

2020 – 2021 TASSO Annual Report to Members

The objective and purpose stated in the Tasmanian Association of State School Organisations Inc. (TASSO) Constitution, - *to promote and protect the interests of families and students in Tasmanian state schools and senior secondary education facilities*, is foremost in the minds of the board and staff. It is central to everything we do as the recognised State peak body representing parents, carers, families, school communities and students.

It has been another challenging year all around the world, as we continue to fight COVID outbreaks around Australia. It is true Tasmania has done a great job to avoid the lockdowns throughout Australia, but the anxiety, financial implication and general uncertainty of what is to happen next can be felt through all communities, families and individuals alike.

In 2021 our communities faced a State election, it was encouraging to see all parties present and debate many initiatives focused on education and the betterment of students in schools. TASSO board would like to congratulate the Liberal party on their win, whilst thanking all candidates for their time and dedication to education and the many who afforded us their time to discuss TASSO vision and appreciation for the role families play in the education of our youth.

I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the TASSO Board to thank the Hon. Jeremy Rockliff for his time, passion and dedication to the education portfolio and his role as Minister. Jeremy over many years was always available and gracious with his time and prepared to listen, offer sound advice and genuinely lead for all in education. TASSO wish Jeremy all the success in his new roles within Government and are assured he will bring the same vigour, passion and wisdom moving forward.

In saying that, I would like to welcome and congratulate the Hon. Sarah Courtney on her appointment to the portfolio of education. In the short time in her role, Minister Courtney and TASSO have had several positive conversations about education and the important role parents, families and carers play in the delivery of an education that aspires to achieve positive outcomes for our students. Minister Courtney's openness, accessibility and passion lead TASSO to believe we will have continued growth and success in building a brighter future for our children.

Past Actions & Forward Planning Bring Positive Results.

Using Technology to Increase Participation

2020 saw TASSO move to undertake all meetings in both an online and face to face capacity, with the main location being the TASSO Office in Lindisfarne and offering the ability for others to link in from the regional centres in the North-West and North. The TASSO Regional Forums were conducted from a central location in each of the three regions, with members of school associations participating either in person or online and TASSO staff participating remotely.

The increased use of technology has meant that TASSO volunteers and staff have been able to participate more frequently in stakeholder meetings, grow knowledge through attending webinars and work more collaboratively.

