

NEW ENGLAND AND
WESTERN
TENANTS ADVICE
AND
ADVOCACY SERVICE
INCORPORATED



ANNUAL REPORT

2018-2019

New England and Western



Incorporated



Tenant Advocate – Dubbo – Linda Grady
Tenant Advocate – Tamworth – Robert Yen
Tenant Advocate Armidale – Caroline Coupland
Tenant Advocate – Remote – Mark West

Service Manager - Armidale - KerryAnn Pankhurst
Finance Officer – Armidale – Neil Scholes-Robertson
Assistant Service Manager – Dubbo – Tamara Newstead

NEWTAAS provides free information and advice on tenancy law, advocacy, community education, NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal assistance, support and representation.

We provide our services to residential tenants of the New England, North West, Western and Far West areas of New South Wales.



New England and Western Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service Inc.

Find our offices at:

NEWTAAS
Minto Building 3
161 Rusden Street
Armidale NSW 2350

Disability Advocacy NSW
Suite 3, 1st Floor
422-426 Peel Street
Tamworth NSW 2340

Dubbo Neighbourhood Centre
1/80 Gipps Street
PO Box 310
Dubbo NSW 2830

Contact us by:

- ◆ FreeCall 1800 836 268 ◆ Phone 02 6772 4698 ◆ Fax 02 6772 2999 ◆
- ◆ Email newtaas@gmail.com ◆

Our office hours are 9.00am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday
If there's no answer, we're already on the phone. Please leave a message.

The Service provides face to face and telephone appointments by arrangement

New England and Western Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service Inc.

Annual Report 2018-2019

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Our Purpose Statement

In the New England, North West, Western and Far West areas of New South Wales, the New England and Western Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service Inc. will

- provide tenancy information and appropriate referrals to people who are renting,
- advocate for tenants in these areas whose life circumstances cause them to be unable to advocate for themselves,
- educate tenants and our communities about tenancy rights and responsibilities,
- deliver these services in a way that respects each individual,
- advocate for legal and social change to redress injustices and inequities in tenancy law, and
- be responsive to the needs of the community we serve.



Our Objectives

In the New England, North West, Western and Far West areas of New South Wales, the New England and Western Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service Inc. works to

- increase access to the legal system for the most disadvantaged people in the communities we serve,
- help clients be better informed of their tenancy rights and responsibilities and the options available to them,
- refer clients to other services when our Service is not able to assist them with their issue,
- work towards a more just, equitable and accessible society for all people, and
- ensure staff in our Service maintain high standards of professional conduct and service delivery.



The Management Committee

Anne Wolfenden – President (2017 – current)
Treasurer (2015 – 2016)



Now retired, Anne has worked in the housing space for many years. Anne brings her long experience in the provision and management of tenancy, and working to increase tenant participation in the community sector and social housing with her.

In addition, Anne's background in finance brings additional skills to the Committee.

Elizabeth Stahlut – Treasurer (2017 – current)
Vice-President (2015 – 2017)



Elizabeth is a solicitor with Legal Minds, an Armidale legal firm.

Elizabeth worked as a volunteer with the North and North West Community Legal Service while undertaking her law degree, and has been concerned with how tenancy law impacts upon the most vulnerable people in society since that time.

Chris Foord – Secretary (2011 – present)
Member (2010 – present)



Chris was a founding member of the NEWTAAS Management Committee in 2010.

Chris has a long history in local government and community services. Chris has had a lifetime involvement in working for people with disabilities, and is now a Disability Advocate with DA NSW.

Marjorie Henzell – Member (2010 – present)
President (2011 – 2017)



Marjorie was a founding member of the NEWTAAS Management Committee in 2010. Marjorie has a commitment to social justice and believes in a right to safe and secure housing.

Now retired, Marjorie was a Senior Social Worker for Human Services in Armidale, working with clients in the North West Region.

Brian Humphreys – Member (2013 – current)



Brian has a long interest in social justice. After many years with Centrelink, and then with Centacare New England North West, Brian has now retired.

Brian joined the Management Committee at the 2013 Annual General Meeting.

Jennifer Bourke – Member (2018 – current)



Jenny joined the Committee in June 2018.

Jenny has many years experience in working with tenants in social housing. Recently retired, she understands the disadvantages and complexities that tenants often face in resolving their housing issues.

Management Committee Members as at 30 June 2018

Anne Wolfenden	President
Elizabeth Stahlut	Treasurer
Chris Foord	Secretary
Marjorie Henzell	Member
Brian Humphreys	Member
Jennifer Bourke	Member



President's Report



It's that time of year again when I can sing the praises of the excellent work our staff have done throughout the year.

The Management Committee and I have been very proud to support the work done by our team. I would like to thank Tamara and Linda in Dubbo, Robert in Tamworth, Mark our remote locum in Melbourne, and KerryAnn and Neil in Armidale for all their hard work and dedication throughout the year. The Committee very much appreciates your efforts.

We hear each month of the work that is happening within the Service, and are always very glad to know of the difference the Service makes. Many of us on the Committee have professional backgrounds in housing and social and community services, and have a thorough understanding of the service delivery that NEWTAAS is funded to provide.

We have heard of many of the 1,913 cases this past year. Of these, some stories stand out. Tamara has done some very intensive work to assist tenants in an aged care complex maintain their tenancies. Robert has been fighting to save a family in social housing whose landlord has been determined to evict them. Linda has been doing excellent work with prisoners. KerryAnn has been supporting tenants with a difficult private landlord. This is an amazing achievement for a service funded for only 4.5 workers.

Mark has been an invaluable help, and he extracted the statistics for NEWTAAS and presented them in a very professional booklet that we have presented to most of the local politicians that represent the areas NEWTAAS covers.

I went with KerryAnn to see our local member in Armidale, Member for Northern Tablelands the Hon. Adam Marshall. He was very impressed with our professionalism and the information we gave him. Tamara and KerryAnn saw the Member for Dubbo, the Hon. Dugald Saunders, and Robert and KerryAnn saw the Member for Tamworth, the Hon. Kevin Anderson, who is also the Minister for Fair Trading. All of our Members of Parliament are very supportive of the Service, a sure sign of the respect held for NEWTAAS within the community.

We hope we have presented a very good case for extra funding, as we have not been able to advertise for the vacant position after the resignation of Caroline in February due to uncertainty of the funding. Thankfully the funding has come through, but alas no extra.

I would also like to thank the Board members, Brian, Chris, Elizabeth, Jenny and Marjorie for all their support of the staff and myself during the year. We firmly believe that a skilled and engaged Management Committee is essential to the ongoing success of the Service.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Wolfenden', written over a light blue background.

Anne Wolfenden
President

Service Manager's Report

It has once again been an incredibly busy year for us. This year we have had a few changes in staff, as well as significant casework and law reform challenges to deal with.

Robert relocated from our Armidale office to Tamworth after Danny's resignation in July 2018 and has settled in well with our co-location at Disability Advocacy NSW. Tamara and Linda continue to work out of the Dubbo Neighbourhood Centre. Caroline started with us in the Armidale office in August and fitted in very well with our happy team. We were very sorry when she had to relocate with her family at the end of January 2019 and we lost her. We went to the merit list, but at the end of March 2019 we found that we needed an advocate in Armidale.



We were very pleased when the Domestic Violence reforms, passed by the NSW Parliament and assented to on 26 October 2018, commenced on 28 February 2019. In the Second Reading Speech, then Minister Keen said, "The specific reforms in the bill will strengthen protection for victims of domestic violence, allowing them to immediately leave a rental property to escape violence without being penalised. Domestic violence is a scourge on our communities and the New South Wales Government is serious about taking action on this issue."

With our funding contract due to end in June 2019, and knowing the impact that short funding has on applicant pools, we were unable to fill the vacant Armidale position. We were fortunate to employ Mark as a remote locum. Mark had worked for many years with another TAAS, and brought extensive experience to us, along with the capacity to extract our data from the TAAP database. You will see an example of his work in the summaries Mark developed for the electorates of Northern Tablelands, Tamworth and Dubbo within this report.

The funding uncertainty continued when the program funding was extended to 30 September 2019 due to the NSW state election. I'm delighted to let you know that we received notification on 29 August 2019 that we have been funded until 30 June 2022.

You'll find short case studies within the electorate pages from page 24, in addition to learning about our "favourite" cases over the year from page 15, where we've felt that we've been able to assist a client who really needed us.

As ever, I am so grateful to our Management Committee for their ongoing dedication to the Service. Anne's support and commitment, and the support of Chris, Brian, Jenny, Marjorie and Elizabeth has been essential to enable the staff to continue their work. The vision and guidance of the Committee are the underpinning of our focus on service delivery.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "KerryAnn Pankhurst". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

KerryAnn Pankhurst
Service Manager

Statistics

Some variability in statistics arises from the introduction of the TAAP database on 1/10/2015. The Service Manager continues to work with the Tenants Union staff and other coordinators to improve the operational functionality and reporting capabilities of the TAAS database.

TU Database /new TAAP database	13/14	%	14/15	%	15/16 July- Sept	15/16 Oct- June	Oct- June %	Annual	16/17	%	17/18	%	18/19	%
Total number of clients	1210		1319		370	1140		1382	1558		1430		1913	
1800 calls	2135		2371		754	1992		2746	2814		3542		3687	
Identify as having a disability	225	18.60%	256	19.60%	72	210	18.50%	19.00%	275	20.10%	314	21.96%	347	21.77%
Identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	263	21.70%	315	23.80%	77	256	22.50%	21.70%	338	24.60%	350	24.48%	389	24.40%
Under 25	121	10.00%	129	9.70%	26	107	9.40%	8.20%	128	9.30%	113	7.90%	139	8.72%
55-74 / 55-64	158	13.06%	150	11.30%	41	84	7.30%	9.50%	156	11.30%	152	10.63%	163	10.23%
Over 75 / 65 and over	22	1.82%	23	1.70%	13	55	4.8	4.20%	80	5.80%	102	7.13%	137	8.59%
Single person household	277	22.89%	327	24.70%	94	89	29.60%	27%	339	21.80%	491	34.34%	610	31.89%
Identify as sole parents	249	20.58%	265	20.00%	74	66	22%	21%	289	18.50%	325	22.73%	358	18.71%
Couples with children	187	15.45%	243	18.40%	59	69	23%		273	17.50%	306	21.40%	317	16.57%
Extended family									68	4.36%	89	6.22%	104	5.44%
Group household	67	5.54%	80	6.00%	15	11	3.60%	3.80%	137	8.80%	74	5.17%	108	5.65%
Employed	291	0.91%	357	0.50%	85	116	33.10%	27.20%	410	26.30%	558	39.02%	654	34.19%
In receipt of income support	640	52.90%	684	51.80%	196	218	62.10%	57.30%	860	55.20%	937	65.52%	1080	56.46%
Renting through an agent	496	40.99%	645	48.90%	140	581	50.90%	48.20%	892	62.70%	884	61.82%	904	47.26%
Renting privately	174	14.38%	177	13.40%	46	131	11.50%	12.00%	150	10.50%	177	12.38%	171	8.94%

TU Database /new TAAP database	13/14	%	14/15	%	15/16 July- Sept	15/16 Oct- June	Oct- June %	Annual	16/17	%	17/18	%		
Renting in social housing	306	25.29%	296	22.40%	102	230	20.20%	24.80%	233	16.30%	277	19.37%	272	14.22%
Homeless/At risk of homelessness	314	25.80%	340	25.70%	69				193	13.60%	268	18.74%	348	18.19%
Referred by NCAT	92	7.60%	132	10.20%	34	121	11.80%	10.20%	167	10.70%	138	9.65%	150	7.84%
Referred by Community organisation	131	10.82%	165	12.70%	50	197	19.20%	16.10%	202	12.90%	257	17.97%	252	13.17%
Received advocacy	243	20.00%	377	28.60%	122	280	24.50%		216	15.10%	280	19.58%	275	14.38%
Assisted to prepare for NCAT (not NCAT representation)	158	13.06%	328	24.90%	87	159	13.90%		200	14.10%	299	20.91%	348	18.19%
Represented/attended at NCAT hearing	93	7.69%	255	19.30%	74	223	19.50%		252	17.70%	323	22.59%	290	15.16%
Comparative figures obtained by number of enquiries in that area from TU database / TAAP database														
Rental bond and compensation	417	34.46%	496	37.60%	138	294	25.79%	432	480	30.80%	551	38.53%	380	26.54%
Repairs	456	37.69%	365	27.67%	121	298	26.14%	419	497	42%	515	36.01%	375	26.19%
Rent and other charges	419	34.63%	574	43.52%	117	427	37.46%	544	655	31.90%	723	50.56%	564	39.39%
Termination	642	53.06%	787	59.67%	191	483	42.37%	674	739	47.40%	814	56.92%	628	43.85%
% Time – Information										8.80%		7.43%		7.20%
% Time – Advice										53.00%		64.54%		58.12%
% Time – Non-Tribunal Advocacy										15.20%		11.69%		11.61%
% Time – Tribunal Advocacy										14.20%		13.93%		13.37%

Note that from July 2017, we were no longer able to fund the additional 0.5 EFT from our resources, and therefore a drop in service occurred.

SEIFA Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage

The NEWTAAS region contains 13 of the 20 most disadvantaged local government areas in NSW, according to the SEIFA Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage from the 2016 Census* data. It contains 33,199 renting households across 57% of NSW.

Service delivery challenges include covering a low population density over a large geographical area, with higher than average rates of low and no literacy, income support, poorer health outcomes, unemployment and disability.

2016 Local Government Area (LGA) Name	Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage		Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage		Index of Economic Resources		Index of Education and Occupation		Usual Resident Population
	Score	Decile	Score	Decile	Score	Decile	Score	Decile	
Brewarrina (A)	757	1	818	1	768	1	943	4	1,651
Central Darling (A)	817	1	855	1	855	1	931	4	1,833
Walgett (A)	832	1	856	1	862	1	929	3	6,107
Fairfield (C)	856	1	896	2	943	2	882	1	198,817
Coonamble (A)	869	1	883	2	916	2	928	3	3,918
Kempsey (A)	888	2	877	1	935	2	891	1	28,885
Broken Hill (C)	901	2	887	2	918	2	895	2	17,708
Richmond Valley (A)	902	2	885	2	947	3	878	1	22,807
Gilgandra (A)	907	2	906	2	960	3	928	3	4,236
Nambucca (A)	907	2	896	2	938	2	919	3	19,212
Kyogle (A)	910	2	905	2	949	3	940	4	8,940
Tenterfield (A)	910	2	902	2	945	2	932	4	6,628
Warrumbungle Shire (A)	913	2	912	2	948	3	948	5	9,384
Liverpool Plains (A)	914	2	906	2	958	3	910	2	7,687
Glen Innes Severn (A)	915	2	909	2	942	2	936	4	8,836
Bourke (A)	916	2	932	3	924	2	992	8	2,634
Inverell (A)	916	2	904	2	948	3	921	3	16,483
Moree Plains (A)	917	2	919	3	939	2	934	4	13,159
Lithgow (C)	923	2	908	2	953	3	893	1	21,090
Cowra (A)	924	2	910	2	958	3	915	2	12,460

*Australian Bureau of Statistics <http://www.abs.gov.au/>

What the statistics mean...

NEWTAAS provides information and advice for every tenant who contacts us. Many people are competent to sort out their tenancy issues by themselves. They need information and strategic advice tailored to their circumstances, and pointing in the right direction, to a process they can follow.

