



[www.moshaustralia.org.au](http://www.moshaustralia.org.au)

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## **Executive Officer's Annual Report for 2016**

2016 has once again been a year of highlights and challenges. As MOSH grows and goes from strength to strength the joys multiply and so do the challenges. The reach of our services has grown and both our volunteer numbers and visitor numbers are increasing each year.

It is always challenging to measure the effectiveness of our services as the ripple effect of suicide and therefore suicide prevention is a difficult field to quantify. Much of our feedback is anecdotal and we are aware that as our visitor numbers grow then so does the need to more accurately record these statistics. This in itself is a sensitive area as many people who live with a mental illness or have been affected by suicide in one form or another are loath to have their loved ones or themselves treated as statistics. This practice contributes greatly to the stigma surrounding mental illness and suicide, the reduction of which is one of our main aims at MOSH.

Volunteer numbers have now passed 50 and we are hosting up to 14 Work For the dole participants at any one time which not only brings valuable extra personnel and funds in to the organisation but created meaningful activities for people who often may not be able to find engagement.

The cornerstone of our services at MOSH House has continued to be our Active Listeners. This service continues to be offered on a walk in basis from 10.30 to 4.30 Monday to Saturday with the exception of public holidays. Our Active listeners also stay in touch with 20 clients via the phone on a regular basis and they know they can call us at any time. During stressful times our volunteers have also gone above and beyond the call of duty and made calls on Sundays and public holidays to ensure our most vulnerable clients are safe and feel cared for.

The MOSH House craft program has grown greatly this year and many of the products produced have been sold at our city Op Shop to bring in valuable revenue. More importantly, the craft room continues to be a source of comfort, care, support and many laughs for many of our clients. Some days there is hardly room around the tables as the team encourage our visitors and clients to engage in a relaxing activity or simply sit with a cuppa and enjoy the company if they are having a bad day. Some of our clients and their carers have told us they believe that they themselves or their loved

ones wouldn't be alive today if it wasn't for the care and understanding they receive from our teams.

Our reflective garden continues to thrive and the decorations on the fences are constantly changing and evolving. Most days you will find at least three or four people enjoying a cuppa under the ever spreading branches of the bottlebrush tree, often accompanied by our surrogate house dog.

As a result of our membership at Foodbank SA we are also able to offer small amounts of food support to our visitors and clients. This may be as simple as a piece of toast with a coffee to supplement their breakfast or a bag or two of fresh vegetable and fruit to take home to stretch their budget.

Through our partnership with Grow SA we are able to host a weekly Grow Group and have had a request for a siblings' grief group. We continue to offer a weekly time to support those who have lost a loved one to suicide.

The reach of MOSH has spread even further this year through existing and new partnerships and networks. I remain a member of two Suicide Prevention networks and attended both the State and National Network of Networks conferences. We continue to strengthen our ties with both the University of Adelaide and UniSA by way of invitations for me to present guest lectures and hosting students on placement. I have been invited to speak to at least four business networking breakfasts which have spread the word about our work and generated some very generous donations towards our work. I continue to be heartened by the number of third party donations that have come our way, either by way of funeral donations or from caring members of the public who have heard of our work.

I have continued to provide information as a guest speaker at various Mental Health and suicide prevention training days this year and delivered the Salvation Army Hope for Life two day training package in the Clare valley.

One of the highlights of the year was our competition to create a design to adorn the Bowden Railway Station. Via an agreement with DSTI we ran an online competition to invite local artists to put forward a design which culminated in an exhibition at MOSH House where we were able to showcase the seven chosen designs with the winner being chosen by public opinion. Even though the Bowden station is due for demolition we have been able to negotiate for the winning design to be transferred to the larger station at Mawson Lakes and the runners up are going to be featured at other stations.

Another major project which was completed this year was the Suicide Prevention Services Directory which was the result of a SA Health grant from a previous year. This valuable resource will be on our new website later in 2017 and will be officially launched at the State Network of Networks Day in April 2017.

We continue to reap the benefits of our association with our Patron, the Lady Mayoress of Adelaide Mrs Genevieve Theseira-Haese who is a constant source of ideas, contacts and event opportunities as well as friendship and support to me.

One of the major challenges we have faced since day one is that of recruitment and retention of volunteers. We have identified that one way to combat that is through better communication and we have taken some initiatives to improve that but as always there is still room for improvement. A need to recruit more key volunteers in responsible roles has been acknowledged and a strategy is being developed to target more mature volunteers in future.

The purchase of a vehicle, preferably a station wagon is a priority for the near future and we are currently working on a funding submission through Impact 100 to increase the reach of our services dramatically.

After more than 8 years of operation as a self-funded organisation run entirely by volunteers I continue to be very proud of what we have been able to achieve as a team. We know we make a difference and we are constantly buoyed by the comments we receive from those we support. We do our best to take on constructive feedback we receive on ways we can improve and look forward to increasing our visitor numbers and client base as the years pass.

Jill Chapman

Executive Officer

January 2017