

**Building Resilient Communities** 

## 2018 Annual Report



### **Our Values**

Caring for people
Supporting our community
Developing partnerships



**Building resilient communities** 

Our Mission

To promote independence, strength and wellbeing in our community through support, advocacy, and education

Midlas would like to thank our funders and supporters for 2017 - 18



Department of Local Government and Communities







Government of Western Australia
Department of Mines, Industry Regulation
and Safety







# Our year at a glance

July	Naidoc week Midland Oval
	Community relief and resilience conference
	Legal Cross check of our centre
August	Homelessness week event at Karnany Resource Centre
	Disability advocates attended NDIS appeals conference in Adelaide
	Financial Counselling Network Strategic planning day
September	Midlas exhibits at Abilities Expo
October	Accredited for further 3 years – National accreditation scheme for CLC's
	Audit for National Standards for Disability Services completed
November	Siobhan Meerman wins FCAWA awards for excellence in financial counselling at FCAWA conference
	Exhibit at Bandyup Prison Expo
	Midlas AGM, new Chair Danielle Bejr appointed
December	Midlas presents at the IDAS forum
	Midlas attends the White Ribbon Day March in Midland
	Midlas assists with Swan Aboriginal Xmas Party

General Manager Justine Clarke finished with Midlas to travel	January
New General Manager Sarah Patterson started	
New Financial Counselling Service opened in Ellenbrook	February
FCN Strategic Planning Day	
Midlas attends Consumer Protection Breakfast	March
Midlas secured Legal funding	April
Partnered with Salvation Army in Middle Swan to open a walk in Tenancy Clinic	April
Partnered with Indigo Junction to run a walk in clinic at Karnany	
Volunteer Week luncheon to celebrate our wonderful volunteers	
Midlas exhibits at the Autism Awareness Day, Good Neighbour event, and Cyril Jackson Expo	May
Midlas complete the Law Society Walk for Justice	
Midlas Lawyer Rita announced a Finalist in Westfield Heroes Award	June

## Chairperson's Report



As Midlas' first Chair under 30, it is a great privilege for me to report on the exceptional services Midlas has provided in a challenging 2017-2018 year.

Looking externally at the environment in which Midlas operates, the State and Federal governments have been in a protracted period of deficit. This deficit has led to significant pressure on expenditure, resulting in greater scrutiny of funding grants and an expectation that organisations receiving funding substantially increase efficiencies.

Further, the not for profit sector is still severely challenged by the absence of long-term sustainable funding contracts which limit the ability to plan effectively. However, last December it was announced that WA will join the National NDIS from 1 July 2018. This certainty for our clients and for the disability sector will provide some measure stability for forward planning.

These pressures combined with the higher cost of living, stagnant wages, insufficient welfare payments and interest rates rises independent of the Reserve Bank, has meant the demand for Midlas services has grown far beyond that which we are funded for and able to provide.

#### **Midlas Board**

I would like to acknowledge the outstanding commitment of each of our volunteer Board members, who tirelessly dedicate their time and expertise to provide a stringent level of governance and support for Midlas.

Following the AGM, I am saddened to announce that Carol Mirco will be retiring from the Midlas Board. Carol has been an invaluable long-term Board member dedicated to upholding Midlas' values at every turn, and she will be sorely missed.

I would also like to welcome Hugh Stevens and Charlie Caruso to the Midlas Board. Coming from diverse backgrounds and experience, the Board looks forward to their insights and commitment over the coming year.

#### **Our staff**

This year we said a sad goodbye to General Manager Justine Clarke who left to complete a trip around the world after being with Midlas for the last eight years. Justine's legacy is leaving behind an institution of strong governance and process that served the community at every turn.

New to Midlas, Sarah Patterson joined as General Manager in February bringing new ideas from her experience in the not for profit sector. She has focused the last nine months on using the strong foundations of Midlas to grow our organisation to find more ways to service the needs of our local community.

On behalf of the Board, we are proud of our staff who continue to deliver superior service to our clients, making a difference in the lives of every person who cross the Midlas doorway. I am delighted to be able to present the inaugural Midlas Values Award to recognise a staff member nominated by clients, who has demonstrated a deep commitment to the Midlas Values in their work.

