



Midlas



Annual Report 2015



Message from the Chair

It gives me great pleasure to submit my fourth report as Chair of the Midlas Board of Management.

It has been another year of transition for Midlas. Sadly Freda Bender Board Director, and a founding member of Midlas, passed away in April. Freda's contribution to Midlas and the local community cannot be overstated, as demonstrated through her winning the Community Award in the Western Australian Seniors Awards for 2012. This year we welcomed Sarah Josey and Jennifer Handz as new Board Directors.

The 2014-2015 Board's governance agenda was strengthened through the development of a three year strategic plan. Directors also underwent skills evaluation and the Board developed a succession plan to ensure its continued effective performance through leadership continuity. The Board continued to be assisted by the Board's Policy Committee chaired by Maxinne Sclanders and the Finance Committee chaired by Simon Kimber.

Danielle Bejr, Cerys Corrins, Sarah Josey (Secretary), Jennifer Handz , Simon Kimber, Bettina McManus (formerly Gibney - Vice Chair), Maxinne Sclanders and Adrian Tomizzi (Treasurer) have brought to the Board significant experience and expertise.

Midlas has benefitted in the past year from the excellent leadership and management provided by the senior management team of Elizabeth Barnes - Chief Executive Officer, Justine Clarke - Client Services Manager and Janet Leerson - Finance Manager.

On behalf of the Midlas Board, I take this opportunity to formally acknowledge the MIDLAS staff for their hard work, dedication and commitment in providing support services to our community.

It has been my privilege to work with the Board and the staff of Midlas over the last 12 months and I thank my fellow Board Directors for their support.

**Carol Mirco
Chair**





Message from the General Manager

I would like to start by thanking past and present staff and board directors of Midlas for their dedication and support to a service that is unrelenting in its vision to build and support resilient communities through their professionalism. Midlas saw another year where it was involved in significant changes within, and external to the organisation. Elizabeth Barnes was CEO for a substantial part of the year and this enabled Midlas to improve its governance; policies and procedures; and begin to implement our new strategic mission to partner with individuals and organisations to promote independence, strength and wellbeing in our community through support, advocacy and education.

Midlas was successful in receiving a number of new funding agreements through the Department of Social Services that included the External Merits Review component to support clients to navigate the process of seeking an administrative tribunal appeal as part of the NDIA trial; Financial counselling and financial capability under its new Financial Wellbeing and Capability programme; and Emergency relief as part of a consortia through the same programme. Midlas also chose to implement the new national disability audit standards (NSDS) and passed accreditation under these standards.

Another important initiative that Midlas undertook was to commit to supporting and promoting a legal volunteer model to assist legal students to develop and refine their legal skills in a demanding, real world legal environment. Due to this innovation the Legal Service has been able to expand its client base, and extend the scope of legal services available to vulnerable families and individuals in the community. Midlas' Financial Counselling, Tenancy Advocacy and Disability Advocacy Services have actively worked to provide workshops, seminars and information sessions to community workers, interested parties, client groups, local government departments and the broader public to facilitate the building of resilient communities and encourage self-empowerment.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our funders; Department of Social Services, Department of Commerce, Department of Child Protection and Family Support, Public Purposes Trust and Lotterywest for enabling Midlas to support the community in the North East and Hills region of Perth through providing advocacy, information advice and education to those in need. I look forward to optimising funding and partnership opportunities over the coming year to ensure Midlas remains at the forefront of community support.

Justine Clarke
General Manager





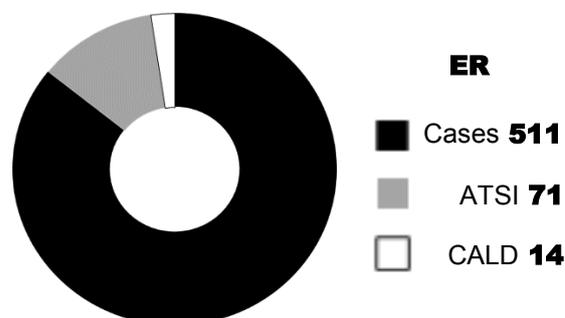
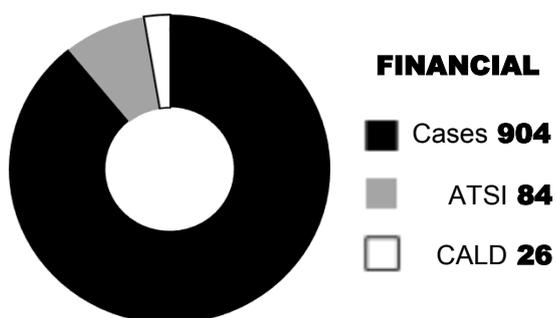
Financial Counselling