For many of our clients, this is not the case.

As a matter of deliberate policy, the Service provides the highest levels of assistance to vulnerable tenants and tenants with complex matters.

We define a “vulnerable tenant” as someone who has at least two of the following characteristics:

- Functionally illiterate
- Having a disability, mental illness, or being a victim of domestic violence
- Being very young in a first tenancy or a frail, older person
- Having family circumstances that prevent them from advocating for themselves
- Having health issues that prevent them from advocating for themselves.

A “complex matter” is a matter where the law is not straightforward, or where there are either multiple issues, or an interplay between law and policy, particularly for social housing tenants. An example of such a matter is a termination notice being issued for rent arrears, where the tenant is in receipt of a rent subsidy, and believes that the subsidy calculation is incorrect.

The level of assistance needed by the tenants contacting us is increasing. Our client intake policy requires us to be mindful of the tenant’s capacity to act for themselves, and we don’t act for them if they are able to do it for themselves.

Vulnerable tenants and complex matters are usually the most time-consuming for us. Here’s an example of the time it can take to do a single complex matter for a vulnerable client:

Summary	Hours
Single mum with rent arrears, domestic violence, and termination by a private landlord who was gossiping around town about the circumstances	67.25
Family with access problems from their private landlord who needed to terminate their tenancy, complicated by jurisdiction	74
Mum with an intellectual disability and six kids, whose social housing landlord was determined to end the tenancy – picked this up with the appeal and rehearing	85.25
Repairs and modifications for a mentally ill social housing tenant	66
Mum with three kids who had constant issues with sewerage and waste due to trees and plumbing – end of tenancy, rent reduction, and subsequent claim by the private landlord for compensation	86
Termination application against a young family for rent arrears by a private landlord, who didn’t like the decision and subsequently appealed	127.5

An advice for a tenant who is literate and has good reading comprehension, who has access to the internet, and is confident and competent to articulate their story may only take an hour of advice to be able to effectively represent their own interests.

July – December 2018 Services Provided	Cases	Cases/FTE	
		Network Avg	Service Avg
Written Advice	246	12.27	54.67
Warm Referral	190	13.08	42.22
Research	198	11.87	44
Represent at meeting with landlord	133	7.63	29.56
Represent/Assist Other Appeal	16	0.45	3.56
Represent/Assist Case Conference	14	0.55	3.11
Prepare FT Complaint	2	0.17	0.44
Pamphlets/Forms/Photocopied Info	393	42.05	87.33
Other	184	12.24	40.89
Negotiation	129	10.34	28.67
NCAT Set Aside	19	1.38	4.22
NCAT Representation	69	5.58	15.33
NCAT Preparation	183	11.14	40.67
NCAT General Application	51	10.69	11.33
NCAT Appeal	3	0.72	0.67
Liaise with third party	189	9.29	42
Legal Aid Grant Obtained	2	0.07	0.44
Information	1045	113.08	232.22
Home Visit	7	0.77	1.56
HAC Representation	2	0.15	0.44
HAC Assistance	3	0.35	0.67
Follow-up (phone)	542	35.46	120.44
Follow-up (face-to-face)	142	12.13	31.56
Follow-up (correspondence)	356	26.07	79.11
Duty Advocacy (hearing representation)	82	5.08	18.22
Duty Advocacy (conciliated agreement)	66	14.69	14.67
Duty Advocacy (advice only)	36	11.5	8
Document Preparation	252	12.57	56
Connect with other support service	848	21.16	188.44
Advocacy	164	22.92	36.44
Advice	971	186.42	215.78

The table illustrates some of the extra logistical and service delivery issues that arise directly from the degree of disadvantage that so many of our clients experience. It places a demand for a higher degree of service delivery, more assistance, more representation, in order for the disadvantaged client to have the same outcome that they would have been able to achieve if they didn't have that level of disadvantage.

A tenant who is functionally illiterate facing the complex information patterns and language of the Tribunal is at a terrible disadvantage. Literacy is the most basic skill for any tenant trying to resolve their issues with their landlord. If you can't read and understand a fact sheet, or complete a Tribunal form, you cannot know what the law says you need to do or how to resolve your problem. Without that skill, it is often easier to give up, to put up with mould, or the leaking roof or the stove or heater that doesn't work. In the worst cases, it's easier to leave.

This is particularly where NEWTAAS makes a difference. For these tenants, we are the difference that enables them to have their repairs done, significantly reduce the amounts of compensation their landlord is trying to get from them, and fighting a retaliatory termination notice. It's these cases that are the most satisfying to us.

Casework Case Studies

These case studies are only a few of the more than 1,900 matters we have dealt with over the past twelve months. When a tenant contacts us for help, they bring to us the intimate stories of their private lives and their often distressing personal circumstances. Our clients can often feel embarrassed, angry, frustrated and humiliated. We treat them with respect, listen to their story, give them strategic advice, and represent them when they cannot best represent themselves.

We hope that in addition to an increased knowledge and understanding of tenancy law, that they leave us with a sense of self-respect and dignity.

Linda's favourite case:

In 2014, a group of elderly tenants from a regional caravan park needed help to get repairs done at their council owned park. There were a variety of issues, including sewerage, rent and rent receipts, and we helped the tenants apply to then Consumer, Trader and Tenancy Tribunal. We won the case, with council being ordered to do the repairs and for the rent to not increase until all of the work was done, and the park was at a suitable standard. Some of the tenants had been there for more than 20 years. This was their home.

The process of getting the work done with the ongoing discussions and negotiations has taken more than four years. The final work will start next week. To minimise the disruption and health risks to our elderly tenants, they will be relocated into adjacent cabins for the duration of this last set of works. Their planned amenities block will allow wheelchair access for them, a necessary facility as they have grown more frail.

Linda has worked tirelessly on this case, patiently working with the old fellas that she has grown to care so much about, while they have struggled to have the repairs completed. She has said this morning with the news of the final works order now in place, commencement of the work next week, and the relocation of the two most fragile tenants for the duration of the work, "I'm so happy for them I could just cry."

Caroline's favourite case:

My favourite case was where NEWTAAS interceded to assist a tenant and his child to not only get out of uninhabitable premises and avoid the punitive abandonment provisions of the law, but where we were able to get the landlord to pay for interim accommodation. But I can't recall the case name so I am going to put in the one that stood out by a country mile: the tenant who cleaned too much.

The tenant moved out of the rented premises and the outgoing condition report was fine and the tenant received her bond. Several weeks later, in fact 3 weeks after the new tenants had moved in, the tenant received a phone call from the former real estate agent saying her former landlord was demanding \$3,000 in compensation to replace the oven.

The basis of the landlord's claim was that the tenant had been cleaning the oven and that the oven was a Self-Cleaning oven. I asked what type of industrial strength (I was thinking acid-wash) cleaner the tenant was using to destroy this poor landlord's oven: the tenant said it was from Coles and was called Easy-something.

I was so astonished I went and told KerryAnn. KerryAnn immediately did a Google search and the very first browser result was:

<https://www.thekitchn.com/why-you-should-almost-never-use-the-self-cleaning-function-of-your-oven-175110>

Another result was: If you have a self-cleaning oven, you can use Easy-Off to clean. This was the cleaning product the tenant said she was using.

We drafted a letter for the tenant to send to the landlord and his complaint was never heard from again. This result was good and bad: great to take the stress out of the tenant's life but bad because we missed out on an opportunity in NCAT to represent a tenant accused of cleaning too diligently.

Robert's favourite case:

This tenant contacted us a week before his hearing in the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal. He'd been a former client of ours for repairs, so we had some knowledge about his circumstances.

When the repairs weren't completed, along with some other issues (more on that later), the tenant gave notice and vacated the property. A week or two later, his self-managing landlord applied to the Tribunal for compensation for break of lease and end of tenancy rectification, along with the rental bond.

We arranged for the tenant to bring all of his documents with him to the Tribunal hearing, where I would meet up with him and have an opportunity to look at his documents and help him try and negotiate with his landlord.

On the day of the hearing, the tenant attended with his documents. Tenants often have no idea how important the documents always are in the Tribunal, and this matter is the perfect example of why the documents are so important.

Having gone through the documents, I realised that the landlord had not deposited the bond. I wasn't surprised, as we have a long history with this landlord. The landlord had written a note on the back of the residential tenancy agreement notating the bond and when it was accepted, in accordance with his usual practice.

Before we spoke to the landlord, I advised the tenant that this was a usual practice with this landlord and that the landlord's actions were illegal. I also wanted to clarify with the tenant whether he had evidence about when he had given vacant possession. The tenant had sworn testimony with him from his parents about when and how he had vacated.

The tenant had left the keys inside the property and sent a text message to the landlord, and his parents were still at the property finishing the cleaning, when the landlord arrived and went inside. This was also usual practice for this landlord, as he does not provide an address to the tenants to return the keys to.

I asked the tenant whether he had received a copy of the outgoing condition report, as he had indicated he had not been given an opportunity to attend at that outgoing inspection. The tenant gave me a black-and-white copy of the outgoing condition report that had been completed and

signed by the landlord. The tenant was querying some of the items marked on that condition report, as well as the names of the tenants that were written on the outgoing condition report, as it was not his name. The tenant suspected that this was an outgoing condition report for some previous tenants. As it was a black-and-white copy, I wasn't certain of its authenticity.

We then went to conciliation with the landlord to see whether we could resolve the matter. I asked the landlord to produce the original document and he did. I was quite surprised to see that the original document had different ink colour for the names of the tenants and some of the comments written on the tenants portion of the ingoing condition report. I was most surprised by the tenant's signature at the bottom of the report, that had been crossed out and another signature substituted which had some similarity to our client's signature but did not appear to match.

I asked the client directly whether that was his signature. He looked at the document, and said it was very close, but it was clearly not his signature. He said, "It was a good attempt."

At this point, the tenant's wife was wild with rage, and she brought up all of the issues around the landlord's behaviour during the tenancy. This landlord had apparently had a habit of coming to the premises uninvited and without notice and peering through the windows, including the window of their young daughter. On one occasion, the daughter saw someone looking through her window and called for her father, who raced outside to confront the intruder and saw a person running away into their car and driving off.

The tenant wasn't able to identify the intruder, until he checked the CCTV that he had installed at the premises and recognised the landlord. This was the final straw that led to the end of the tenancy.

I told the landlord that we would not negotiate further with him and he needed to withdraw his application immediately. The landlord considered his situation. He asked me to step outside for a "gentlemen's chat" to discuss the situation. He admitted to me that he had changed the details of the tenants in the condition report, but other than that, claimed that the tenants were lying about the date when they had left the tenancy. He then decided that discretion was the better part of valour, and he would withdraw his application.

As our conversation was continuing, the Tribunal member called us as we were the last matter on his list. The landlord told the Tribunal that it appeared that there were "some issues" with his condition report and that I had told him that because it was his application, he needed to provide evidence of his allegations. The member told him in response, "This is usually the case, and what would you like to do?"

The landlord confirmed that he would like to withdraw his application, and the Tribunal made orders in accordance with that.

After the hearing, the landlord continued "chatting" to me and told me that he had purchased this copy of the condition report from the Real Estate Institute, and that it had been completed by tenants who had decided that the last minute that they won't going ahead with the tenancy. Because he had paid money for it, he didn't feel that he should have to pay to get another one, and decided to simply use it again.

I asked him why he just didn't download the free and easily accessible condition report available on the Fair Trading website. He had no response. Whether he has finally learned this, we will probably see in a future Tribunal hearing.

Tamara's favourite case:

This tenant was referred to us by his housing provider. He lived in the property for nearly 2 years, but in the previous six months had had ongoing issues with rent arrears.

The tenant had previously been issued with a Termination Notice which resulted in a Specific Performance Order being made by the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal. However, when the tenant failed to comply with that SPO, the matter went back before the Tribunal and the tenancy was terminated.

After borrowing a lump sum from a family member to pay towards the arrears, the housing provider allowed the tenant to continue his tenancy.

Only a few months later, the tenant again fell into arrears. The matter went back before the Tribunal for the third time, and again the tenancy was terminated due to the tenant's frequent failure to pay rent. At that time his rent arrears were in excess of \$1,000.00.

It was at that point that we became involved. Based on our advice and support, the tenant was able to obtain a week's rental payment towards his arrears from a local charity service. He was able to sort out his previous payment issues with Centrelink to ensure that his rent would be paid each week, as well as increasing the repayments he was making to address the arrears.

He made a really good effort to address the tenancy issues. He told us that he would do whatever it took to keep a roof over his son's head and maintain a stable home environment, as his son had only recently come into his care.

The tenant did not have a car and had to walk to appointments. He also suffered from back issues, making this difficult task harder.

As a result of his efforts in addressing the issues around the tenancy, he's managed to save his home. For me, this case highlights what a tenant is capable of achieving with the right advice and support, when they are determined, even if they have tried and failed in the past.

Mark's favourite case:

A group of boarding house residents had fallen out with their landlord, and the tenants wanted to leave. The landlord wanted them to leave. However, there was an outstanding issue in relation to the return of the bond. The landlord threatened a lockout, and the residents contacted NEWTAAS. There was no written agreement, no receipts and only verbal accounts of who had paid what to whom.

There followed a flurry of phone calls between NEWTAAS, the residents and the landlord, with Tamara and I constantly running to try and get it sorted.

The landlord agreed to pay some of the bond, but not to refund rent paid in advance. The residents wouldn't budge until they were paid their bond and rent in advance. More phone calls, until finally agreement was reached. The landlord would pay and the tenants would leave.

Even though the money and exit was agreed, there was a final difficulty with the residents not understanding what could go into the agreement. They wanted a statement of the landlord's

unlawful actions within it. It's often difficult for people to understand that the law doesn't make provisions for an apology, and an apology that is forced often has very little meaning.

We helped the residents understand that victory by way of receiving all of their money back was better than an unsigned agreement and no cash.

"But how do I know if the residents will abide by the agreement?" asked the landlord.

"Because you write it down and both parties indicate, in writing, that they will do what they have agreed", we told him, explaining that this was one of the great advantages of having written records.

We drafted a settlement agreement. The residents and landlord signed and emailed the agreement. The money was paid. The residents hit the road. All sorted, without recourse to NCAT, Police, Fair Trading or anyone else.