#### **Midlas Delivers**

Despite the external pressures and internal changes, Midlas has continued to identify better ways to build resilience in our community. In this year alone Midlas has:

- Built partnerships with Women's Law Centre, Koolkuna Women's Refuge, Indigo Junction, and Salvation Army
- Secured Legal funding from the Office of the Attorney General, and
- Managed to wipe an amazing \$500,000 worth of debt for our clients

Midlas is well-positioned to continue to build resilient communities, and we have identified opportunities to continue to do so in a changing world. However it is only by working collaboratively with government and partner organisations that together, we will be able to combat the increasing environmental pressures facing our clients.

Danielle Bejr Board Chairperson



## General Manager's Report

2017-18 has been a busy year for Midlas, and has demonstrated just how passionate, committed and resilient our team are. General Manager Justine Clark finished her time with Midlas in January and travelled Europe (we are not at all jealous!), but she left a legacy, with Midlas still benefiting from her tireless work to develop networks and promote the amazing work our team does for the community.

One of these achievements was the announcement that Midlas will be included in the next round of funding for Community Legal Centres. This resulted from significant lobbying from the Community Legal Centre Association WA, and Midlas. The funding from the Attorney General's office allows us to increase our Family Law service next year to see the double the number of clients we could this year. This is a huge advantage for the community in the City of Swan and we are grateful to the Attorney General for his ongoing support.

I joined the team in February and was surprised to find out just how diverse and comprehensive our services are. This small but passionate team, support people from all walks of life to develop skills, access information and collect resources to build their capacity and resilience. It really is a hand up, not a hand out.

This year our focus has been on developing networks and partnerships with organisations and individuals to wrap around the community and ensure no-one is left behind. This has resulted in some great partnerships, shared supports, and better outcomes for the community. Our team has also actively promoted our services and support to reach more people. We have been attending expos and community events regularly to connect with people and share our knowledge. We also developed a Social Media platform, as a way to share information and news with a wider audience.

I am really excited to be on board with Midlas and am looking forward to seeing how we develop and grow over the coming years. Our new strategic plan is courageous, but with the passion and commitment of our team and Board, I believe we will achieve our objectives and watch the community thrive as a result.

Sarah Patterson General Manager



### **Our Board**

**Danielle Bejr** (BComm, BPsych) Chairperson



**Simon Kimber (MBA)**Vice Chairperson



Carol Mirco (MBA, MAnth)
Secretary



Clint Ford (MCom GDipMMgt BA)
Director



Andrew Canion (GAICD, BComm, Dip Mgmt)
Treasurer



Joanna Riley (LLB, MBA, GAICD)

Director



Millie Richmond-Scott (GAICD, BLaw, BArts)
Director

### Our Team



At Midlas we have a strong culture of celebration and appreciation, and we share this both inside and outside of the organisation. Our small, passionate team work hard to support people in tough situations, and give all of themselves to creating positive opportunities for others. This year we saw Disability Advocate Silvia, and Financial Counselor Heather return to the team, after Afeif and Reginah left to pursue new opportunities – and we have developed a positive culture which is reflected in all areas of our work (and makes for a fun team environment)

### **Our Volunteers**



Where would we be without the support of the amazing volunteers who dedicate their time to make our community great? Midlas has some amazing volunteers on our Board, in our Legal team, and in our Administration team who all contribute to the success of our organisation, and better our community.

Without the work of each of our volunteers we couldn't do the work we do so we thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your ongoing commitment and support.

### **2018 Volunteers**

Louise Ireland
Ashley Harman
Rita Kleinfeld-Fowell
Rod Munoz
Jenee Peters
Anastasia Causton
Mitchell Hutchinson



### 2018 Students

Ashley Harman Arnold Lee Shannan Ferrez Swati Gupta





### Financial Counselling

Midlas Financial Counselling has seen some exciting changes this year! We've been delighted to expand our service in Ellenbrook to a full-time position, making it easier for people in the area to get the access they deserve. We're also excited to welcome Karen Ratcliffe, a fresh new Financial Counsellor to our ranks, as well as welcome back the experienced expertise of Heather McBurney! Not content with that, we have taken steps to support the Financial Counsellors of tomorrow by offering workplace experience to volunteers and mentoring to the Department of Communities scholarship winner Ashleigh Harman.