Midlas financial counsellor's deal with vulnerable families and individuals experiencing financial hardship. We aim to empower clients where they have the capacity to deal with their financial situation or advocate and negotiate on their behalf when required. It has been noted that there has been an increase in complex cases where clients previously earning high incomes are now unemployed and over committed. In the main, these clients request information regarding bankruptcy. There has also been an increase in families and individuals affected by drug and alcohol where clients are residing in financially and domestic abusive households.

Midlas financial counselling service is funded by the Department of Child Protection and Family Support and Department of Social Services. Metro services were advised in June that the Department of Child Protection and Family Support would cease funding financial counselling services when contracts ended on the 30th September 2015. This funding cut has resulted in restructuring and reduction in staffing across the service. It has also resulted in a telephone financial counselling outreach service to Wooroloo Prison farm ceasing.

The demand for the financial counselling service continues to exceed availability to meet community need. We continue to refer clients both internally and externally to ensure that they receive relevant complementary services that achieve a more holistic outcome for the client. Networks and partnering closely with other organisations allows Midlas staff to keep up to date with current trends and services offered.

Midlas financial counsellors are members of the Financial Counselling Association of WA and have attended professional development and completed the required supervision to retain membership.





Emergency Relief

Midlas receives funding to deliver emergency relief across the North East region of Perth from Department of Social Services in partnership with Sussex Street Community Law Service and a Lotterywest grant. Emergency relief is provided through a case management model where clients must be engaging with an advocate for a full assessment of their needs to be undertaken.

Midlas formed a partnership with Foodbank where clients are provided with a \$30.00 voucher to purchase food. The \$30.00 Foodbank voucher provides clients with approximately \$130.00 worth of food and the feedback received to date has been positive.

Midlas initiated a network group with other providers of emergency relief in the Midland region and this group will now meet on a quarterly basis to keep all interested parties up to date with trends and emergency relief available. Midlas also attended the 2015 WACOSS Emergency Relief Conference and provided a presentation on Integration and Partnerships in the Emergency Relief Sector. Midlas is once again a member of Charity Link and this year will provide Christmas Hampers, Back to School Backpacks and blankets. Midlas also provides swags in partnership with SWAGS For the Homeless.

Community Education

In the past 12 months Midlas has created a contemporary community education program with one of our advocates taking on the additional responsibility of coordinating community education for the service and engaging with community groups and members.

A strong partnership was formed with the Midland Women's Health Care Place that has resulted in a series of sessions titled 'Getting More out of Life'. The sessions focused on budgeting, energy saving tips and providing a forum for women within the community to come together to share their life skills in money management. Midlas Financial Counsellors also hold ongoing information sessions with the Centrelink Income Management team at local playgroups.

A Midlas financial counsellor and tenant advocate attend on a regular basis the Bandyup Women's Prison 'Solid Ground' group to provide information in relation to tenancy and financial matters. Our tenant advocates have engaged in network meetings with Department of Housing to build stronger partnerships and have released several publications on 'Bonds' and 'Going to Court'.

Due to the roll out of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) within the Midland/Hills precinct, our disability advocates have been engaging and networking with organisations informing them of the role that Midlas can take within the NDIS process. They have also been engaging with the wider community holding information sessions at schools and with community groups.

Midlas advocates have also attended community events that have included NAIDOC day where all team members participated in celebrating the occasion with a stall and Disability Expos which provided the wider community with information on Midlas and its holistic approach.