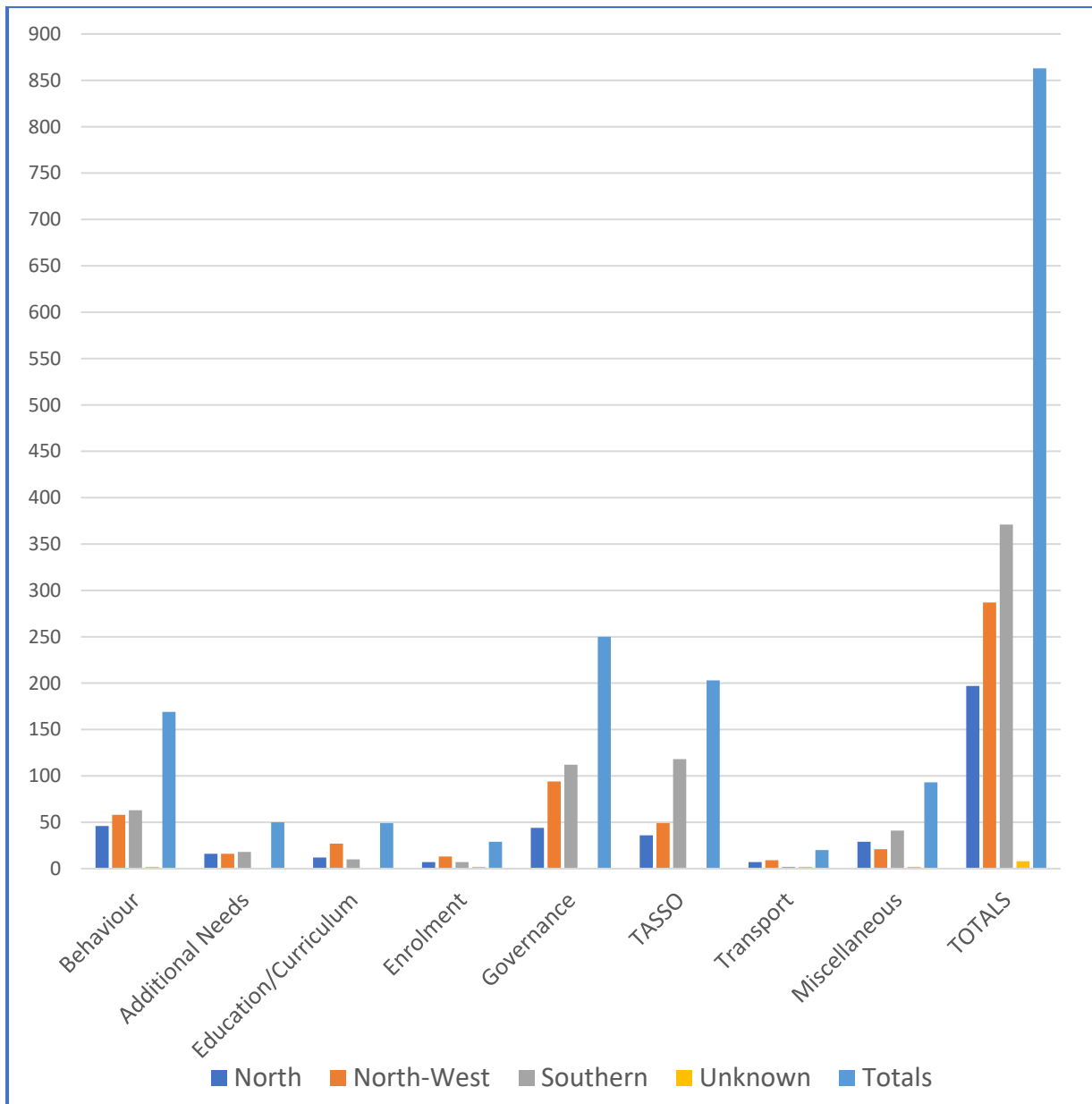
2020-2021 Focus

School Associations, their Committees, Families and Community

The core objective of TASSO is the provision of support, guidance, and information to all members of school associations, their families and communities and is central in our decision making. It is this work that is the most satisfying, particularly when the outcome is of benefit to student learning and the greater engagement of families with the school.

The graph below depicts the number of phone and email contacts received by staff and volunteer Board members for the previous year, grouped into specific topics. Many of these 863 contacts require an average of 40 minutes each in the initial contact and generally result in a minimum of two follow up conversations, emails and correspondence with more than one party, and may potentially include several units of the DoE, school associations and supporting bodies, adding 2 hours, before a positive and effective outcome is achieved. This equates to a minimum of 2,000 hours providing direct assistance and service to those we represent.

**Contacts by Topic, Region & Total Number
for July 1, 2020, to June 30, 2021.**



Working with Stakeholders

TASSO has continued its long-held tradition of building relationships and working in collaboration with like-minded groups. The fundamental aim being, to better represent the voice of families of students in Tasmanian government schools and colleges.

Members of the Board have served on stakeholder committees, attended a variety of meetings, and continue working with the Department of Education (DoE). The list below depicts the variety and frequency of active involvement by TASSO:

Event	Frequency
Aboriginal Cultural Awareness	1
ACSSO AGM & Board Meeting	1

ACSSO Board Meeting	1
ACSSO Delegates Meeting	2
ACSSO Facilitated – Comms Officers or EOs – Sharing ideas	1
ACSSO Directors meeting	3
Australian Education Union Tas Branch	1
City School Partners Community Consultation	1
DoE - Director of Inclusion & Diversity	1
DoE - Deputy Secretary of Learning & DoE Secretary's EO	1
DoE - Family Engagement Approach	1
DoE – Finance TASSO Grant	3
DoE – Inclusion Advisory Council	1
DoE - LSS Director – Maureen McKeown	3
DoE - Manager Financial Services & Director Finance & Budget Services re SAC's	1
DoE – Minister for Education Jeremy Rockliff	2
DoE – Minister for Education Sarah Courtney	1
DoE - Reporting to Families Reference Group	5
DoE – School Association Team & DoE Web designers	1
DoE- Secretary Tim Bullard	2
DoE - School & College Term Dates Alignment – Kate Grady	1
DoE - State Budget Briefing with stakeholders	1
DoE - Student Support – Craig Woodfall	1
DoE - Student Wellbeing Survey Briefing	1
DoE – Trisha Reardon – SAC	1
Education Minister's new Education Advisors	1
Employsure	5
Fair Education: A Catalytic Contribution towards Educational Equity	1
Family Engagement Update	1
Labor's Joint Industry Advisory Council	1
Meeting with SAC Chair & Treasurer from Southern Region	1
Ministerial Inclusion Advisory Panel	2
Northern Regional Meeting	4
Northern School Association Meeting	1
North-West Regional Meeting	4
North-West School Association Meeting	1
Shadow Minister for Education Josh Willie	1
Southern Regional Meeting	4
Southern School Association Meeting	8
State Budget Community Lock-up	1
TASC catch-up	4
TasCOSS AGM	1
TasCOSS Community Services COVID-19 Fortnightly Catch-up	12
TasCOSS Lunch with the Premier	1
TasCOSS State Budget Briefing	1
TASSO AGM	1
TASSO Induction	2
TASSO Board Meeting	6
TASSO Management Committee Meeting	3
TASSO Q&A	3

Working in collaboration with like-minded groups, to enable us to better represent the voice of families of students in Tasmanian government schools and colleges have occurred on 107 occasions. Each occasion on average takes 3 hours, this includes attendance, pre & post preparation and in some circumstances travel time, which equates to 321 hours.