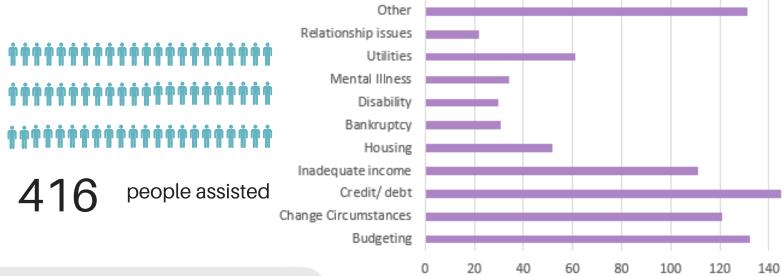
Most of our clients have mortgages (or two, or three) and many of them have worked their whole lives with an eye towards their retirement. When things fall apart financially, it's the work of a lifetime that is falling about their ears. Physical & mental ill-health and involuntary loss of employment have been major contributing factors to most of our client's financial hardship and none of the three tend to have quick recovery periods. Even those who regain a steady income will often be working for less than they used to – and can't sustain the debt that was built on more.

It's not all grim news, however! We at Midlas are keenly watching the Banking (and Superannuation and Financial Services misconduct) Royal Commission unfold and encourage everyone who has a story to participate if they can. Much of what we have seen uncovered with relation to consumer credit, mortgage brokers and small lenders are battles we have fought on individual fronts for years. We are looking hopefully forward to improved protections for consumers as a result of the investigation and better awareness and self-reporting by the general public too!

Also very welcome in the Financial Counselling sphere are new initiatives brought in by Water Corp who are once again leading the way in humanistic responses to financial hardship. From their basic 'three month hold' on your account, their long-standing Water Assist program, the new Start Over initiative, and Medical Assist programs, we are giving them a well-deserved standing ovation.

Siobhan Meerman Senior Financial Counsellor

### Client source of difficulty



2021

hours of Financial Counseling provided

Our clients had
\$55m
worth of total debt

Government Other
No Income
Savings

Client source of Income

81%

of clients reported feeling more capable after a Financial Counseling session

\$500,000

of debt we have had waived for clients

## **Tenancy Advocacy**

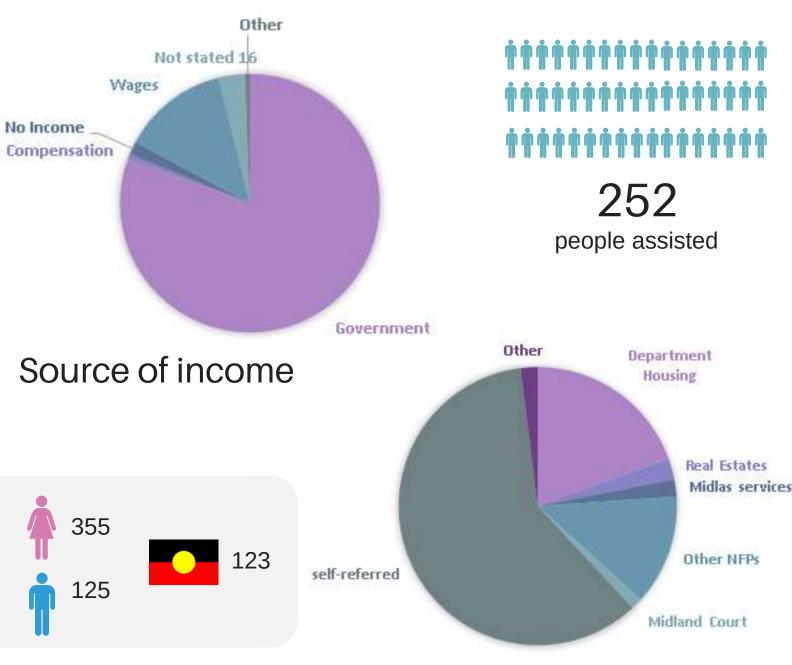
Over the past year, Midlas' Tenant Advocates have assisted over 250 clients to appeal their tenant liability debts, sustain their tenancies, negotiate termination notices in the Magistrates Court, and address and manage their rent arrears. We have also assisted clients with obtaining private tenancies due to our ongoing relationships with the Real Estate Agents in our service area.