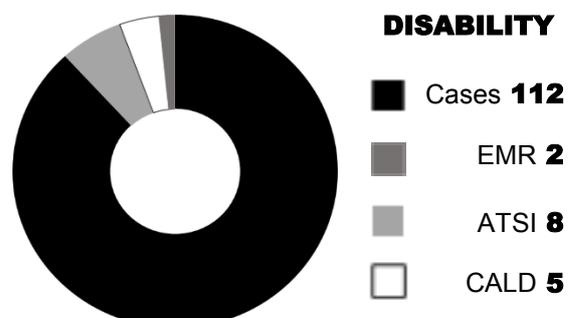
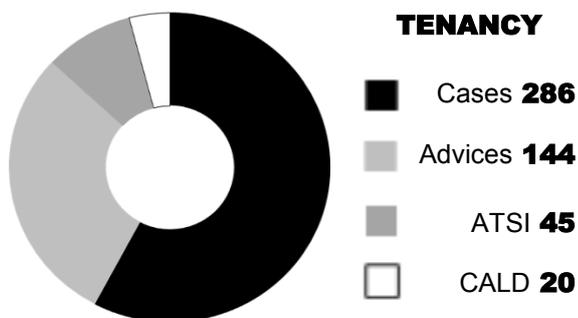




Tenant Advocacy

The tenancy service is another integral part of Midlas holistic wrap-around service for our clients who find themselves in difficulty trying to sustain their tenancies and often present with issues around rent arrears, termination notices, fees and bond complaints and understanding their general rights. The tenant advocates have reported that they are being kept busy with many long term complex cases requiring negotiation with the Department of Housing, community housing providers and private lessors. The experience and commitment of the tenancy team to ensure clients do not become homeless has resulted in many successful outcomes.

Midlas tenancy team provide an outreach service to clients requiring assistance with their court matters relating to tenancy at the Midland Magistrates court on a Monday. They have also been able to assist tenants with retaining their tenancies, through accessing the emergency relief funding that Midlas receives towards an unpaid rent bill, due to being faced with crisis situations. In addition the tenancy team are out and about providing community education on a tenant's general rights and responsibilities and updating the website with relevant blogs about current tenancy issues.





Disability Advocacy

As Midlas is situated within the Perth Hills National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) trial area, advocates have worked with participants through eligibility, planning process and reviewing of plans. Advocates have also had an integral role in feeding back to key NDIS staff regarding client's experiences of the NDIS and have seen many positive outcomes as a result. Midlas has established key working relationships with staff at the NDIS which has resulted in direct referrals and acknowledgements within NDIA's quarterly reports and publications. Midlas' work with the NDIS has also resulted in stronger working relationships with other service providers and advocacy organisations across the metropolitan area.

To ensure greater accessibility for clients with disabilities, advocates have recently introduced the contemporary home visit policy. This has enabled advocates to reach clients in the most need of service but has also had an impact on the Midlas budget and staff resources.

There has been an increase in the level of support required for clients accessing Centrelink services. Revised eligibility criteria for Disability Support Pension applicants and reduced funding for Centrelink has led to clients who would have previously been able to advocate and navigate Centrelink processes independently, requiring more intensive involvement by Midlas staff. However, on the positive side, this has led to strong working relationships being established with key Centrelink staff such as social workers and management.

External Merits Review (EMR)

Two clients who were assisted by Midlas disability advocates through the NDIS Internal Review process had made the decision to escalate their concerns to External Merits Review (EMR) late June 2015. Prior to this, advocates have worked with clients and liaised with NDIS staff to resolve concerns to client's satisfaction without the need to access the EMR process. As part of this process, clients are being assisted by our advocates to complete their EMR applications, to apply for Central Assessment Provider (CAP) funding for legal representation and to liaise with the Appeals Administrative Tribunal (AAT), Legal Aid and other relevant parties regarding the client's concerns. As these two clients were the first EMR cases in WA, all relevant parties have been positively engaged in navigating the previously unknown processes involved. Midlas Advocates have actively promoted community education regarding their role in assisting potential clients and service providers in appealing NDIS decisions to ensure that clients were aware of their rights and responsibilities throughout the NDIS process.