KerryAnn's favourite case:

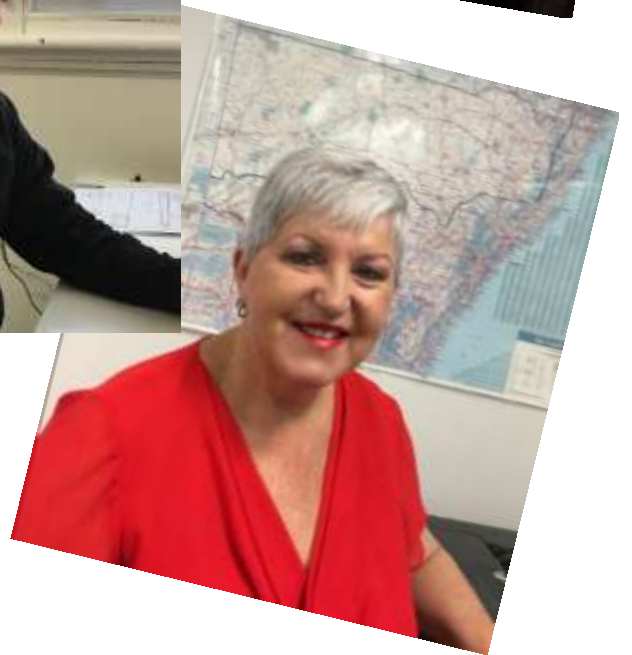
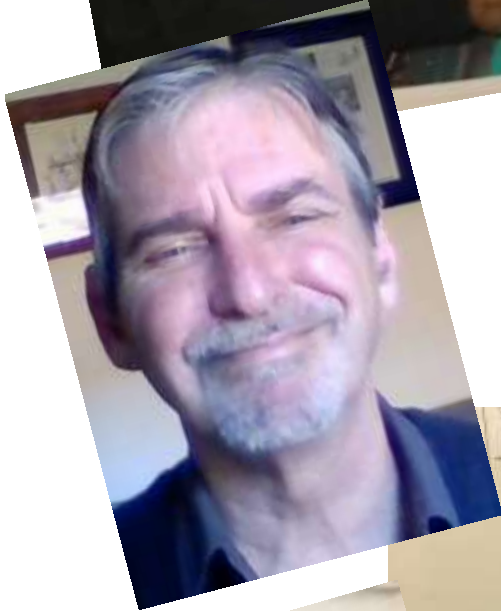
We were contacted by a tenant in community housing, whose home had been head leased from a private landlord. This three-bedroom house had been sub-leased to our client, and the tenant and her two children were constantly running out of hot water.

Following investigation, it was established that the electric hot water system was only 50L, entirely inadequate for any family, particularly when the bathroom had a bathtub in it!

We made representations to the landlord for them to use to their landlord, and ultimately helped our client apply to the Tribunal for orders, joining the head landlord to our application.

We then made submissions for a rent reduction for the tenant and her landlord, at which point we were contacted directly by the head landlord. We settled, a 300 L hot water system was installed, and we withdrew the tenant's application.

This tenant absolutely stuck to her guns all the way through the several months it took to run this case and have the new hot water system installed. All she wanted was for her daughters to be able to have a hot bath after coming home from sports practice in the winter, and she jolly well made it happen.



Thank you...

We receive a lot of “thank yous” each year, sometimes cards, flowers and small gifts. We’re grateful for every one of them. Whilst we are careful that our clients understand that we are a funded service there to assist them, sometimes glancing across at the card stuck on the wall next to our desks helps us to push along through the case work a little easier.

Dear Tamara,

After your email, I wrote an email to [REDACTED] and accepted her to claim the bond money. Earlier she had adjusted the invoice and reduced the carpentry cost so that the bond money will cover all the outstanding owing cost.

She replied that once she claims the bond, then there will be nothing owing from me.

I take this opportunity to thank you for all your sincere efforts in helping us and giving us confidence.

Now, having relieved from the stress, we [REDACTED] both thank you and feel grateful for your timely intervention.

Thank you very much!

Thanks and Regards,

Dear Linda,

That is correct.

Thankyou for you wonderful service it has been amazing. I no longer fear the repercussions and feel like I now have a voice.

Truthfully I felt quite intimidated by the both of them during the process especially the wife and the comments made when leaving.

For a small sum of \$250 to never have to deal with them again. I will pay that. I was happy to leave the house and move on and some times that costs. But I am really happy were I am now. Again thank you for you help

Kind Regards

I don't know why she had to be difficult in the first place but anyways atleast it's done !
Isn't need to continue with the tribunal , please withdraw

Thankyou so much for your help! We wouldn't of got this result without your help. Thankyou

Thank you very much for your dedicated service. I really appreciate your service as a new immigrant. I was so much frustrated yesterday to lose the money which I earned through so much hardship. Now I feel so good.

Dear KerryAnn

I just wish to express my heartfelt and sincere thanks for your thorough professionalism and due diligence in representing me at the tribunal against those modern robber baron, carpetbagging estate agents [REDACTED]

The result was truly gratifying!

It is easy at times in this hard, cynical world in which we live, to reach a point of resignation and defeat against the forces of tyranny, and the wolves they use to terrorise people with.

You have reaffirmed my faith in the legal system and how it dispenses justice. Truly i am lucky to be an Australian and to be represented by someone such as yourself.

Long may you run KerryAnn Pankhurst, the world sorely needs more of your ilk.

Thankyou most sincerely

Hi Tamara

Thankyou so much for your phone message this morning I am so relieved at the outcome! I don't know if my uncle really understood the gravity of it all but please know that we all very much appreciate your (and Linda and team) wonderful support I don't know what we would have done without you.

Thankyou for doing what you do with such care. Kindest regards

Funding for the TAAP Program

With the support and leadership of the our peak body, the Tenants Union, Tenants Advice and Advocacy Services have been seeking an increase in funding for the program to support the essential service that we provide to NSW residents who rent their homes. Below is an excerpt from a Tenants Union report on the state of the funding:

People missing out

Total funding to TAAP has not increased in real terms for 15 years. However, the number of tenancies across NSW has grown by over 50% per cent over that time. This has left TAAP with demand outstripping capacity. Increasingly, tenants are missing out on the services they need and deserve. Research by the Tenants' Union [TU] indicates that TAAP services are not able to help up to 1 in 3 people seeking their assistance.

Since the last TAAP funding increase the number of rental bonds held has significantly grown from 551,777 [June 2003] to 872,527 [Jan 2019]. Over the 5 years to 2016, 63 per cent of the net growth in the number of NSW households were rental households. Many renting households are home to vulnerable families - 42 per cent of NSW renter households include children (ABS Census 2016).

The growing demand has led to a growth in wait times for tenants to access a tenant advocate. This has led to many instances when tenants receive assistance too late for the tenant to gain a fair or just outcome.

Source of funds has increased

There is now over 1.5 billion dollars in bonds earning interest. For year-end June 2018 there was a surplus of 4.1 million. Money contributed to the accumulated funds varies over time and is currently 65.6 million. TAAP funding accounts for approximately 11% of the total interest earned on tenants bonds. Accumulated funds in the Property Services Interest Account rose from \$225 million to \$239 million over the 2018 year.

Savings to government and strong social outcomes

Based on detailed experience TAASs are able to effectively provide advice to tenants on the real world implications of their matter and negotiate solutions keeping matters out of the Tribunal. TAAS are effective and increase efficiency in the Tribunal and broader conflict resolution systems providing a saving to government.

In 2017/18 TAAP services and the TU assisted 30,385 tenants, of which many were particularly vulnerable. They did this across 97,031 individual sessions. Where assistance was provided, 85% of the time there was a positive outcome for tenants. Information sheets on tenancy topics were downloaded almost 820,000 times.

Early intervention by TAAP services prevents homelessness including homelessness as a result of domestic and family violence. As the result of advice and advocacy by skilled TAAP workers, homelessness is averted in 82% of cases where tenants are at risk of termination. This work preventing homelessness has significant flow on effects to other parts of the NSW Governments social policy agenda including preventing people entering the health system and enabling children to remain in the family. The later prevents exits into the out of home care system¹.

A Snapshot of NEWTAAS

The New England and Western Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service Inc. is funded by Fair Trading NSW as part of the consumer protection program. The Program is funded from the interest on the Rental Bond Interest Account and the Property Services Statutory Interest Account. Program guidelines detail the criteria that services must meet.



NEWTAAS Inc. is an incorporated association with a volunteer Management Committee.

The Service has three offices in the larger towns in the region, and is funded for 4.5FTE staff.

The Service employs six staff, in a mix of part and full-time positions. The Service's Tenant Advocates, Assistant Service Manager and Service Manager provide tenants across the region with face-to-face, telephone, email, and written information and advice. Where tenants meet the Service's client intake

criteria, the Service provides advocacy and representation in the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

Tenant Advocates, the Assistant Service Manager and the Service Manager conduct Community Education sessions across the region in schools, tertiary institutions and in partnership with community organisations across the region with the goal of educating current and future tenants about their rights and responsibilities under tenancy law.

NEWTAAS has been assisting tenants for nearly seventeen years, and during that time has helped more than 18,000 tenants with more than 21,650 matters.



In 2015, a new database was introduced for the Tenants Advice and Advocacy Services. Whilst a significant improvement on our previous database, we had not been able to provide electorate data to the Members of Parliament who cover our region, something we have always considered very important. Our MPs represent the 33,000 renting households across our region, and it's important they know what's happening.

Mark has been able to extract our data and provide the electorate information that you will see on the following pages.

our area Tamworth State Electoral District

The Census shows that median household and individual incomes rose in Tamworth SED between 2006 and 2016.

Home rents were stagnant.

While this should put tenants in a better position, that has not proven to be the case.

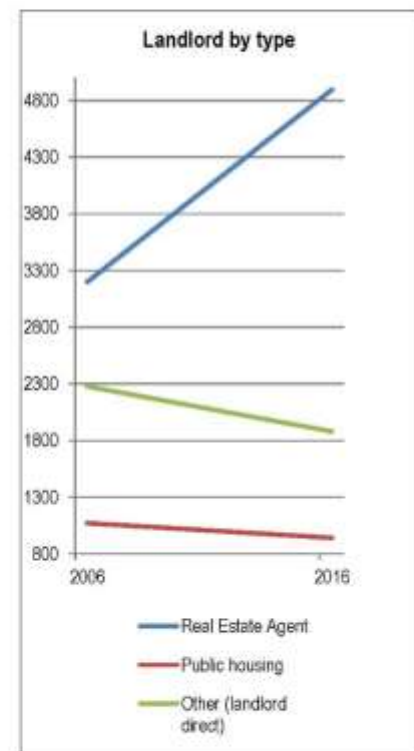
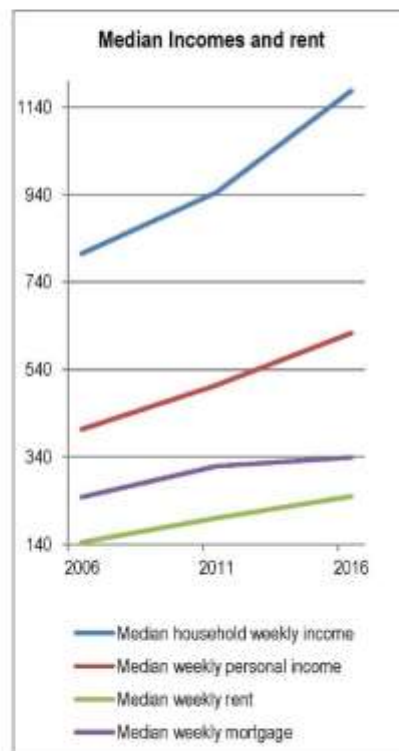
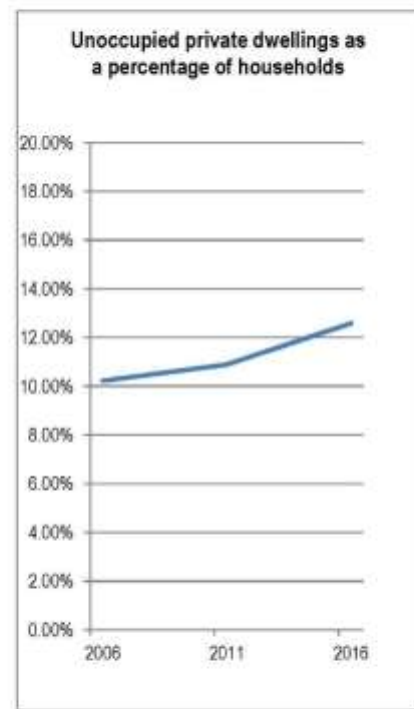
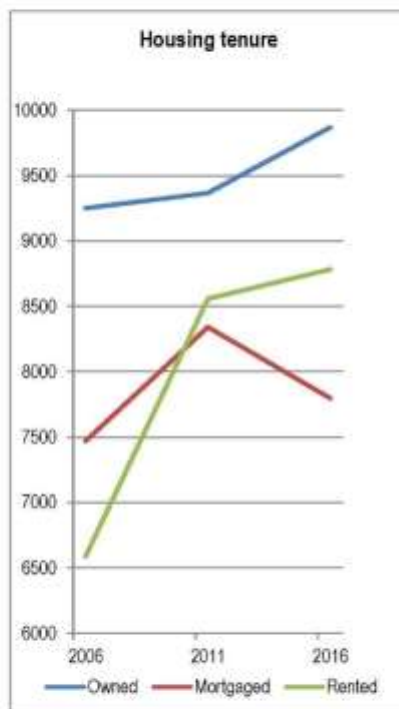
Analysis by .id Community Demographic Resources show that many incomes, in the Tamworth Regional Council area at least, remain stubbornly stuck in the bottom two income quartiles.

Fifty-five per cent of household incomes are in the bottom two quartiles, as are 60 per cent of local employee incomes.

Low incomes mean low rents. Low rents mean lower investment and lower quality dwellings for most renters.

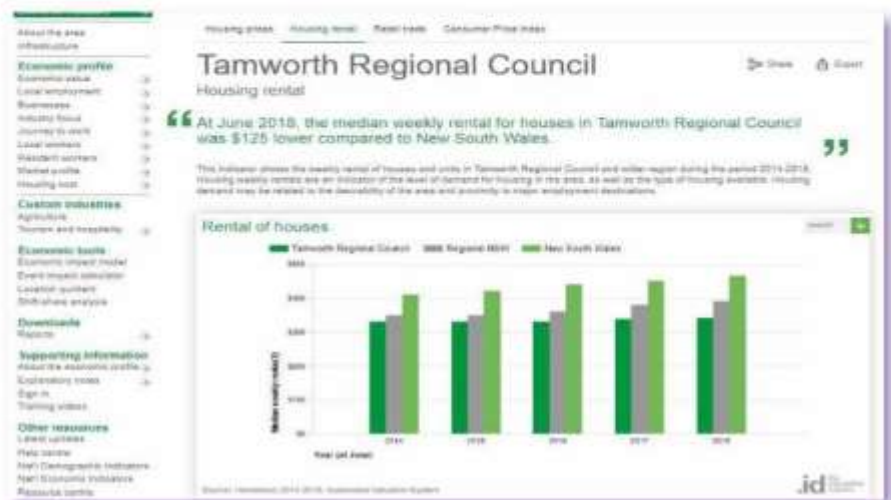
.id has identified areas of rental and mortgage stress in the region. In some areas, more than 50 per cent of renting households are facing rental stress

Low incomes mean, for many, secure housing is precarious. Disruptions to work, income, family relationships and health drive many households to breaking point. If safe and secure housing cannot be maintained, other problems follow.