We have successfully continued to sustain and develop relationships with the Department of Housing, local community organisations and local real estate agents. This enables us to advocate for our clients and work towards the best outcome possible. The positive results we achieved for our clients can also be attributed to our ongoing court support work at the Midland Magistrates Court. Midlas has also now engaged with outreach at Salvation Army in Swan View, Indigo Junction, Bandyup Prison, and Ellenbrook so that we are enabling the community to have easier access to support.

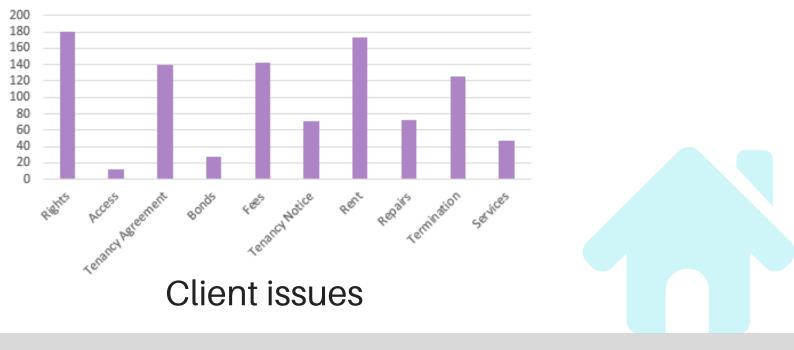
In another case we successfully negotiated with The Housing Authority, for a family of five who were locked out of their rental property due to rental arrears and a court order. The windows were boarded up and the client's belongings were still inside. Midlas sourced funding from the community sector to assist with the arrears that were due to loss of employment. Midlas then approached The Housing Authority to negotiate having the boards removed, the keys given back, and allowing the family entry so the children could stop sleeping in the car. This outcome was due to the rapport that Midlas and The Housing Authority have built together.

Midlas Tenant Advocates deliver the best possible service for our clients for the best outcomes, and are proud of the year that was.

Taryn Benn Tenant Advocate



### Source of referral



## Disability Advocacy

2017-18 has been a busy year for the Disability Advocacy team, with constant changes to the NDIS causing challenges for many of the people we support. The announcement in December 2017 that we would be adopting a Federal scheme alleviated a lot of confusion for people awaiting roll out in their area, but also caused some tension for those in the State scheme. As a result, we have actively been a voice for people accessing the NDIS, and have advocated systemically for changes that will give people in the scheme more choice and control.

Midlas Disability Advocates supported over 100 clients to appeal their NDIS plan in the past year – a staggering 40% more than last year. We also increased our Community Education, providing sessions on advocacy, negotiation, and the NDIS appeals process to community groups, Disability Service organisations, and other community organisations.

We welcomed three new organisations who are now supporting clients to appeal NDIS decisions, helping to meet the ever growing demand, and giving our Disability Advocacy team a broader network of Disability Advocates who all support one another. We are looking forward to strengthening these networks and supporting each other further in the coming months.

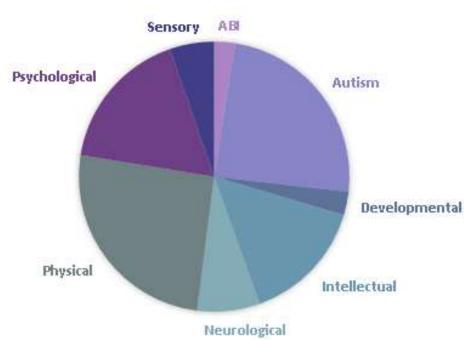
Midlas is passionate about the rights of people with a disability, and will continue to promote, enhance, and support initiatives that increase participation, inclusion and representation for people with a disability