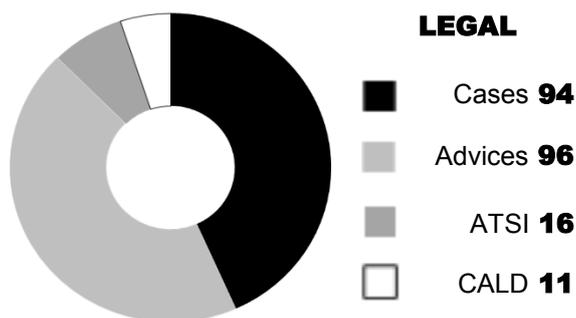




Legal Service

The Legal Service is currently led by a single principal lawyer employed 4 days per week, and supported by a team of volunteer paralegals. With the appointment of a new lawyer in December 2014, Midlas decided to develop a concerted student volunteer program. Due to this innovation the Legal Service has been able to expand its client base, and extend the scope of legal services available to vulnerable families and individuals in the community. The service scope includes legal advice, minor assistance, advocacy, court representation and education for the benefit of victims of domestic and family violence, separating families, and victims of crime.

Access to a lawyer is vitally important to the continued excellence and development of all of our services. The principal lawyer at Midlas ensures that all services comply with legal requirements. The volunteers also assist in this regard, providing, under the principal lawyer's direction, timely research on relevant aspects of the law, including law reforms. In addition, the principal lawyer at Midlas acts as the Responsible Person to ensure the organisation's compliance with the Risk Management Strategy through the National Association of Community Legal Centres (NACLC) Risk Management Guide.





A Volunteer's Experience

I first applied to volunteer as a paralegal for Midlas as I wanted to gain experience in a practical legal environment and that is exactly what I received. Leah, the solicitor at Midlas, encourages us to work independently, and questions our research in order to further assist us with our learning. I have learned so much from Leah regarding family law, domestic violence, criminal injuries compensation claims, as well as the practical application of the law for a community centre. More specifically, in my time at Midlas I have had the opportunity to interview clients, draft affidavits, and assist clients in applying for criminal injuries compensation claims, which I have now discovered is a lengthy process which would be near impossible for someone to attempt without legal assistance.

Although my role is to assist the legal department I feel I have had the opportunity to get to know everyone's roles at Midlas, and feel very much a part of a close knit team. I feel so blessed that I have been able to work with such amazing people at Midlas as everyone is so welcoming and willing to help one another where they can.

An obvious benefit to volunteering in a community legal centre is feeling as though you are making a difference in the community. It has made quite an impact on me seeing the relief on client's faces as they walk out of Leah's door feeling like they have a bit more control over their circumstances. On top of this however, working in a community centre has, for me, truly highlighted the need for services such as those provided by Midlas, and it feels good to be able to support that service. I am incredibly grateful for the opportunities to further my learning that Midlas has provided.

Chloe Littlewood
Legal Volunteer





Message from the Treasurer

It is pleasing to be able to announce a turnaround to an annual operating surplus having achieved \$5,720 for the financial year ending 30 June 2015. This is testament to the sound financial practices of the management team to minimise unnecessary wastage and continually monitor actual expenditures against budget targets to ensure that Midlas remains a viable and sustainable organisation which continues to deliver vital services to the community for many years to come.

The near future presents challenges amidst a leaner funding environment, as the organisation is reliant on state and commonwealth administered government funding. With recent cuts to state financial services funding Midlas have had to rebalance our portfolio of service offerings. This has resulted in a reduction in the capacity of financial counselling services provided by Midlas and other providers in Western Australia. Personally it is of concern to see the paradox whereby funding reduces in times of greater community need. As government taxation revenues are affected, available funding provided to not for profit organisations to service some of society's most vulnerable people becomes more limited. The reduction of funding for proactive and client empowering services, such as financial counselling will act as a driver of increased demand for a wider range of social services in the community putting a further stretch on available resources.

In line with our strategic direction, a key drive of the organisation is to continue to provide a holistic and broad range of services which are accessible to all members of the community that seek them. To be able to deliver more high quality services, and diversify the organisation's exposure to individual funding bodies and grow the organisation's capabilities whilst remaining focussed and staying true to our mission.

I would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge the outstanding commitment, passion and contribution of all of the staff members in the delivery of Midlas' services to the community.

Adrian Tomizzi
Treasurer





Independent Auditor's Report

Report on the Financial Report

We have audited the accompanying financial report, being a special purpose financial report of Midland Information Debt and Legal Advocacy Services (Inc), which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2015, the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, notes comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information, and the Directors' declaration.