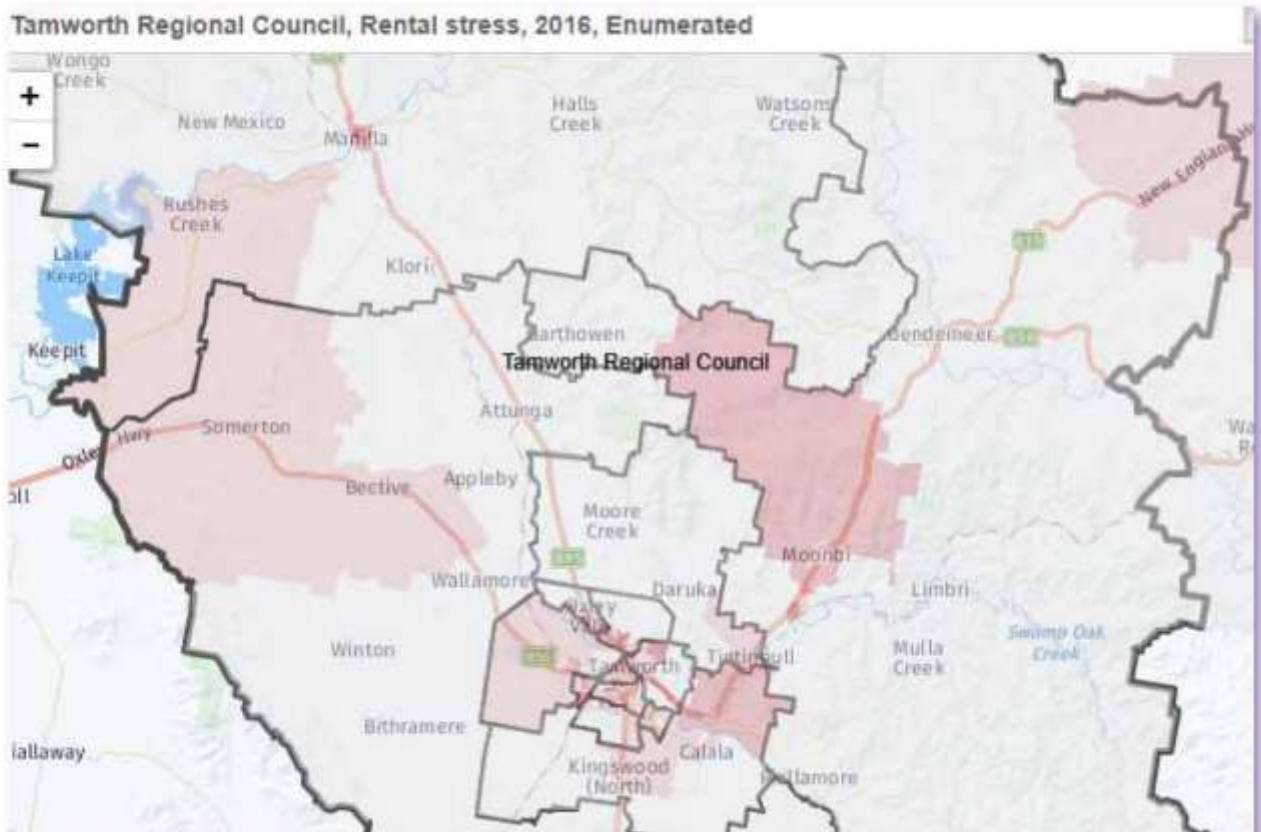


Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics

Tamworth State Electoral District our area



All extracts sourced from id Community Demographic Resources at <https://economy.id.com.au>. Accessed 10/7/2019



our clients Tamworth State Electoral District

CASE STUDY Failure to repair costs

Storm damage to a retaining wall in a premium rental property was not repaired for several months. Frustrated with the loss of privacy and structural damage to the premises, the tenant applied to the Tribunal.

We helped the tenant obtain orders for repairs, compensation and a rent reduction. The landlord failed to make the payments as required, and the tenant had to obtain a garnishee order against the rental income at the real estate agency. The agent became so difficult to deal with that the tenant chose to end the tenancy early. *29 hours*

Tenure type	Tenant	326	71%
	Cotenant	106	23%
	Subtenant	2	0%
	Other occupant	12	3%
	Park home owner	1	0%

Clients at risk of domestic violence 2018– 19	
6	1.3%

Main Income Source	Employed	146
	Government transfer payments	271
	Other	41

Landlord type	Aboriginal housing	9	2%
	Community housing	30	7%
	Public housing	37	8%
	Hotel / motel	2	0%
	Other	9	2%
	Private landlord with agent	315	69%
	Private landlord with no agent	45	10%
	Residential park	2	0%

Rents paid in 2018-2019 cases	
Average rent	\$289
Median rent	\$290
Rent ranges	
Total reported	363
Under \$100 per week	8
\$101 – \$200 per week	52
\$201 – \$299 per week	140
\$300 – \$350 per week	96
Over \$351 per week	74

CASE STUDY “Annoying” mortgagee repossession

Tenants contacted NEWTAAS after receiving a Notice of Possession from the Sheriff when the landlord's bank obtained a Writ for Possession.

We gave the tenants comprehensive written advice, which they passed on to the agent. The agent nevertheless insisted that the tenants pay rent, and give notice to end the tenancy, in spite of the provisions of the Residential Tenancies Act.

The agent made an application to the Tribunal for the bond, and for the tenants to pay rent. In the application they said:

“The tenant is currently in a periodic lease and has submitted a claim from the bond board for their bond money.

“The tenants are becoming very difficult to deal with and has continuously been behind in their rent. They received a letter from the Sheriff stating the house is to be re-possessed and they are to vacate. They have sort (sic) information and passed this information on to me that they were told they do not have to pay rent and can claim their bond while residing in the property until they find another residence and vacate.

The owner and real estate are frustrated with the tenants always finding ways of claiming money from the owner.”

The landlord's application was heard and dismissed by the Tribunal. *33.25 hours*

Tamworth State Electoral District our clients

NEWTAAS provides assistance to all renters who contact us. The level of assistance depends on the capacity of the renter to effectively deal with the issues they are facing. Higher levels of assistance are provided to tenants who have low literacy or circumstances where they can't represent themselves.

ATSI and gender	ATSI	122	27%
	Female	300	66%

Access to technology – 2018-2019 clients			
Number of clients listing a mobile number as their primary contact phone	399		87%
Number of clients with email address supplied (search and estimate)	184 – 247	40 –	54%
Number of clients with primary access to internet through mobile phone (estimate)	30% of those with an email address.		

All case studies on these pages have been drawn from the electorate of Tamworth.

CASE STUDY Family kept housed

The tenant had been unable to attend a Tribunal hearing and the tenancy was terminated for rent arrears of \$740.00. We helped the tenant complete an application to have the orders set aside, and use that application to negotiate for the continuation of the tenancy for a further two months and a payment schedule for the arrears. The landlord and agent did not want to have to go back to the Tribunal, and the tenant was able to keep the family (couple and three children) housed while they found another home. *3.25 hours*

Households	Household type	Number in 2018-2019	% of cases involving
	Total Cases	458	100%
	Couple	73	16%
	Family	71	16%
	Group	26	6%
	Extended family	21	5%
	Single	128	28%
	Sole Parent	101	22%

CASE STUDY Victims comp hijack

When her previous partner broke into the tenant's home, causing significant damage and putting her into hospital, the landlord's agent assisted the tenant to apply for victim's compensation to be paid to the landlord for repairs. Following our advocacy, the landlord agreed to claim the costs from his insurance company, and the tenant was able to use the money to relocate herself and her two children. The insurance company has indicated they will pursue the perpetrator for the costs of the damage. *11.5 hours*

Age	Under 25 years	50	11%
	25-50	273	60%
	51-65	51	11%
	Over 65	43	9%

Housing saved for mum and seven kids

Following a referral from Legal Aid in January 2019, we assisted a tenant with seven children in social housing defend an application to NCAT to terminate her tenancy.

We worked extensively with government and community services to help the tenant understand and meet her rights and responsibilities, and represented her at NCAT. We were aware that the children would be taken into care if the tenancy was lost.

We argued that the the Tribunal needed to consider the tenant's intellectual disability and the potential impact on her family if she became homeless. After three months of Tribunal hearings, and further consideration by the Tribunal, the tenancy was saved. *65 hours*

our area Northern Tablelands State Electoral District

The Northern Tablelands State Electoral District is a large and diverse electorate.

Census statistics overturn many misconceptions about communities in the electorate.

"Armidale is a very rich area."

"Uralla is full of hippies and single mothers."

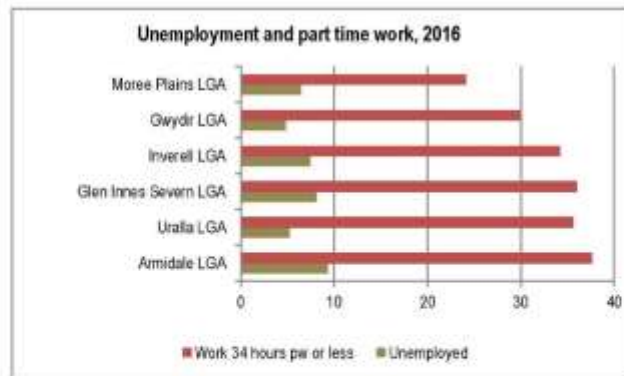
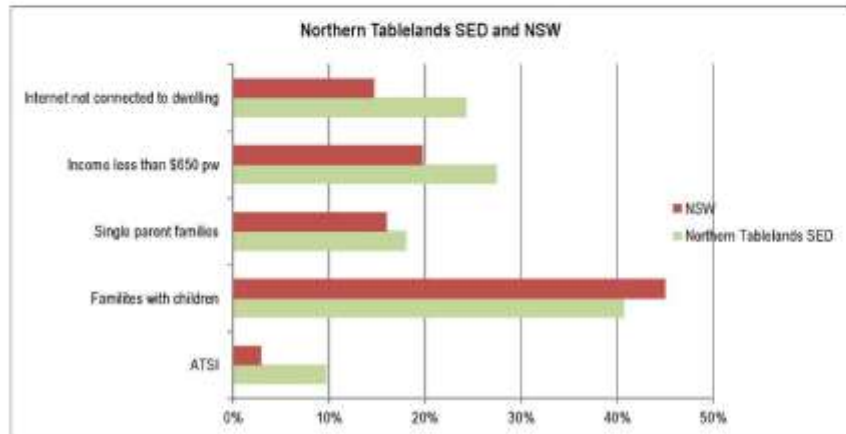
"Moree is hot, dry and troubled."

Except Armidale has the highest unemployment and underemployment in the electorate. Uralla has the lowest unemployment. Moree Plains has the highest household income and among the lowest rents. Moree Plains and Armidale have massive proportions of renters, and the fewest taking on mortgages.

Across the electorate, there are fewer owners and homebuyers, and substantially more renters. The proportion of low income households is high across the electorate, particularly so in Glen Innes, Inverell and Gwydir.

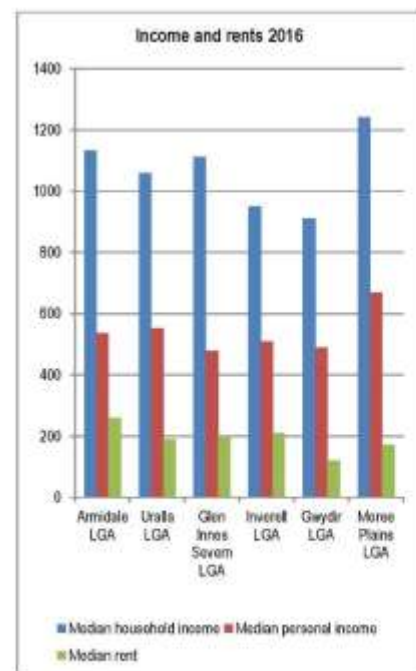
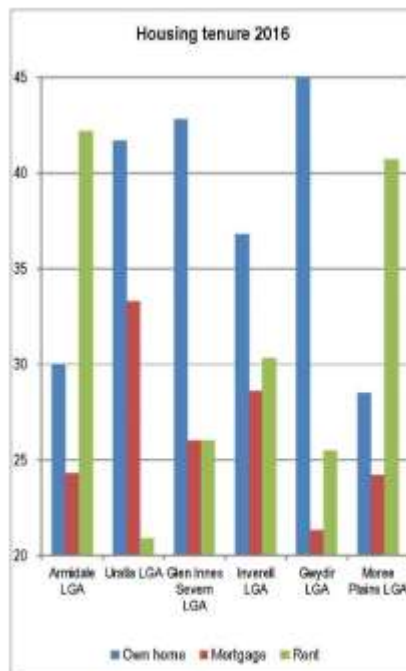
27.2 per cent of Northern Tablelands households receive less than \$650 per week, substantially more than in Tamworth (24.2%) and Dubbo (23.2%).

While median rents and household incomes have stayed in step since 2011, other things haven't. In the LGAs with the highest median incomes, access to home ownership is the lowest and tenants often face the most limited options.

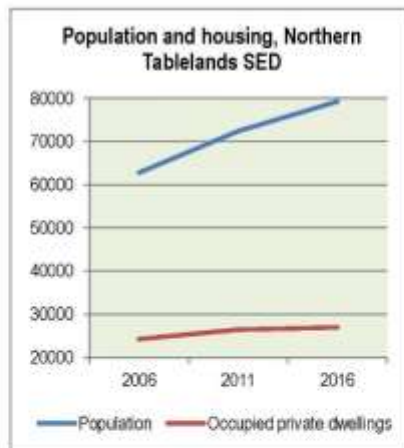
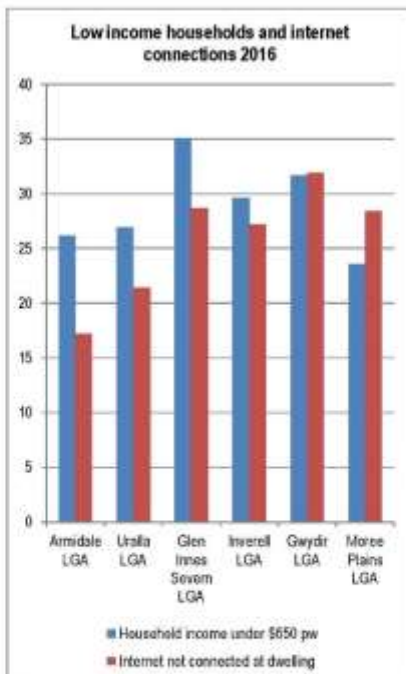
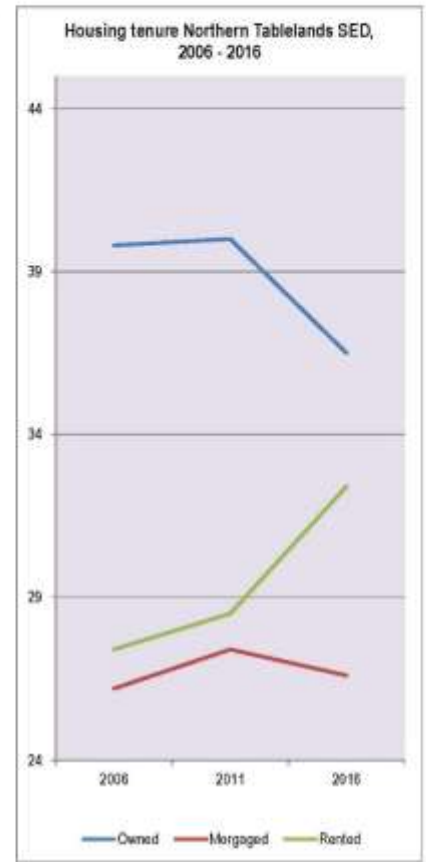
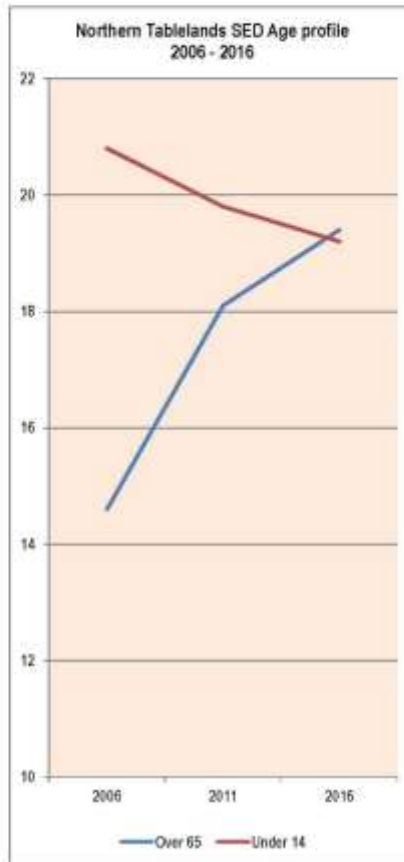
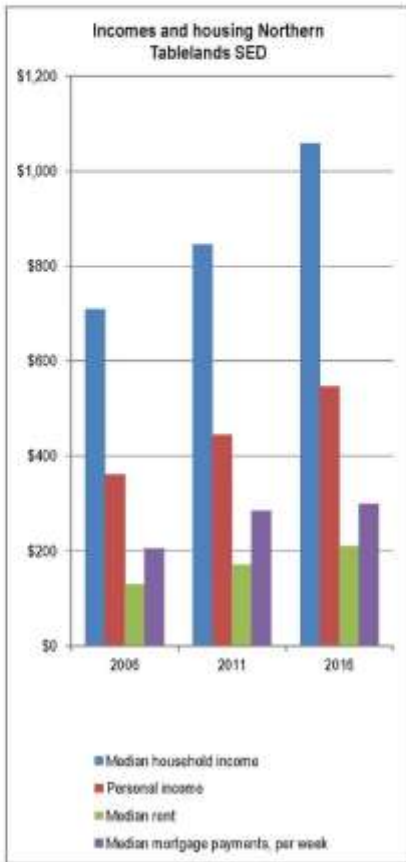


‘When you click on the property location it gives the first photo of the property for sale, if you find a group that all look fidgety and fibro, front doors optional extra. Then you’ve found the area to avoid.’