Megan Butt Senior Disability Advocate

## 

of clients live alone

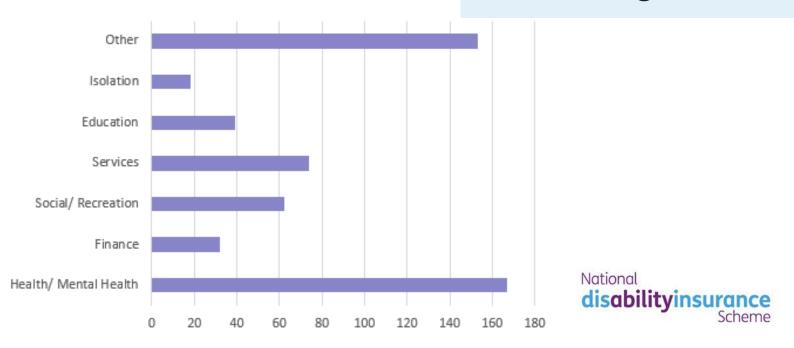
## **Disability Advocacy**



**Primary Disability** 

### Issues we addressed

104 NDIS Appeals lodged



## Legal Services

Our service continues to give priority to people who have experienced family violence and who find themselves needing legal assistance. We have 3 areas of practice – Family Violence Restraining Orders, Family Law and Criminal Injuries Compensation claims. There were significant changes to the Restraining Orders legislation in July 2017 which have had a positive impact on our ability to negotiate and settle restraining order matters in the early stages of proceedings.

We enjoy a good working relationship with local services such as the Midland Family Violence Service, located at the Midland Magistrates Court and the local women's refuge and Domestic Violence Advocacy Service who provide many of our referrals. A highlight of the year has been to present the first of a series of four seminars to grandparents across Perth who have full time care of their grandchildren. The seminars cover legal issues facing grand carers, including whether to seek court orders to formalise the arrangement. The next seminar will be held in Midland in August 2018. The other areas where the seminars are to be held are Mandurah, Mindarie and Armadale.

We have also been participating in a legally assisted family dispute resolution program run by Perth Family Relationships Centre. Where there is a dispute between parents over arrangements for the children, each parent is provided with a lawyer to give initial advice and then to be present during the mediation session to provide support and ongoing advice as needed. The pilot is targeted specifically toward assisting Aboriginal and CALD clients.

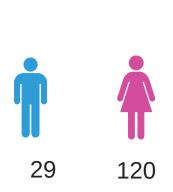
Rita, Ivy and Lorraine enjoyed being part of the annual Walk for Justice during Law Week in May 2017 to raise funds for Law Access.

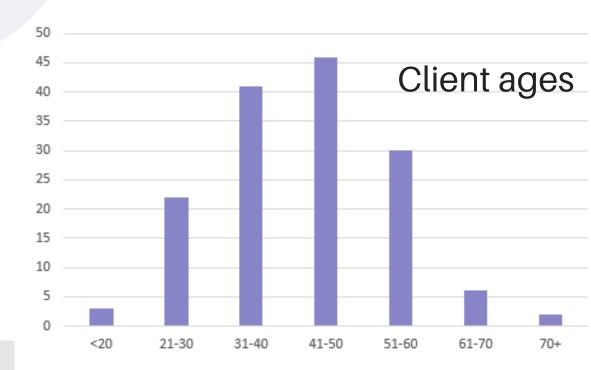
The legal team currently consists of our volunteer lawyer Rita and her trusty guide dog Ivy, Jenee, our law student volunteer and myself. During the year we said goodbye to Mitchell and Anastasia, law student volunteers who were unable to continue to volunteer due to their study and work commitments. We are enormously grateful to all of the volunteers who have helped Midlas to provide a much needed legal service.