Directors' Responsibility for the Financial Report

The Directors are responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view and have determined that the basis of preparation described in Note 2 to the financial report is appropriate to meet the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act 1987 (WA) and is appropriate to meet the needs of the members.

The Directors' responsibility also includes such internal control as the directors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of a financial report that gives a true and fair view and is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Those standards require that we comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial report. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgement, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the company's preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the company's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the Directors, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial report.

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

Independence

In conducting our audit, we have complied with the independence requirements of the Australian professional accounting bodies.

Opinion

In our opinion the financial report presents fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Midland Information Debt and Legal Advocacy Services (Inc) as at 30 June 2015, and its financial performance and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with the financial reporting requirements of Associations Incorporation Act 1987 (WA).

Basis of Accounting

Without modifying our opinion, we draw attention to Note 2 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared to assist Midland Information Debt and Legal Advocacy Services (Inc) to meet the requirements of Associations Incorporation Act 1987 (WA). As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose.

BDO Audit (WA) Pty Ltd

Ian Skelton

Director

Perth, 17 September 2015



MIDLAND INFORMATION DEBT AND LEGAL ADVOCACY SERVICE (INC)
Statement of Profit or Loss and other Comprehensive Income
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2015

	2015	2014
	\$	\$
Continuing Operations		
Revenue and funding	1,141,979	983,553
Expenses for charitable activities	(1,136,259)	(1,020,106)
Surplus/(Deficit) from continuing operations	<u>5,720</u>	<u>(36,553)</u>
Surplus/(Deficit) from discontinued operations	<u>-</u>	<u>10,936</u>
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	<u>5,720</u>	<u>(25,617)</u>
Other Comprehensive Income for the year	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Total Comprehensive (Deficit)/Surplus for the year	<u><u>5,720</u></u>	<u><u>(25,617)</u></u>



MIDLAND INFORMATION DEBT AND LEGAL ADVOCACY SERVICE (INC)
Statement of Financial Position
AS AT 30 JUNE 2015

	2015	2014
	\$	\$
ASSETS		
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	268,412	218,526
Other receivables	67,064	125,720
Prepayments	12,214	2,245
Total Current Assets	<u>347,690</u>	<u>346,491</u>
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Property, plant and equipment	23,720	28,443
Total non-current assets	<u>23,720</u>	<u>28,443</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>371,410</u>	<u>374,934</u>
LIABILITIES		
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Provisions	31,467	19,493
Deferred income	86,518	113,791
Other liabilities	48,620	43,644
Total Current Liabilities	<u>166,605</u>	<u>176,928</u>
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Provisions	22,279	21,200
Total Non-Current liabilities	<u>22,279</u>	<u>21,200</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES	<u>188,884</u>	<u>198,128</u>
NET ASSETS	<u>182,526</u>	<u>176,806</u>
EQUITY		
Retained surplus	182,526	176,806
TOTAL EQUITY	<u>182,526</u>	<u>176,806</u>



MIDLAND INFORMATION DEBT AND LEGAL ADVOCACY SERVICE (INC)
Statement of Cash Flows
AS AT 30 JUNE 2015

	2015	2014
	\$	\$
Cash flows from operating activities:		
Grant Receipts	1,288,211	937,000
Other income	832	1,260
Payments to suppliers and employees	(1,231,911)	(1,015,156)
Interest received	6,937	5,885
Net cash inflows/(outflows) from continuing operating activities	<u>64,069</u>	<u>(71,011)</u>
Net cash inflows/(outflows) from discontinued operating activities	-	10,936
Net cash inflows/(outflows) from operating activities	<u>64,069</u>	<u>(60,075)</u>
Cash flows from investing activities:		
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	(14,183)	(4,400)
Net cash inflows/(outflows) from investing activities	<u>(14,183)</u>	<u>(4,400)</u>
Cash flows from financing activities:		
Net cash from financing activities	-	-
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	49,886	(64,475)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of period	218,526	283,001
Cash and cash equivalents at end of period	<u>268,412</u>	<u>218,526</u>

The Board of Management

Chair - Carol Mirco Carol has extensive experience within the health care and not-for-profit sectors. Carol has a strong understanding of governance principles, gained through extensive experience with not-for-profit and regulatory boards. Her leadership skills and achievements were recognised when she was awarded the NT TMP/Hudson Telstra Business Women of the Year Award in 2003 for work in the Government Sector. Carol's educational achievements include a Bachelor of Health Science (Nsg), a Graduate Diploma in Arts (Aboriginal and Intercultural Studies), a Master of Applied Anthropology and a recently completed Masters of Business Administration (MBA). Carol has been Chair of the Midlas Board of Management since 2012.