TASSO Board and staff were members of Boards, Reference Groups and Advisory Panels during the Association Year of 2020-2021 of:

Group	Representative
ACSSO Board of Directors	Neil Myers
ACSSO Member Representative	Jared Dickason
DoE Years 11 - 12 Extension Program Reference Group	Wendy Timperon
DoE Years 9 to 12 Curriculum Framework	Chris Lynch
DoE Inclusion Advisory Committee	Jared Dickason
DoE NAPLAN Stakeholders Group	Jared Dickason, Debra McOrist-Mitchell
UTas Faculty of Education Course Advisory Committee	Chris Lynch
Labor's Education, Science, Research & the Antarctic Industry Advisory Council	Nigel Jones Jared Dickason
DoE Review into Reporting to Families Steering Committee	Wendy Timperon

In 2020-2021 TASSO were financial members of:

- Australian Council of State School Organisations (ACSSO)
- Tasmanian Association of the Gifted
- Volunteering Tasmania
- Australian Research Alliance for Children & Youth (ARACY)
- Association of Children With Disabilities
- TasCOSS

TASSO & the Media

TASSO play a strategic role in being the first point of contact for the media when seeking comment on matters that directly support or effect families in the sector of Education. Continuing open and transparent communication between TASSO and the media have seen in excess of 50 contacts made to TASSO by media outlets from Tasmania and mainland Australia this year. Media now operating in a cycle of 24 hours per day seven days a week has increased demand for instant responses.

TASSO and the board have been very measured in their response to media requests and have only commented on requests in line with current policy.

TASSO Goals for 2020-2021 and their progress

Regional Forums

One of the KPI's set out in our funding was to conduct one regional meeting per term within each region – South, North and North-West of Tasmania. Each of these meetings had a core theme:

Term 4 2020 – *Good Communication*

Attendance – 16

Term 1 2021 – *Supporting our kids through Good Governance*

Attendance – 13

Term 2 2021 – *eSmart* in conjunction with Alannah Madeline Foundation

Attendance – 15

Term 3 2021 – *Feeding our Schools* with Tasmanian School Canteen Association

Attendance – 8

Currently, these Forums are only held in the evenings. To be more inclusive to our membership for 2021 – 2022 we will be trialling both evening and daytime sessions for these forums. All forums will be available online to attend from any region.

Additional KPI's

[Publish Six Newsletters](#) - delivered eight newsletters – two per term

Conduct Two Surveys over 12 months - TASSO over the last reportable year delivered 1 survey, – School Association Committees Made Easy. We also conducted a survey which closed in April 2020, - Learning in Term 2, the education of Tasmanian students delivered at home due to COVID-19.

The plethora of surveys conducted by other organisations, widely promoted and supported by TASSO included:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Square Pegs Tasmania – a survey for students with dyslexia, parents, educators and professionals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ACSSO – a national survey following up on an earlier survey looking at schooling during COVID-19.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• DoE – Get Involved – delivery of secondary education in Hobart City.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• DoE – review into reporting to families.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tas Govt – Child & Youth Wellbeing Survey – have your say.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• DoE – When you try to talk to your teen survey.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Skills Tasmanian- Have your say for a new Vocational Education & Training campaign.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tas Assessment, Standards and Certification – Student Survey

TASSO Looking Forward

TASSO understand much of the work supporting our school associations and their members is undertaken in a reactionary manner when advocating for and offering positive support. We believe the more proactive we become in the development of resources and upskilling of

members that the anxiety which can exist within school associations, families and school communities will decline.

The Board have identified five areas we will continue to work on over the coming years:

- Increased engagement with school associations through direct and online platforms with the delivery of newsletters, surveys, working groups, regional forums and the development of monthly Q & A sessions
- Continued development and growth of our board and staff and their skill sets
- Continued development and refinement of the platforms we use to engage with all stakeholders in the education sector
- Development of an Induction and Planning Workshop deliverable both online and in face-to-face planning sessions
- Review of all current tools to support the ever-changing needs of those we directly support families, school associations and their committees, the broader school community and the student.

TASSO BOARD & STAFF 2020-2021

A vital element of any community based, not for profit organisation, like TASSO, is the invaluable contribution made by volunteers. We would not exist if it was not for the dedication of the TASSO board, all of whom are volunteers.