Lorraine Taylor Principal Lawyer 64%

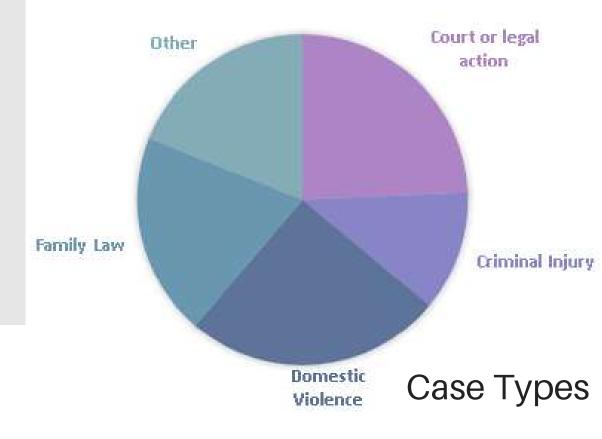
of reported assaults are related to Family Violence 53 new cases resolved

62 advices given





In 2017-18
there were
more reported
incidents of
Family Violence
than arson,
robbery, and
vehicle theft put
together.



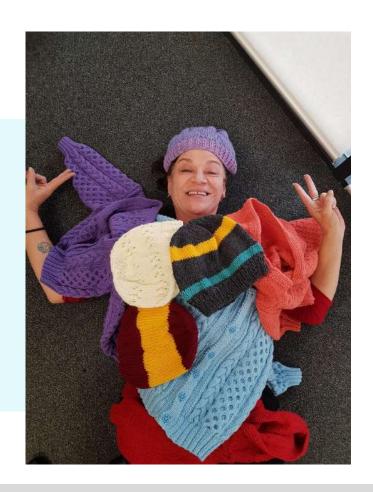
Emergency Relief (ER), is a service that Midlas provides in support of people receiving support across any of our services. Intended as an emergency stopgap measure, Emergency Relief can make the difference in a moment when everything feels like it is falling apart.

Having no money and no food, and no way to change that, is a terrifying and demoralizing 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.

Midlas offers a number of emergency support options dependent on the persons situation, which can range from a food, pharmacy or petrol vouchers; support with purchasing white goods or rent arrears; swags and blankets for those experiencing homelessness. Seasonal ER has also continued, with Midlas acting as an intermediary for back-to-school backpacks, winter woolen items, and Christmas food and toy hampers.

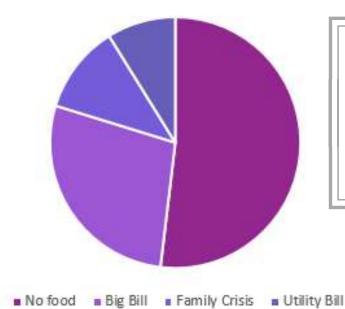
### "This is a lifesaver, honestly, a lifesaver!"

Client receiving a \$150
 Woolworths voucher



## **Emergency Relief**

\$42,004.98 of vouchers given to families in need in 2017-18



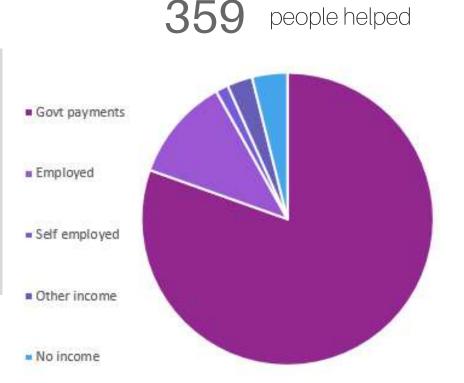
Midlas has been able to help people with not only vouchers and food relief, but also to pay bills, purchase whitegoods, and access Hardship Utility Grants

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1 in 5 children have experienced food insecurity in Australia this year



of people seeking Emergency Relief had some form of employment

## Treasurer's Report

The 2017/2018 financial year has been an eventful one for Midlas. Externally, the organisation has adjusted to changes in government, increased demand for services, implementation of the Federal NDIS, and saw the State economy somewhat stabilise. Internally, the Board endorsed a new strategic plan and engaged a new General Manager to deploy that ambitious plan. Amidst this season of change, Midlas has been able to manage itself financially to maintain effective performance and deliver an overall surplus.