Vice Chair - Bettina McManus Bettina is a business advisor with 15 years experience as a director and 6 years as an executive director in the small to medium size business sector. Bettina holds several Board and Committee positions within the not-for-profit sector and is currently the Vice-chair of the Board of Management of Midlas. Bettina's focus is governance, business coaching, marketing and business development. Bettina previously spent many years with Woodside Energy Ltd in Company Secretariat maintaining the regulatory compliance of a large group of subsidiaries and administratively coordinated several committees. Bettina has a Master of Business Administration, Master of Commerce in International Business, Graduate Certificate in Business Law, is a Graduate member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Management.

Treasurer - Adrian Tomizzi Adrian is a qualified Chartered Accountant and holds a Bachelor of Commerce (Accounting and Marketing Double Major) from Curtin University of Technology. Adrian has grown up and attended school within the Swan Region. This is his first Board position, and he hopes to bring some financial knowledge and fresh perspectives to help MIDLAS achieve its strategic vision and aspirations in the community.

Secretary - Sarah Josey Sarah is an accountant and advisor at KPMG with over 5 years of experience with clients in a range of industries/sectors including government-funded not-for-profit organisations. Sarah has provided significant support to not-for-profits to gain/maintain funding, produce budgets, comply with tax and accounting obligations, comply with employee obligations and present Boards with overviews and descriptions of the complex financial information about their organisation. Sarah has completed a Bachelor of Arts in Management and Finance at the University of Leicester, England before emigrating to Perth to become a Chartered Accountant.

Freda Bender As a founding member of Midlas, Freda has been on the Board of Management since the very beginning. Midlas spent some time operating out of Helena Street Lotteries House Building in Midland where Freda fought to secure low cost rental accommodation for community organisations. Freda was also a founding member of Swan Emergency Accommodation and volunteers her time at the Citizen's Advice Bureau, the Midland Nursing Home and is also on the board of the Red Cross and the Ascension Anglican Church Council. Freda sadly passed away on March 29 2015.

Maxinne Sclanders Maxinne has been a senior manager in the public service for over ten years, an educational administrator and a teacher. She left the public service in 1997 to become an independent consultant specialising in evaluation and review, policy development, human resource management and organisational development. As well as broad experience across the public sector, she has established extensive networks and working relationships throughout the health industry (government and non-government), and the agricultural sector.

Simon Kimber Simon has over 20 years management experience in business operations, marketing and general management in the private sector. This is Simon's first position in the NFP 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 has an MBA and is currently completing a Masters in International Politics.

Cerys Corrins Cerys joined the Midlas Board in June 2014. She has worked with people with disability for thirty years in both State and Local Government settings, predominantly in management positions. Cerys is passionate about all social justice issues and the inclusion of people with disability into their local communities. She has lived in the Midland /Hills area for over twenty years and continues to work in Midland. Cerys' local knowledge regarding people with disability will "value add" to the Midlas board.

Jennifer Handz is General Counsel and Company Secretary at P&N Bank, working with the Board of Directors, CEO and business units of the Bank. Previously, Jennifer was a partner at Lavan Legal specialising in banking and finance with extensive experience in project finance, syndicated and bilateral lending, equity investments and restructuring.

Danielle Bejr Danielle is currently a student at Curtin University, studying a double degree in Psychology, Human Resource Management and Industrial Relations. She enjoys volunteering in her community groups, and has experience in the role of Secretary at the Psychology Student Council at Curtin, as well as in the role of HR Director and a Project Manager at Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) Curtin. Through SIFE Curtin, she has helped to create The Halo Yarns, Perth's first Aboriginal youth magazine.



Midlas

Building Resilient Communities

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