At the 2020 AGM, Neil Myers joined the TASSO Board as a Northern Delegate, bringing much experience and leadership through his career in elite athlete management in rowing and business skills through his many years running his own family business.

During 2020 – 2021 we as a board were fortunate to welcome two additional board members to the table –

Natham Reynolds– Southern Delegate – Natham is a very active member in the Sorell community serving as Deputy Mayor of the Sorell Council, Chair of the Midway Point Community Centre whilst also running his own bus company. In addition, Natham sits on Dodges Ferry Primary School Association and is Chair of Sorell School Association. Natham's level head and knowledge of governance procedures have brought leadership and guidance to our board and will over the coming years.

Jessica Bennett – North-West Delegate - Jessica is chair of the Forth Primary School Association and comes to us with experience gained whilst serving having served in different roles within her school association. Jessica is also a board member of the Devonport Gymnastics Club and is active in the Ulverstone Family Learning Centre currently being developed in Ulverstone. Jessica's passion and enthusiasm for public education and quality outcomes for children and families have been a breath of fresh air to the board and we truly value what she brings.

They say nothing ever remains the same and this rings true for the TASSO board as it is with great sadness we need to farewell three board members –

Rena Henderson – Due to changing personal circumstances Rena stepped away from our board late last year. Whilst not on our board Rena remains active and involved in the public

education sectors supporting many of the schools in her region of the North-West. I would like to thank Rena on behalf of all members of TASSO for her work and support over her time and I know to this day, Rena is only a phone call away when I need great advice or someone to rally the troops.

Neil Myers – Neil has also decided not to renominate for the TASSO Board at the moment. Neil joined TASSO and proved instant energy and enthusiasm undertaking a key role as Director to our national counterpart ACSSO. Thank you, Neil, for your time and thoughtful advice over the last 12 months and wish you all the best for the future.

Chris Lynch – Chris has chosen not to renominate to the TASSO board from the coming year as he has accepted to be the Labor candidate at the next Federal Election in the seat of Braddon. Chris has been heavily involved in the communities of the North-West in board roles on a variety of organisations, a Councillor with the Burnie City Council and provides many volunteer hours to other groups across the North-West coast. Chris first joined TASSO's governing body in 2017 and was a great mentor to many on the board and brought much clarity and wisdom to all areas of debate. On behalf of all members of TASSO, I wish Chris every success in the next chapter in his career. TASSO's loss of Chris from the board is definitely Braddon's gain.

Thank you to the Board over the last 12 months for your ongoing support with all we have tried to achieve and continue to undertake over the long road to recovery ahead. Thank you to:

Nigel Jones – Southern Delegate

Natham Reynolds – Southern Delegate

Wendy Timperon –Secretary

Dannielle Murfet –Treasurer

Neil Myers – Northern Delegate

Chris Lynch – North-West Delegate

Jessica Bennett – North-West Delegate

Rena Henderson – North-West Delegate

Finally, the board acknowledge the tireless work undertaken by our small and amazing team of staff, whose ability to adapt to the ever-changing scene of education. The continued delivery of information in a timely manner to our school associations, through to dealing with the individual needs of those families we support as an organisation. The ability as a team to embrace changes required and, in many cases, bring and support the Board along the way, cannot be summed up in words or acknowledged enough. I would like to personally thank –

Debra McOrist-Mitchell – Operations Manager

Tom Preston – Communications Officer

Melissa Reid, Finance Officer

Donita Shadwick – Administration Officer

In Conclusion

Whilst Tasmania has fared well over the last 12 months and through good management by the Tasmanian Government and all in Tasmania – we have still had to endure the uncertainty that comes with a global pandemic. The anxiety, uncertainty and in many cases, financial hardship have been real in our communities over the last 12 months. But the resilience of our children, families and communities has been a pleasure to watch and experience.

TASSO Board would like to acknowledge the strong leadership by the Department of Education, led by Secretary Tim Bullard and his team. We acknowledge and appreciate each and every principal, teacher, support worker, facilities attendant, administrator and support staff for their can-do attitude to each and every change and uncertainty faced by us all in the 2020 – 2021 year and we continue to face over the coming 12 months.

To the families and carers of Tasmania's children, youth and future leaders, your efforts have not gone unnoticed. Many of you have been genuinely inspirational in the manner in which you stepped up at short notice, for some moved outside of your comfort zone, made sacrifices, and worked with schools to ensure the continuing education of your children.

If nothing else, the continued pandemic has taught us as individuals, parents, families, organisations, boards and communities that we can embrace this ever-changing environment, adapt where required and continue to offer support, solutions and positive outcomes for those that most need it in our community – our most vulnerable and our children.

We as a board look forward to continuing our journey and deliver positive and real outcomes for all in education and provide time-sensitive support and understanding to the ever-changing needs of our current world.



Jared Dickason

TASSO President