The wonderful thing about the not-for-profit sector is its amazing ability to run, figuratively, on the smell of an oily rag. This year has required Midlas to balance the enthusiasm of implementing a new strategic plan with the need for fiscal restraint. The challenge of cash flow is a fact of business life for the team at Midlas, and I commend their prudent management and budgetary control.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognise and thank Janet Leerson, Business Manager, for her fastidious approach to financial control. Every organisation needs a good Financial Controller; in Janet, Midlas has a great one. I congratulate Janet for a job well done as while I take responsibility as Treasurer, Janet is the engine-room that ensures our on-going success.

A surplus of 4.6% of revenue was achieved for 2018, against 5.3% in the prior corresponding year, in a year that saw revenue decline by \$35,646. In response to lower revenue, Midlas was able to reduce expenditure by 2.7%. Of course, no organisation can continue to lower its cost base ad infinitum, and this will present a challenge for future years if revenue fails to grow. Nevertheless, the 2017/18 surplus has enabled Midlas to grow its overall retained surplus to \$286,303, providing a strong buffer to offset future strategic investment activities of the organisation.

I consider the achievement of a surplus not to be a down payment on future investment, particularly for future years where a deficit result might be the appropriate strategic outcome. As Treasurer, I endorse a multi-year, long-term view of the organisation's financial health. I encourage readers to interpret the financial reports as a single chapter of a multi-year story: one that depicts Midlas' strategic journey of building an organisation that responds and changes to always best meet the needs of the community



**Building Resilient Communities** 

2017 - 2018 Financial Reports



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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 2018, 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 2018 and of its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended; and
- 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 Notfor-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.

#### Emphasis of Matter - Basis of Accounting

We draw attention to Note 2 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared for the purpose of fulfilling the financial reporting responsibilities under 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.

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

### 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 <a href="http://www.auasb.gov.au/auditors\_responsibilities/ar1.pdf">http://www.auasb.gov.au/auditors\_responsibilities/ar1.pdf</a>. This description forms part of auditor's report

ARMADA AUDIT SERVICES PTY LTD

Graeme Wovodich

Registered Company Auditor Reg.No. 13421

Dated 2nd of November 2018

GWevoobah

## Statement of Profit or Loss and other comprehensive income

	Notes	2018 \$	2017 \$
Continuing Operations		*	•
Revenue and funding	3(a)	999,521	1,035,167
Expenses for charitable activities	3(b)	(953,566)	(980,221)
Surplus/(Deficit) from continuing operations	-	45,955	54,946
Surplus/(Deficit) from discontinued operations	-		*
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	_	45,955	54,946
Other Comprehensive Income for the year	-	**	<b>10</b>
Total Comprehensive (Deficit)/Surplus for the year	-	45,955	54,946

The above Statement of Profit or Loss and other Comprehensive Income should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

### Statement of Financial Position

	Notes	2018 \$	2017 \$
ASSETS CURRENT ASSETS Cash and cash equivalents Other receivables Prepayments Total Current Assets	4(a) 5 —	428,416 117,516 11,162 557,094	378,872 1,568 11,073 391,513
NON-CURRENT ASSETS Property, plant and equipment Total non-current assets TOTAL ASSETS	6 _	18,011 18,011 575,105	21,827 21,827 413,340
LIABILITIES CURRENT LIABILITIES Provisions Deferred income Other liabilities Total Current Liabilities	7 8 9	23,971 178,079 61,219 263,269	33,880 37,885 69,490 141,255
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES Provisions Total Non-Current liabilities TOTAL LIABILITIES NET ASSETS	7 _	25,533 25,533 288,802 286,303	31,737 31,737 172,992 240,348
EQUITY Retained surplus TOTAL EQUITY	_	286,303 286,303	240,348 240,348

The above Statement of Financial Position should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

### Statement of Cash Flows

	Notes	2018 \$	2017 \$
ASSETS CURRENT ASSETS Cash and cash equivalents Other receivables Prepayments Total Current Assets	4(a) 5 —	428,416 117,516 11,162 557,094	378,872 1,568 11,073 391,513
NON-CURRENT ASSETS Property, plant and equipment Total non-current assets TOTAL ASSETS	6 _	18,011 18,011 575,105	21,827 21,827 413,340
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EQUITY Retained surplus TOTAL EQUITY	_	286,303 286,303	240,348 240,348

The above Statement of Financial Position should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.