<https://www.somersoft.com/threads/which-area-to-avoid-in-armidale-nsw.108182/>
Property investment advice for Armidale



Northern Tablelands State Electoral District our area



LGAs in this document

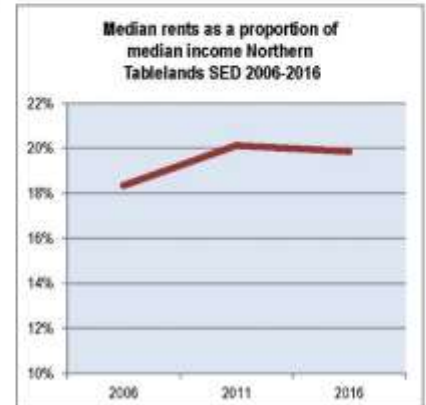
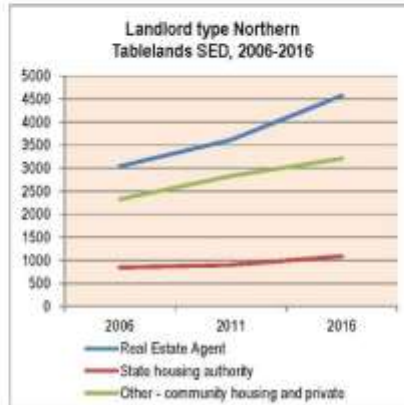
There have been a number of changes to LGA boundaries and names since NSW Fair Trading and Community Data Solutions developed the TAAP database.

There have also been some coding errors.

We have removed Moree data from Gwydir LGA and included it separately. We have also removed Narrabri from Gwydir LGA and the Northern Tablelands SED, in an attempt to give as accurate picture of our work and our area as possible.

Guyra was not listed as a Local Government Area in the ABS statistics for the 2016 Census, although it is listed as such on the TAAP database. However we can only find 8 cases so categorised, and feel that its non inclusion in this document will not greatly impact on the overall data quality.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006, 2011 and 2016 census, Quick Stats and Community Profiles, available at <https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au>; <https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/Home/2016%20Census%20Community%20Profiles>



our clients Northern Tablelands State Electoral District

CASE STUDY Caring for older tenants

We were contacted by a 90 year old man who wanted to move closer to the hot springs. He'd thought he'd signed only a three month tenancy, and wanted to leave. When speaking to him, it soon became apparent that he had short-term memory loss, and we had to dig deeper. We ended up working closely with the tenant and his daughter (who held a power of attorney), and negotiated with the landlord's agent to have him released from the tenancy without penalty. We then worked with them to resolve the debt arising from the condition of the property, without any need for NCAT.

33.5 hours

Landlord type	Aboriginal housing	19	5%
	Community housing	39	10%
	Public housing	34	8%
	Hotel / motel	1	0%
	Other	14	3%
	Private landlord with agent	254	62%
	Private landlord with no agent	39	10%
	Residential park	0	0%

CASE STUDY Collaborative work keeps tenants off TICA

This tenant was the carer for his intellectually disabled sister, and was on a disability support pension due to his own intellectual disability. They had rented a home with a friend, and the tenancy was successful until the friend left the tenancy. The tenants couldn't pay the full rent without that third person, and arrears began to build, with property care also becoming an issue. The agent applied to NCAT for termination and compensation, and we worked over the following weeks with the tenants, the agent and community services. We reached an agreement about the amount of compensation, and had the tenants removed from TICA, the "bad tenant" database, without further Tribunal action. 57.25 hours

All case studies are drawn from the electorate of Northern Tablelands.

Tenure type	Tenant	260	64%
	Cotenant	112	27%
	Subtenant	0	0%
	Other occupant	17	4%
	Park home owner	0	0%

Rents paid in 2018-2019 cases	
Average rent	\$280
Median rent	\$260
Rent ranges	
Total reported	301
Under \$100 per week	8
\$101 – \$200 per week	60
\$201 – \$299 per week	99
\$300 – \$350 per week	74
Over \$351 per week	60

Main Income Source	Employed	141
	Government transfer payments	224
	Other	18

CASE STUDY Tenants stop eviction after NCAT marathon

Tenants in their seventies were renting a small rural property. They had been in dispute with their landlord over water leaks from a supply pipe. The landlord started turning the water off. Invalid termination notices were issued and unlawful inspections carried out. The landlord finally applied to NCAT to end the tenancy. We dealt with jurisdiction, retaliatory termination, contempt of NCAT, and a Facebook campaign against the tenants. Across five hearings and multiple NCAT applications, the tenancy was saved. Eventually, the tenants' health was failing and they moved closer to health services.

194.5 hours

Northern Tablelands State Electoral District our clients

ATSI and gender	ATSI	80	20%
	Female	266	65%

Access to technology – 2018-2019 clients		
Number of clients listing a mobile number as their primary contact phone	339	83%
Number of clients with email address supplied	165	40%
Number of clients with primary access to internet through mobile phone (estimate)	30% of those with an email address.	

Cases related to domestic violence	
59	14%

Households	Household type	Number in 2018-2019	% of cases involving
	Total Cases	409	100%
	Couple	53	13%
	Family	66	16%
	Group	33	8%
	Extended family	41	10%
	Single	111	27%
Sole Parent	65	16%	

Age	Under 25 years	48	12%
	25-50	214	52%
	51-65	73	18%
	Over 65	28	7%

NEWTAAS offices and NCAT hearing venues

Dubbo

Dubbo *weekly*

Bourke

Broken Hill

Brewarrina

Coonamble

Gilgandra

Mudgee

Warren

Armidale

Armidale

fortnightly

Inverell

Glen Innes

Tenterfield

Moree

Tamworth

Tamworth *weekly*

Coonabarrabran

Gunnedah

Moree

Narrabri

CASE STUDY NCAT application overturns premature retribution against tenant and her kids

Before the recent domestic violence reforms, a young mum fled her tenancy with her four little kids after her previous partner was released from prison and found her. The landlord's agent listed her on TICA for "absconding, rent arrears and abandoning the tenancy." The tenant's mum had been emptying the property and cleaning, and the agent pre-empted the finalisation of the tenancy by changing the locks and disposing of the tenant's remaining belongings. After asking the agent to modify the listing to reflect the true circumstances, with a poor response, we helped the tenant apply to NCAT to have the listing removed. The application never went to hearing, as TICA immediately removed the listing when they received the application. We're grateful for the DV reforms that are helping many tenants in this electorate. *12.25 hours*

NEWTAAS provides assistance to all renters who contact us. The level of assistance depends on the capacity of the renter to effectively deal with the issues they are facing. Higher levels of assistance are provided to tenants who have low literacy or circumstances where they can't represent themselves.

CASE STUDY Resident escapes unregistered boarding house without excessive penalty

We helped this tenant living in an unregistered boarding house work out if he was a tenant or a boarder. His landlord wanted him to pay six months of rent to leave. With our advice and support, he was able to give reasonable notice to end his occupancy agreement and recover his four weeks bond. *2.5 hours*

our area Dubbo State Electoral District

Dubbo State Electoral District is a large and varied electorate, with contrasting outcomes for households and renters, geographically and within localities.

Population growth between the 2006 and 2016 census was at 9 and 7 per cent respectively, but the number of occupied dwellings increased by only 7 and 2 per cent. A part of this is explained by the growth in the number of unoccupied private dwellings. The proportion of older residents is increasing, while that of children under 14 is dropping.

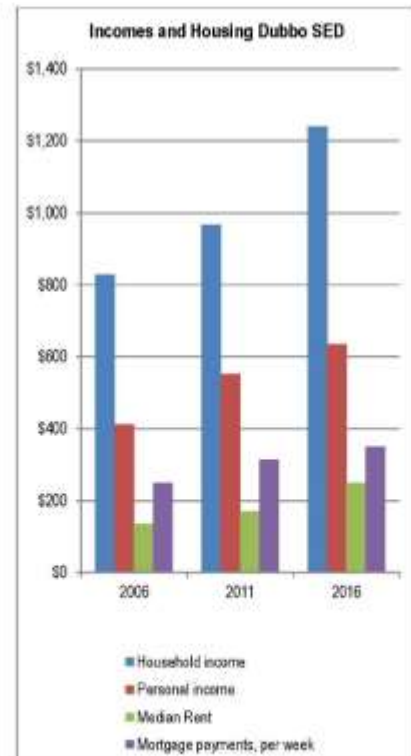
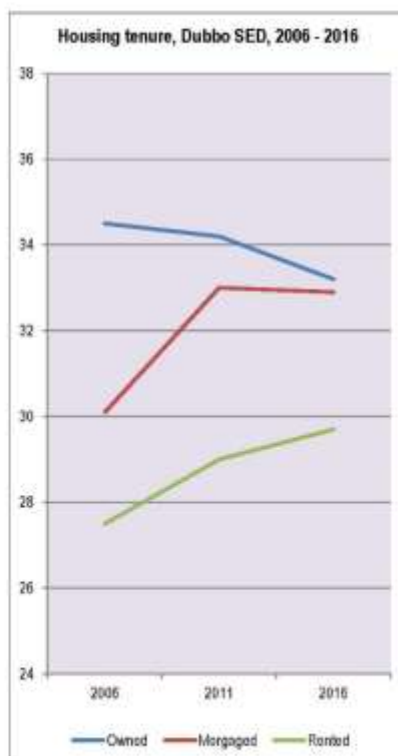
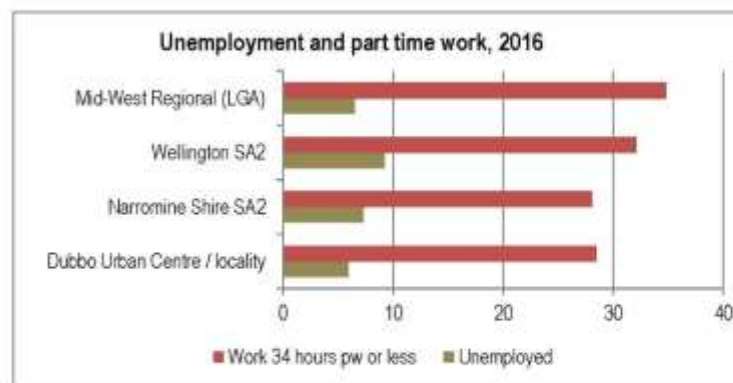
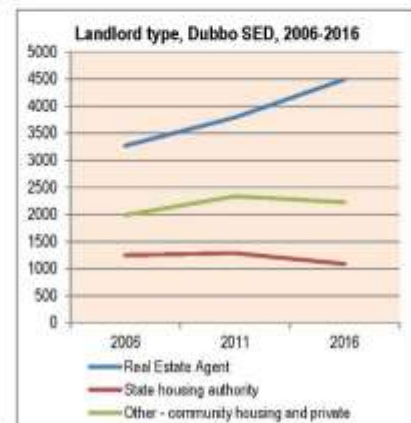
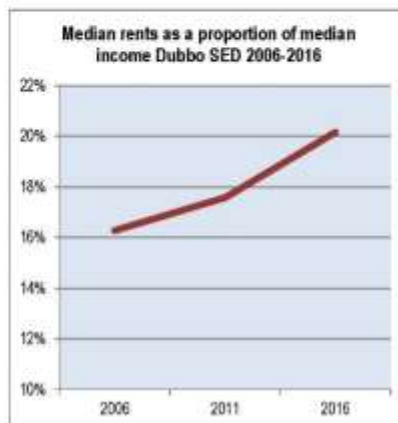
Dubbo SED has a higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households, households with weekly incomes under \$650 and of single parent families. It has a lower internet penetration and fewer families with children.

Incomes, rents paid, and relative poverty vary across the electorate and often exacerbate the tenancy problems faced by households.

