

Report from the Chair

What a year, but we rose to the occasion, adapting the way we worked and communicate, with some changes likely to remain well after a global pandemic has tried to dampen our spirits. In addition to responding to the changed world, we have also been working hard to continually improve our governance structures to heighten professionalism and transparency, review our priorities and ensure we remain committed to our purpose and objectives.

Following the departure of Klaus Baur from the CEO role, Flourish secured respected consultant Annie Curtis as interim Executive Officer to ensure stability during a period of significant transition. I gratefully acknowledge Annie and the Mental Health, Alcohol and Drug Directorate (MHADD) of the Tasmanian Government for providing additional support throughout this period and thank Klaus for his ongoing support right through until the end of the financial year.

While Annie was with us she undertook a comprehensive review of internal processes and policies and identified potential new funding opportunities, which have since proved fruitful! Annie stayed a few months longer than originally planned (that global pandemic interfering with our plans again) until we were in a good position to recruit a new Chief Executive Officer. Flourish commissioned Searson & Buck to manage a full recruitment process and Flourish Member Representatives comprised 50% of the interview panel, to ensure Members' voices guided this critical decision on the leadership of the organisation. I am pleased to formally introduce Dr Astrid Wootton who commenced the role as Flourish's new Chief Executive Officer on the 6th of July 2020. I look forward to working with Astrid as she leads Flourish into a bright future.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Board for their commitment to the organisation over the last year. The Directors for the 2019/2020 financial year were myself (Chair), Anne Sheehan (Treasurer), Lisa Coppe (Northern Representative), Elida Meadows, Kate Whitehouse, Richard Scaife (Deputy Chair). Kim Backhouse, and Justine Barwick (until Feb). I welcomed Alicia Bracken to the Board in July 2020 as Southern Member Representative, and as we head into the AGM, I am exceptionally pleased to advise that we also have nominations for Member Representatives from the North-West and the North - all Board positions will be filled, and two-thirds of the Board have a lived experience. We are looking forward to developing our new Strategic Plan with the membership.

Rhonda McLaughlin
Chair of the Board

Report from the CEO

Right now, as we negotiate our way through a global pandemic and continuing economic uncertainty, Flourish's mission – to support those with lived experience of mental ill-health, ensuring their voices are heard and respected by the government, service providers and the community – has never been more important! The challenges of COVID-19 have impacted the entire community. Rates of mental ill-health are rising. Flourish can make a positive difference, by working to lower stigma, and foster understanding, empathic attitudes toward mental health consumers.

This year, Flourish welcomed 37 new Members. Its Consumer Representative Service (CRS) expanded, moving towards our goal of having lived experience voices at the table for every decision-making forum in the Tasmanian Mental Health Service. The CRS also underwent a comprehensive review, to ensure a best-practice operational model and underpin future development.

Flourish also reached out to support lived experience in the workforce, employing four new peer workers to link with Bapcare's NDIS program, to 'walk alongside' consumers, helping them negotiate the NDIS application process. This three-year project is coordinated by Dr Ivan Zwart. Flourish gratefully acknowledges funding assistance from the Tasmanian Community Fund, which has made the project possible.

Flourish also worked to tackle workplace stigma, and barriers to disclosure of mental ill-health, through the ILC-funded Mind Friendly Workplaces project, led by Brendan Barry. This encourages Tasmanian workplaces to book 'outreach' workshops that bring a lived experience facilitator into the workplace to foster discussion about and 'normalise' the experience of mental ill-health. COVID-19 related workplace closures inevitably delayed this project, however, Flourish is committed to continuing its full delivery in 2020/21.

It is an honour and a privilege to be appointed as Flourish's new CEO. I gratefully acknowledge the warm welcome given to me by the Board, staff, volunteers, and by Flourish Members! I really look forward to working with you all in 2020/21.

Astrid Wootton
Chief Executive Officer

We would like to extend our thanks to our funding partners and event sponsor:



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Annual Report 2019-20

In the last financial year...

37 

New Members joined Flourish

We experienced a significant increase in our membership, with new members joining us from all areas of the state.

27 

Flourish Local Action Group (FLAG) meetings held

Our members came together more than two dozen times in their respective regions to discuss issues facing mental health consumers

11

Peer Workers trained through Flourish

11 members completed Peer Work training, including Certificate IV in Mental Health Peer Work and NDIS Peer Work. This training prepared them for Peer Work roles in the sector.



Our new website was launched

With our new website, Flourish modernised its online presence bringing with it better compatibility for mobile devices, an interactive calendar of events, and an up to date overview of who we are and what we do.



Our new Member space opened

A new space at our office dedicated to Members was opened and offers a calm, relaxing environment for members to meet, collaborate or relax.

We were quick to respond to consumer needs during COVID-19

In response to COVID-19, we set up a social 1-on-1 phone call service to give those feeling additional anxiety or isolation a friendly person to talk to.

We also launched a weekly online "coffee catch-up" social initiative, inviting members to informally connect via video chat. This initiative proved to be immensely popular and has continued into the new financial year.



100% of requests for Consumer Representation filled

We were able to fill every request for Consumer Representation that we received in the 2019-20 financial year.

This was thanks in no small part to a tremendous effort from our talented consumer representatives.

In total, we ensured the consumer voice was represented **74** times!



Our Mind Friendly Workplaces project launched

Geared toward workplaces and community organisations, our Mind Friendly Workplaces project aims to raise awareness, educate, and remove the stigma surrounding mental illness and encourages employers and employees alike to stay engaged with one another and the greater Tasmanian community.