrew attended high school at Swan Christian College and his first purchased home was in Bassendean. Andrew holds a degree in Economics and Commercial Law, an Advanced Diploma in Leadership and Management, has completed the Cranlana Programme and is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Andrew chairs the Finance committee and sits on the Partnership and Collaboration committee.

## *Carol Mirco* Secretary

Carol is a registered nurse and an experienced policy officer with a demonstrated history of working in the hospital & health care industry in the public and private sectors. Carol was recognised for her contribution to the public sector as winner of the Northern Territory 2003 TMP / Hudson Telstra Business Women of Year Community and Government Award. Carol has a Master of Business Administration and a Master of Applied Anthropology, and is a Fellow of the Australasian College of Health Service Management and a Fellow of the Australian College of Nursing. Carol was Chair of the Midlas Board from 2012 – 2015, returning to the Board in March 2016 after a short break, and currently holds the position of Secretary. Skilled in Not-for-profit organisations, business planning, government and emergency management, Carol's focus is governance, policy development, regulation and strategic planning.

## *Clint Ford*

Clint Ford has around 20 year's senior corporate experience. His experience includes lobbying and public affairs, marketing strategy, campaign direction and business development. He is also a director of WA Deaf Society Inc and is a Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Clint holds a Master of Commerce, Graduate Diploma of Marketing Management and a Bachelor of Arts. Clint sits on the Policy committee.

## *Elizabeth Lee*

Elizabeth has over 19 years' experience in the areas of corporate governance and company secretarial functions. Prior to joining Questus, Elizabeth held company secretarial positions for Phosphate Resources Limited, Macmahon Holdings Limited, Corporate Compliance Partners and Lend Lease Primelife Limited. Elizabeth also performed contract company secretarial roles with Macquarie Bank Limited and Austock Group Limited. Elizabeth holds a Bachelor of Business majoring in Finance and Business Law from Edith Cowan University, a Graduate Diploma in Corporate Governance from Governance Institute of Australia, a Graduate Diploma in Corporate Governance for ASX Listed Entities from Kaplan Financial Institute and is a Fellow member of the Governance Institute of Australia. Elizabeth sits on the Finance committee.

## *Millie Richmond-Scott*

Millie Richmond-Scott is a Senior Associate in the Dispute Resolution team of the Perth office of MinterEllison. She has managed disputes for and advised global and national resources and oil & gas companies, various corporate clients and Western Australian government agencies and port authorities. Millie is also a director of WA Deaf Society Inc and is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Millie holds a Bachelors Degree of Laws from the University of Western Australia, as well as a Bachelors Degree of Arts (Majoring in Politics and International Relations). Millie sits on the Partnership and Collaboration committee.

## *Joanna Riley*

Joanna is employed as a corporate lawyer for Automotive Holdings Group Limited. Joanna commenced her legal career in litigation before moving to in house counsel roles. She has extensive commercial experience both in Australia and overseas having worked in the energy and financial services sectors before joining AHG. Joanna holds a Bachelor Degree of Laws, a Masters of Business Administration from the University of Western Australia and is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Joanna has a son with autism.



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**[www.midlas.org.au](http://www.midlas.org.au)**

**[admin@midlas.org.au](mailto:admin@midlas.org.au)**

**23 Old Great Northern Highway**

**Midland WA 6056**

**Phone: 9250 2123**