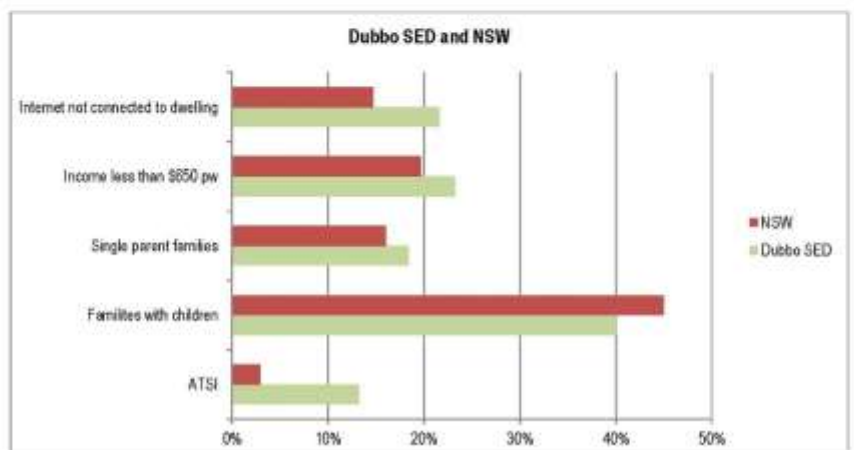
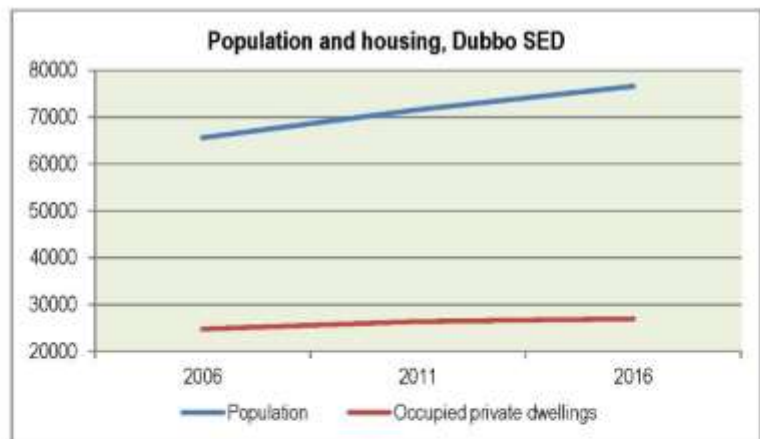
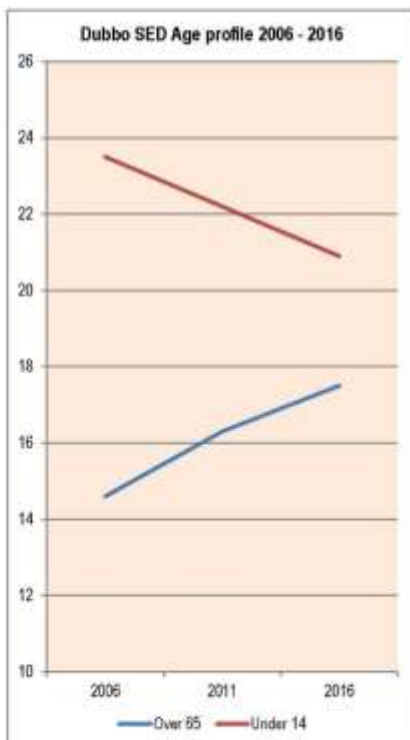
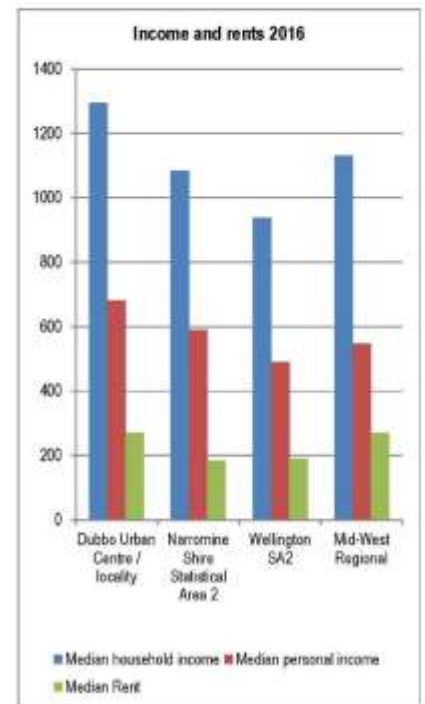
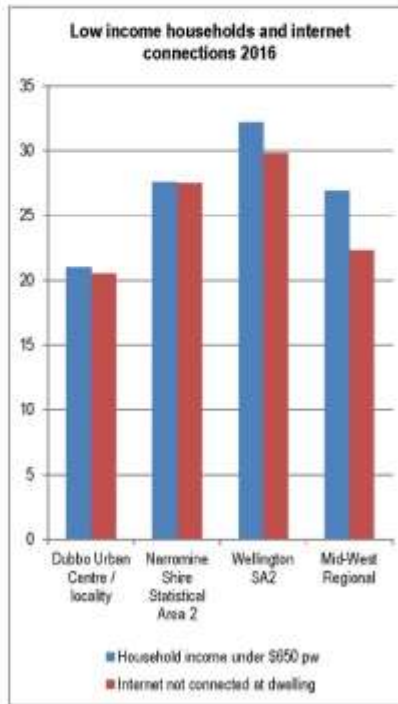
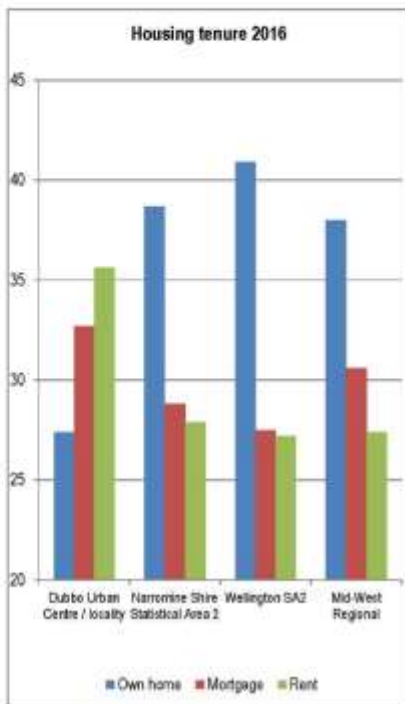
In 2016, more households were renting and were paying more for their homes.

Fewer households rented through private landlords and social housing providers, while real estate agents managed more homes.

Renters are facing more and more difficult problems. The issues that tenant households face, and how our service deals with them are detailed in the following pages.



Dubbo State Electoral District our area



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006, 2011 and 2016 census, Quick Stats and Community Profiles, available at <https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au>; <https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/Home/2016%20Census%20Community%20Profiles>

our clients Dubbo State Electoral District

CASE STUDY Keeping kids out of care

A great-grandmother contacted us after her granddaughter was taken into custody and FACS Community Services took the great-grandchildren into care. She was in a fixed-term agreement in an over-55s rental complex, but was the only person suitable to care for the children. We helped her to negotiate with her landlord, who agreed to release her without penalty after initially refusing, and she was able to start a new tenancy with the children.

21.25 hours

Tenure type	Tenant	209	67%
	Cotenant	84	27%
	Subtenant	1	0%
	Other occupant	5	2%
	Park home owner	1	0%

All case studies on these pages are drawn from the electorate of Dubbo.

Main Income Source	Employed	135
	Government transfer payments	147
	Other	5

Landlord type	Aboriginal housing	7	2%
	Community housing	12	4%
	Public housing	23	7%
	Hotel / motel	0	0%
	Other	5	2%
	Private landlord with agent	125	40%
	Private landlord with no agent	27	9%
	Residential park	2	1%

Rents paid in 2018-2019 cases	
Average rent	\$296
Median rent	\$300
Rent ranges	
Total reported	241
Under \$100 per week	3
\$101 – \$200 per week	40
\$201 – \$299 per week	76
\$300 – \$350 per week	58
Over \$351 per week	64

CASE STUDY Duty advocacy helps tenants save big

A couple with six children were moving out of their FACS Housing home, when it was broken into and extensive damage caused to the house and their belongings. We worked with the tenants and Police to help prove to FACS Housing that the tenants weren't liable for the \$7,095.00 damage. This family was helped after they found us at NCAT, when they went to contest the application that had been made against them by FACS Housing. We try and attend all of the general NCAT lists in Dubbo.

20 hours

CASE STUDY Landlord bond claim cut down to size

After a three year tenancy, a young mum with small kids wasn't able to afford to continue when her partner and co-tenant was incarcerated. The landlord refused to negotiate and applied for compensation of \$4,951.29 to NCAT, a major stress while she was also dealing with her partner's criminal charges. We helped her get her evidence together and contest the charges at NCAT, which found that she owed \$735.19, more than \$4,200.00 less than the landlord's claim.

We often see exaggerated claims made by landlords at the end of tenancies, and without having knowledge of tenancy law and how NCAT operates, tenants are vulnerable.

34.25 hours

Dubbo State Electoral District our clients

ATSI and gender	ATSI	72	23%
	Female	198	64%

Access to technology – 2018-2019 clients		
Number of clients listing a mobile number as their primary contact phone	262	84%
Number of clients with email address supplied	119	38%
Number of clients with primary access to internet through mobile phone (estimate)	30% of those with an email address.	

Cases related to domestic violence	
22	7%

Households	Household type	Number in 2018-2019	% of cases involving
	Total Cases	311	100%
	Couple	40	13%
	Family	63	20%
	Group	13	4%
	Extended family	13	4%
	Single	100	32%
	Sole Parent	66	21%

Age	Under 25 years	27	9%
	25-50	178	57%
	51-65	52	17%
	Over 65	20	6%

NEWTAAS offices and NCAT hearing venues

Dubbo

Dubbo weekly
Bourke
Broken Hill
Brewarrina
Coonamble
Gilgandra
Mudgee
Warren

Armidale

Armidale fortnightly
Inverell
Glen Innes
Tenterfield
Moree

Tamworth

Tamworth weekly
Coonabarrabran
Gunnedah
Moree
Narrabri

CASE STUDY Tenants, NEWTAAS find long running case and appeal exhausting

A couple on variable income due to casual work were struggling to pay the rent. Their landlord applied to NCAT for rent arrears and termination of the tenancy, but had problems with their rent ledger, and the application was adjourned. After learning more about the tenancy, our advocate helped the tenants lodge a cross-application for a rent reduction. Following the formal hearing, the landlord appealed the decision. Having been through six months of NCAT by that time, the tenants had had enough and agreed to end the tenancy and pay off \$700 rent arrears, half of what the landlord had originally sought. *128.5 hours*

NEWTAAS provides assistance to all renters who contact us. The level of assistance depends on the capacity of the renter to effectively deal with the issues they are facing. Higher levels of assistance are provided to tenants who have low literacy or circumstances where they can't represent themselves.

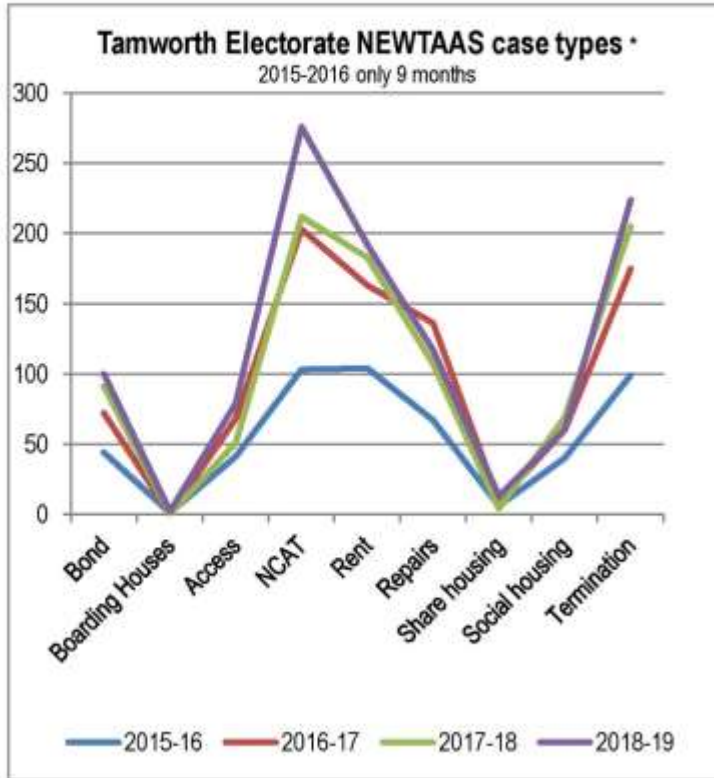
CASE STUDY

NEWTAAS helps domestic violence survivor escape tenancy

This tenant came to us following a domestic violence event, when she had fled her home with her little daughter. She had been to see her real estate agent, who had insisted that she complete a 21 day termination notice. Thanks to the recent reforms of the Residential Tenancy Act 2010, we were able to help her see her doctor and give a domestic violence termination notice ending her tenancy.

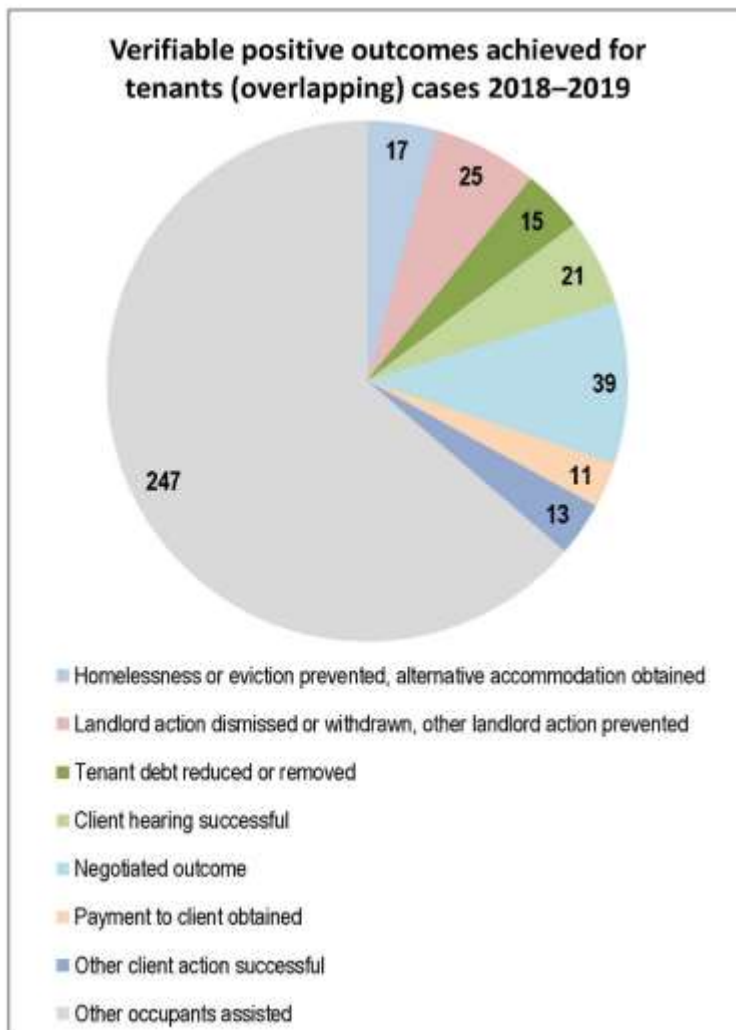
9.25 hours

Tamworth State Electoral District our work



Case types and work done, 2018 – 2019
Tamworth State Electoral District
Based on tenancy address

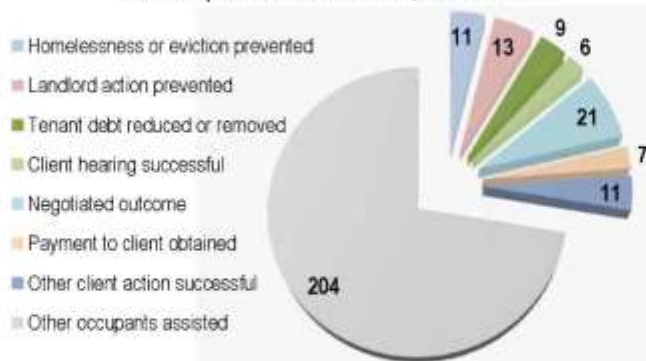
Type of work	Advice, information or referral only	Tribunal or Non-Tribunal Advocacy	
		Total number of cases dealt with	Proportion of advocacy cases
Total number of cases dealt with	378	80	
Bond	72	28	35.0%
Boarding Houses	1	1	1.3%
Access	68	11	13.8%
NCAT	208	68	85.0%
Rents	145	47	58.8%
Repairs	101	16	20.0%
Share Housing	11	2	2.5%
Social Housing	44	16	20.0%
Termination	178	46	57.5%
Total Hours	576.75	915	
Average time per case (hours)	1.5	11.4	



Good outcomes achieved for client	Number of cases with positive outcomes known	Time spent (hours)	Average time per case (hours)
2015-2016	71	1166	16.4
2016-2017	85	1208.5	14.2
2017-2018	176	1179.25	6.7
2018-2019	267	1170.5	4.4

Northern Tablelands State Electoral District our work

Tenants' positive outcomes, 2018–2019

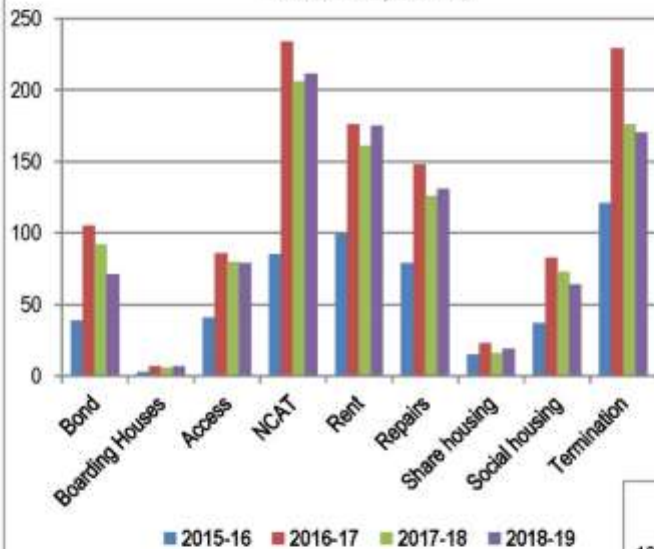


Case types and work done, 2018 – 2019
Northern Tablelands State Electoral District
Based on tenancy address

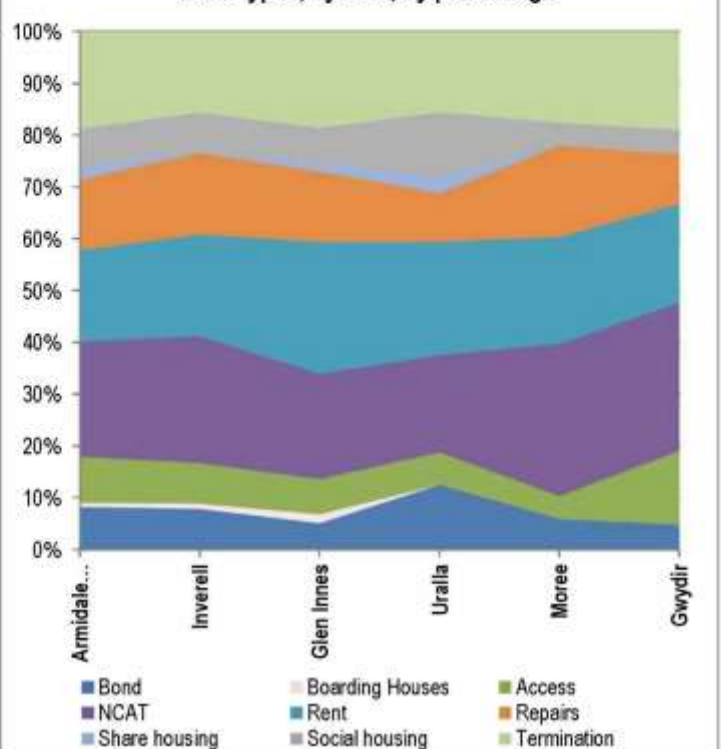
Type of work	Advice, information or referral only	Tribunal or Non-Tribunal Advocacy	
Number of cases	350	59	<i>Proportion of advocacy cases in total</i>
Bond	54	17	23.9%
Boarding Houses	7	0	0.0%
Access	67	12	15.2%
NCAT	169	42	19.9%
Rents	142	33	18.9%
Repairs	109	22	16.8%
Share Housing	15	4	21.1%
Social Housing	47	13	21.7%
Termination	137	13	8.7%
Total Hours	503	799.5	
Average time per case	1.4	13.6	

Northern Tablelands SED NEWTAAS case types

* 2015-2016 only 9 months

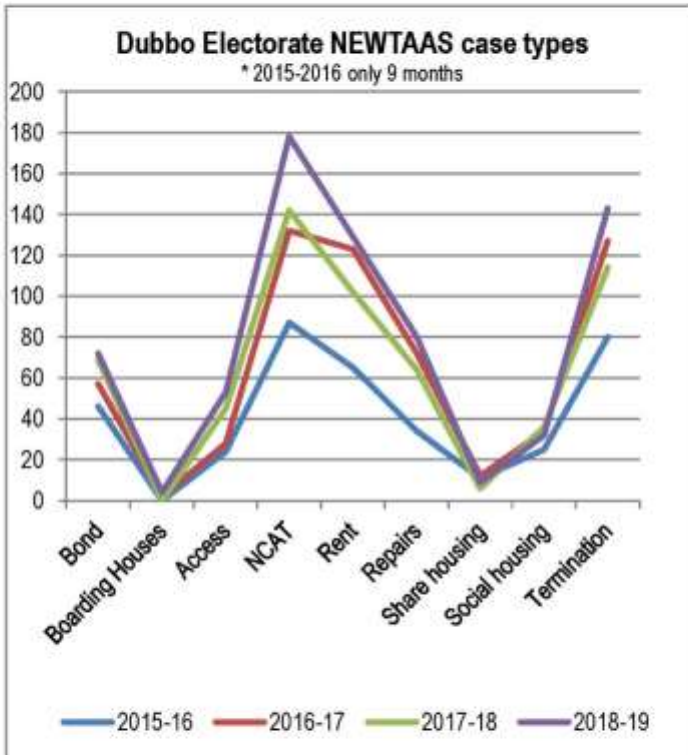


Case types, by LGA, by percentage



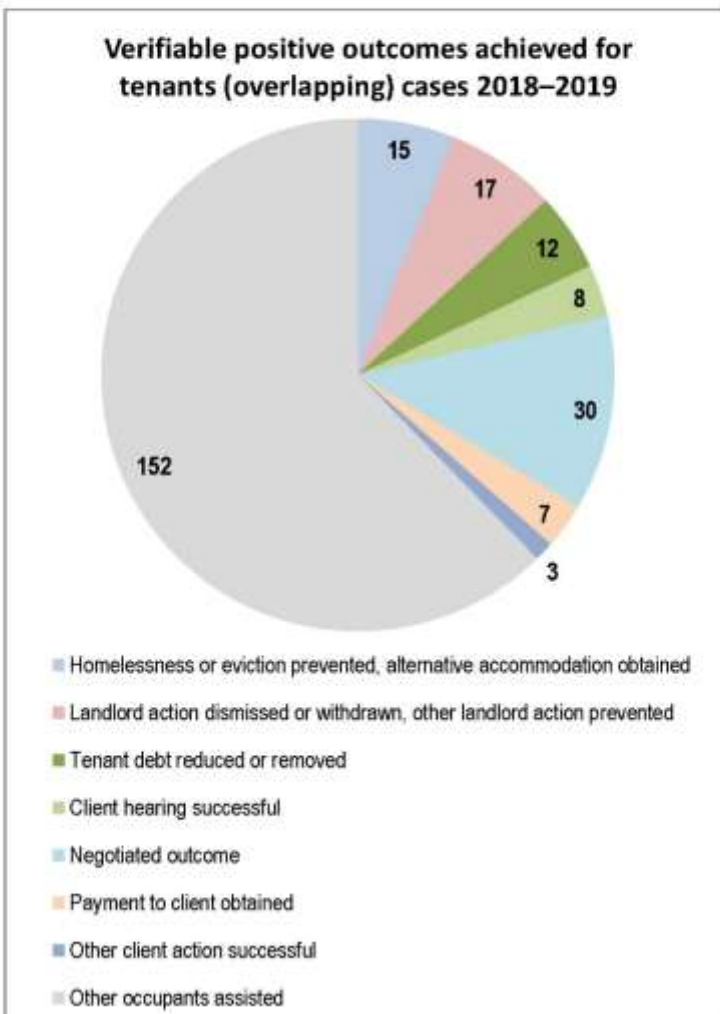
Good outcomes achieved for tenant	Number of cases with positive outcomes known	Time spent (hours)	Average time per case (hours)
2015-2016	67	775.25	11.6
2016-2017	77	1342.5	17.4
2017-2018	153	789.5	5.2
2018-2019	222	862	3.9

Dubbo State Electoral District our work



Case types and work done, 2018 – 2019
Dubbo State Electoral District
Based on tenancy address

Type of work	Advice, information or referral only	Tribunal or Non-Tribunal Advocacy	
		Number of cases	Proportion of advocacy cases
Total number of cases dealt with	245	66	
Bond	45	27	40.9%
Boarding Houses	3	1	1.5%
Access	45	8	12.1%
NCAT	123	55	83.3%
Rents	86	43	65.2%
Repairs	64	16	24.2%
Share Housing	6	3	4.5%
Social Housing	21	11	16.7%
Termination	98	45	68.2%
Total Hours	363.75	850.75	
Average time per case (hours)	1.5	12.9	



Good outcomes achieved for client	Number of cases with positive outcomes known	Time spent (hours)	Average time per case (hours)
2015-2016	64	559.5	8.7
2016-2017	66	719.25	10.9
2017-2018	107	644.5	6.0
2018-2019	170	811.75	4.8

Where our positive outcomes show “other occupants assisted”, this overwhelmingly refers to households where children benefit from the good tenancy result.

The tables below show outcomes achieved across NEWTAAS’ catchment.

Positive outcomes achieved for clients by work type and issues dealt with, Northern Tablelands SED 2018 – 2019											
of 409 total cases	Total cases - good result	Bond	Boarding Houses	Access	NCAT	Rents	Repairs	Share Housing	Social Housing	Termination	Total Hours
Tribunal Advocacy	35	11	0	8	26	19	14	4	9	24	550
Advice, referral and assistance only	187	40	2	40	109	94	71	5	17	80	312

Positive outcomes achieved for clients by work type and issues dealt with, Tamworth SED 2018 – 2019											
of 458 total cases	Total cases - good result	Bond	Boarding Houses	Access	NCAT	Rents	Repairs	Share Housing	Social Housing	Termination	Total Hours
Tribunal Advocacy	80	22	1	10	57	41	14	2	12	39	833
Advice, referral and assistance only	203	42	0	43	121	80	63	5	18	104	337.5

Positive outcomes achieved for clients by work type and issues dealt with, Dubbo SED 2018 – 2019											
of 311 total cases	Total cases - good result	Bond	Boarding Houses	Access	NCAT	Rents	Repairs	Share Housing	Social Housing	Termination	Total Hours
Tribunal Advocacy	50	20	0	7	44	33	11	2	8	35	639.75
Advice, referral and assistance only	120	24	1	27	72	47	38	2	9	53	172

Positive outcomes achieved for clients by work type and issues dealt with, Barwon SED 2018 – 2019											
of 162 total cases	Total cases - good result	Bond	Boarding Houses	Access	NCAT	Rents	Repairs	Share Housing	Social Housing	Termination	Total Hours
Tribunal Advocacy	13	3	0	2	11	9	3	0	1	11	73.75
Advice, referral and assistance only	65	15	1	11	44	28	22	1	7	36	124.75

In trouble with renting?



We are providing free training to community services whose clients might be:

- ✗ Escaping domestic violence
- ✗ Listed on a “bad tenant” database or have a bad history
- ✗ Homeless and looking for a home to rent
- ✗ Young people moving out of home
- ✗ Families with children struggling to keep their homes
- ✗ Living in poor conditions that impact upon their health and relationships
- ✗ People with disabilities renting their homes in the community
- ✗ Facing eviction from their homes
- ✗ Older people needing support to stay in their homes

Many people don't realise that their rented home is a legal contract. Until it comes crashing down, many of our clients don't understand the significant costs involved when a tenancy ends badly.

In two hours, we can teach you:

- ✓ The basic operation of a tenancy contract
- ✓ The rights and responsibilities of your clients
- ✓ How to improve your client's chances at getting a tenancy
- ✓ What resources are available and how to use them



We are delivering this training all over our region. Participants are consistently telling us that the training is useful to them and helping them get better outcomes with their clients.



We're a community service who provides tenants with information and advice, and we will advocate for the most disadvantaged tenants to help them resolve their tenancy issues with their landlords. We cover 57% of NSW, with offices in Armidale, Tamworth and Dubbo.

We will travel to deliver the training to groups of 10-15 community workers.

If your service is interested and can get a small training group together in your town, call us on 02 6772 4698 or email us at newtaas.admin@gmail.com with some proposed dates and we will arrange to come to you.

New England and Western Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service Inc.

Minto 3, 161 Rusden St, ARMIDALE ♦ 1/80 Gipps St, DUBBO
♦ 422-426 Peel St, TAMWORTH ♦ www.tenants.org.au
Fax 02 6772 2999 ♦ Phone 02 6772 4698 ♦ newtaas@gmail.com

**NEW ENGLAND AND WESTERN TENANTS ADVICE AND
ADVOCACY SERVICE INCORPORATED
ABN 31 279 732 390**

**SPECIAL PURPOSE FINANCIAL REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2019**

New England and Western Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service
Incorporated (ABN 31 279 732 390)
(An Incorporated Association)

Special Purpose Financial Report

For the year ended 30 June 2019

Contents to the financial report

Committees Report	2
Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income	4
Statement of financial position	6
Statement of changes in equity	7
Statement of cash flows	8
Notes to the financial statements	9
Statement by Members of the Committee	16
Independent auditor's report	17

Committee's Report

Your committee members submit the financial statements of the New England and Western Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service Incorporated ("NEWTAAS") for the year ended 30 June 2019.

Committee Members

The names of the Committee members throughout the year and at the date of this report are:

Anne Wolfenden (Chair)
Elizabeth Stahlut (Treasurer)
Christine Foord (Secretary)
Marjorie Henzell
Brian Humphreys
Jennifer Bourke
Julia McCosker

Principal Activities

No significant change in the principal activities occurred during the year and the service continued with its objectives of providing information, advice and advocacy services to tenants across the New England, North West, Western and Far West of New South Wales.

The Grant funding contract with the Department of Fair Trading NSW was renewed as at 1 July 2016 for a further 3 years until 30 June 2019, which has been extended for 3 months until September 2019. This renewed funding contract introduced a change to the mix of activities that NEWTAAS is funded for. The change in mix of activities intensifies the existing focus on the most disadvantaged complex tenants within our region and Fair Trading now provide most of the straightforward phone advice. Financially, there has been a real decrease in funding of 10%, as the service is now funded for 4.5 (previously 5.0) Equivalent Full-Time workers.

After balance date events

There are no outstanding matters which the committee considers to be significant.

Going Concern

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis. The current funding contract expires on 30 September 2019. It is likely that the funding contract will be extended for a further 6 months and then go out to tender. NEWTAAS has been offering TAAS services since 2002 and is the best performing TAAS in NSW. It is therefore considered likely that NEWTAAS will be successful in their tender application. However should NEWTAAS be unsuccessful in their tender application then the organisation would be wound up as it is dependent on Grant funding to operate.

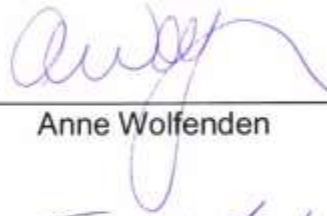
Operating Result

The operating deficit for the year ending 30 June 2019 is \$NIL, (2018 deficit of \$1).

New England & Western Tenants Advice & Advocacy Service Inc.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the members of the committee:

Chair



Anne Wolfenden

Member



Elizabeth Stahlhut

Dated: August 2019

New England & Western Tenants Advice & Advocacy Service Inc.

Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income for the
Year ended 30 June 2019

	2019	2018
	\$	\$
Revenue		
Grant – Core Funding	522,145	509,409
Grant – Non Core Funding	53,608	46,290
Reimbursable expenses	1,703	46
Other Income	3,640	3,640
Interest	7,639	6,501
Total revenue	588,735	565,886
Expenditure		
Salary and Related Expenses		
Salaries and Wages	387,957	363,601
On-costs	107,836	104,192
Total Salary and Related Expenses	495,793	467,793
Other Operating Expenses		
Phones & Communication	20,620	21,000
Language or Cultural Services	421	118
Depreciation	9,699	10,334
Operating Management	7,938	15,478
Office Expenses	11,105	8,119
Consumables	2,008	2,336
Insurance	5,006	4,490
Rent	24,266	23,637
Staff/Volunteer Training	1,280	1,156
Transport and Motor Vehicle Costs	10,599	11,424
	92,942	98,092
Total Expenditure	588,735	565,885
Current year deficit before income tax	Nil	1
Income tax expense	Nil	Nil
Net Current year deficit	Nil	1

New England & Western Tenants Advice & Advocacy Service Inc.

Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income for the
Year ended 30 June 2019 (Cont.)

Other comprehensive income

Items that will not be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss when specific conditions are met.

Nil Nil

Items that will be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss when specific conditions are met

Nil Nil

Total other comprehensive income for the year

Nil Nil

Total comprehensive income for the year

Nil 1

Total comprehensive income attributable to members of the entity

Nil 1

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

New England & Western Tenants Advice & Advocacy Service Inc.

Statement of financial position as at 30 June 2019

	Note	2019 \$	2018 \$
ASSETS			
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash and Cash Equivalents		485,429	660,319
Accounts receivable and other debtors	2	6,503	4,003
Shares		10	10
Total Current Assets		491,942	664,332
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			
Plant & equipment	3	18,261	22,178
Total Non Current Assets		18,261	22,178
Total Assets		510,203	686,510
LIABILITIES			
CURRENT LIABILITES			
Accounts payable and other payables		15,392	19,426
Employee provisions	4	253,503	192,056
Other current liabilities	5	148,181	386,929
Total Current Liabilities		417,076	598,411
NON CURRENT LIABILITES			
Employee provisions	4	78,368	73,340
Total Non Current Liabilities		78,368	73,340
Total Liabilities		495,444	671,751
NET ASSETS		14,759	14,759
Equity		14,759	14,758
Retained surplus/(Deficit)		Nil	1
Total Equity		14,759	14,759

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

New England & Western Tenants Advice & Advocacy Service Inc.

Statement of changes in equity for the Year ended 30 June 2019

	Equity
	\$
Balances at 1 July 2017	14,758
Comprehensive Income	
Deficit for the year attributable to members of the entity	1
Other comprehensive income for the year	Nil
Total comprehensive income attributable to members of the entity	14,759
Balance at 30 June 2018	14,759
Comprehensive Income	
Surplus for the year attributable to members of the entity	Nil
Other comprehensive income for the year	Nil
Total comprehensive income attributable to members of the entity	Nil
Balance at 30 June 2019	14,759

New England & Western Tenants Advice & Advocacy Service Inc.

Statement of cash flows for the Year ended 30 June 2019

	2019	2018
	\$	\$
Cash flows from operating activities		
Grant income	397,958	633,479
Interest received	7,639	6,501
Payments to employees	(427,618)	(400,231)
Payments to suppliers	(147,087)	(146,179)
Net cash (used in)/generated from operating activities	(169,108)	93,570
Cash flows from investing activities		
Payment for plant and equipment	(5,782)	(10,812)
Net cash used in investing activities	(5,782)	(10,812)
Net increase/ (decrease) in cash held	(174,890)	82,758
Cash on hand at the beginning of the financial year	660,319	577,561
Cash on hand at the end of the financial year	485,429	660,319

Note 1 Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

Basis of preparation

These financial statements are special purpose financial statements prepared in order to satisfy the financial reporting requirements of the *Australian Charities & Not for Profits Commission Act, 2012* ("ACNC") and grant funding conditions. The Committee has determined that the Association is not a reporting entity in accordance with the definition contained in AASB 1053.

The financial statements have been prepared on an accruals basis and are based on historical costs and do not take into account changing money values or, except where specifically stated, current valuations of non-current assets. The financial statements are presented in Australian dollars.

NEWTAAS is a registered charity under the ACNC and is classified as a medium entity. Under the ACNC reporting requirements NEWTAAS is required to apply the following six accounting standards as a minimum to the extent that they are relevant:

- AASB 101 Presentation of Financial Statements;
- AASB 107 Statement of cash flows;
- AASB 108 Accounting Policies, Changes in Accounting Estimates and Errors;
- AASB 1048 Interpretation of standards;
- AASB 1054 Australian Additional Disclosures.

The following significant accounting policies, which are consistent with the previous period unless otherwise stated, have been adopted in the preparation of this financial report.

(a) Income Tax

The Association is exempt from Income Tax and accordingly no provision has been made.

(b) Plant and Equipment (PPE)

Plant and equipment are carried at cost less, where applicable, any accumulated depreciation.

The depreciable amount of all PPE is depreciated over the useful lives of the assets to the Association commencing from the time the asset is held ready for use.

When the written down value of PPE is Nil an assessment is made by management and a decision made to write off. Any subsequent profit on sale is recognised as revenue.

(c) Impairment of Assets

At the end of each reporting period, the Association reviews the carrying values of its tangible assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have been impaired. If such an indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset, being the higher of the asset's fair value less costs to sell and value in use, is compared to the asset's carrying value. Any excess of the asset's carrying value over its recoverable amount is recognised in the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income.

(d) Employee Benefits

Provision is made for the Association's liability for employee benefits arising from services rendered by employees to the end of the reporting period. Employee benefits have been measured at the amounts expected to be paid when the liability is settled.

(e) Provisions

Provisions are recognised when the Association has a legal or constructive obligation, as a result of past events, for which it is probable that an outflow of economic benefits will result and that outflow can be reliably measured. Provisions are measured at the best estimate of the amounts required to settle the obligation at the end of the reporting period.

(i) Redundancy

Redundancy provisions are measured in accordance with the minimum standards contained in the National Employment Standards and are essential given that NEWTAAS is dependent on cyclical government funding. These provisions may be required to be paid out immediately if the organisation was unsuccessful in winning one 3 year grant funding tender.

(ii) Personal/Carers Leave

The Association records a potential liability for personal leave for all permanent part-time and full-time employees. The amount is measured at its nominal value at balance date and includes related on-costs. Although this provision does not comply with Accounting Standards, it represents the liability of NEWTAAS to employ casual staff or increase part time employee hours to cover time lost as

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 30 June 2019 (Cont.)

part of their commitment to continuity of service delivery from a small organisation.

(iii) Locum

The Association's funding contract requires that a service be deliverable to all residential tenants in the New England, North West, Western and Far West areas of New South Wales. The entity records a potential liability for casual staff that may be required to satisfy periods of high demand. This includes ensuring continuity of service delivery during periods of orientation and training as new staff learn their roles. This provision does not comply with Accounting Standards and is measured by management's best estimate.

(f) Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents includes cash on hand, deposits held at call with banks, and other short-term highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less.

(g) Revenue and Other Income

Revenue is measured at the fair value of the consideration received or receivable after taking into account any trade discounts and volume rebates allowed.

Interest revenue is recognised when received.

Grant and Donation income is recognised when the Association obtains control over funds. Control over core grant income received occurs when it is applied in accordance with funding guidelines as set down in the funding agreement. The Association has no right to recognise funds as income unless they are applied in accordance with the funding agreement guidelines. Any excess funds remaining at the end of the grant period are to be repaid to the funding body. If grant conditions are not satisfied the revenue is deferred and recognised as a liability.

All revenue is stated net of the amount of goods and services tax (GST).

(h) Leases

Lease payments for operating leases, where substantially all the risks and benefits remain with the lessor, are charged as expenses in the periods in which they are incurred.

(i) Goods and Services Tax (GST)

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of GST, except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO). Receivables and payables are stated inclusive of the amount of GST receivable or payable. The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the

ATO is included with other receivables or payables in the Statement of Financial Position.

(j) New and Amended Accounting Standards Adopted

During the current year the Association adopted all new and amended Australian Accounting Standards and Interpretations applicable to its operations which became mandatory.

(k) New Accounting Standards applicable in future periods

The AASB has issued new and amended Accounting Standards and Interpretations that have mandatory application dates for future reporting periods.

The committee members have decided against early adoption of these Standards, but do not expect the adoption of these standards to have any impact on the reported position or performance of the Association. If the Association in the future enters into a long term rental lease, a right to use asset might emerge.

(l) Going Concern and Economic Dependence

NEWTAAS is dependent on Fair Trading - Department of Finance and Services for the majority of its revenue used to operate the business. There is a current funding contract in place ending 30 September 2019. At the date of this report the committee have no reason to believe the Commissioner for Fair Trading, Department of Finance and Services will not continue to provide funding to NEWTAAS into the foreseeable future. As a result the financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis.

New England & Western Tenants Advice & Advocacy Service Inc.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 30 June 2019 (Cont.)

Note 2 Accounts receivable and other debtors

	2019	2018
	\$	\$
Accounts Receivable	1,141	1,964
Prepayments	3,254	Nil
Reimbursable Expenses	146	145
Tax Receivable	1,962	1,894
Total Trade and Other Receivables	6,503	4,003

Note 3 Property, Plant and Equipment

	2019	2018
	\$	\$
Office Equipment	50,429	49,645
Less: Accumulated Depreciation	(32,168)	(27,467)
Total Property, Plant and Equipment	18,261	22,178

	2019
	\$
Carrying amount at 30 June 2018	22,178
Asset Purchases	5,782
Profit/Loss on disposal of Equipment	Nil
Depreciation	(9,699)
Closing Balance at 30 June 2019	18,261

New England & Western Tenants Advice & Advocacy Service Inc.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 30 June 2019 (Cont.)

Note 4 Employee Provisions

	2019	2018
	\$	\$
Current		
Annual Leave	66,458	55,658
Long Service Leave	51,078	47,051
Personal/Carers Leave	29,720	38,318
Locum & Salaries	93,800	46,364
Time in Lieu	12,447	4,665
	<u>253,503</u>	<u>192,056</u>
Non Current		
Redundancy	78,368	73,340
	<u>78,368</u>	<u>73,340</u>

Note 5 Other Current Liabilities

	2019	2018
	\$	\$
Income in Advance	148,180	386,929
	<u>148,180</u>	<u>386,929</u>

Note 6 Leasing Commitments

Operating Lease Commitments

Rent of offices in Armidale, Dubbo and Tamworth Payable

	2019
	\$
- minimum monthly lease payments	2,022
- not later than 12 months	Nil
- between 12 months and five years	Nil
- greater than five years	Nil
	<u>2,022</u>

The Armidale office Minto property lease was intended to be a non-cancellable lease with a two-year term ending on 30 June 2019, with rent payable monthly in advance. There are contingent rental provisions within the lease agreement requiring that the minimum lease payments shall be increased by a maximum of the Consumer Price Index per annum. A lease has been prepared but is yet to be signed and so NEWTAAS' current commitment is to pay one month rent in advance.

The other offices are located in Dubbo and Tamworth. Both these offices have an informal Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") in place which provides for the option of either party giving one month's notice. In reality, these arrangements are reviewed on an annual basis.

The MOU in Dubbo provides for an estimated term to the end of June 2019 with CPI increments. This is because NEWTAAS agreed to meet the costs involved in relocating within the Dubbo Neighbourhood Centre ("DNC"). Rent is payable quarterly in advance. NEWTAAS are in the process of negotiating a new MOU with DNC which is likely to be \$11,500 per annum for 5 years with CPI or 3%.

The Tamworth office is a single office sublet under an MOU with Disability Advocacy NSW, with rent payable monthly in advance with CPI increments annually.

Note 7 Contingent liabilities and capital commitments

Contingent liabilities

To the best of the manager's and members of the Committee's knowledge and belief there are no contingent liabilities at balance date.

Capital commitments

To the best of the manager's and members of the Committee's knowledge and belief there are no other capital commitments at balance date.

Note 8 Related Parties

There were no known related party dealings.

Note 9 Events after the end of the Reporting Period

No matters or circumstances have arisen since the end of the financial year which significantly affected or could significantly affect the operations of the Association, the results of those operations, or the state of affairs of the Association in future financial years.

New England & Western Tenants Advice & Advocacy Service Inc.

Statement by Members of the Committee
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019


The Committee has determined that the Association is not a reporting entity and that these special purpose financial statements should be prepared in accordance with the accounting policies outlined in Note 1 to the financial Statements.

In the opinion of the Committee and in accordance with the *Australian Charities & Not for Profits Commission Act, 2012*, the attached special purpose financial statements:


1. Present a true and fair view of the financial position of New England and Western Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service Incorporated as at 30 June 2019 and its performance for the year ended on that date.
2. At the date of this statement there are reasonable grounds to believe that New England and Western Tenants Advise and Advocacy Service Incorporated will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

In determining their opinion above the committee have taken into consideration the going concern information set out in Note 1(l) to these accounts.

This statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the Committee and is signed for and on behalf of the Committee by:

Chair 

Anne Wolfenden

Member 

Elizabeth Stahlnt

Dated: August 2019

Independent Audit Report to the members of New England and Western Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service Incorporated

Report on the Audit of the Financial Statements

Opinion

We have audited the accompanying financial statements, being special purpose financial statements of New England and Western Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service Incorporated (the Association), which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2019, and the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, the statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, including a summary of significant accounting policies, other explanatory notes and the members' declaration.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements of the Association are in accordance with Division 60 of *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*, including:

- (i) giving a true and fair view of the Association's financial position as at 30 June 2019 and of its performance for the year ended on that date in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1; and
- (ii) complying with Australian Accounting Standards to the extent described in Note 1 and complying with the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulations 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 Association in accordance with the auditor independence requirements of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* and the ethical 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 statements in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

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 1 to the financial statements, which describe the basis of accounting. The special purpose financial statements have been prepared for the purpose of fulfilling the Associations' financial reporting responsibilities under the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* and its members. As a result, the financial statements may not be suitable for another purpose. Our opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

Emphasis of Matter – Going Concern

Without qualifying the above opinion, we draw your attention to the information regarding going concern set out in Note 1(j) to the financial statements. The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis despite the uncertainty around the extension of the grant funding past 30 September 2019.

Responsibilities of Management and those charged with Governance

Management is responsible for the presentation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with 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 statements is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

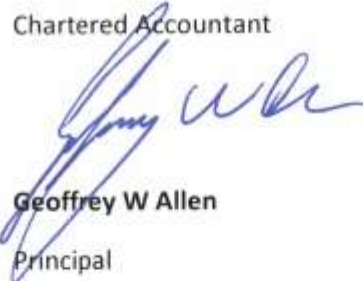
In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the Association's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Association or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's Responsibility

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are 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 the financial statements.

Forsyth's

Chartered Accountant



Geoffrey W Allen

Principal

92 Rusden Street, Armidale

Dated this 30th August 2019