

2019 – 2020 TASSO Annual Report to Members

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

July 2019 to the end of June 2020 has been a challenging year, and more so the time since March 2020, just like it has for everyone, with the onset of a global pandemic caused by COVID-19, which we all continue to deal with.

Past Actions & Forward Planning Bring Positive Results.

Using Technology to Increase Participation

In previous years TASSO upgraded technology, migrated to Office 365 and volunteers and staff became accustomed to working with written information on a shared digital platform. This investment placed us in good stead to remain connected and functional no matter the restrictions in place at any given time due to COVID-19.

The necessity to embrace the technology at hand meant what were once ideas has become reality. It was often suggested that Management Committee meetings be held online, now they are. The benefits of which have been 100% attendance, increased frequency, and enhanced governance. However, it would be safe to say the greatest benefit to the voluntary Management Committee is that they no longer need to give up whole Saturdays to attend Management Committee meetings.

Strategic planning always identified the need to utilise a cost and time effective system which would offer the opportunity for active participation and inclusion to a greater number of individuals, school associations and communities, regardless of their geographic location. Connectivity to adequate internet is something beyond our control. However, we will continue to push for comparable access to the national broadband and technological equipment which allows all schools, their students, families, and communities to be on parity with those in urban areas.

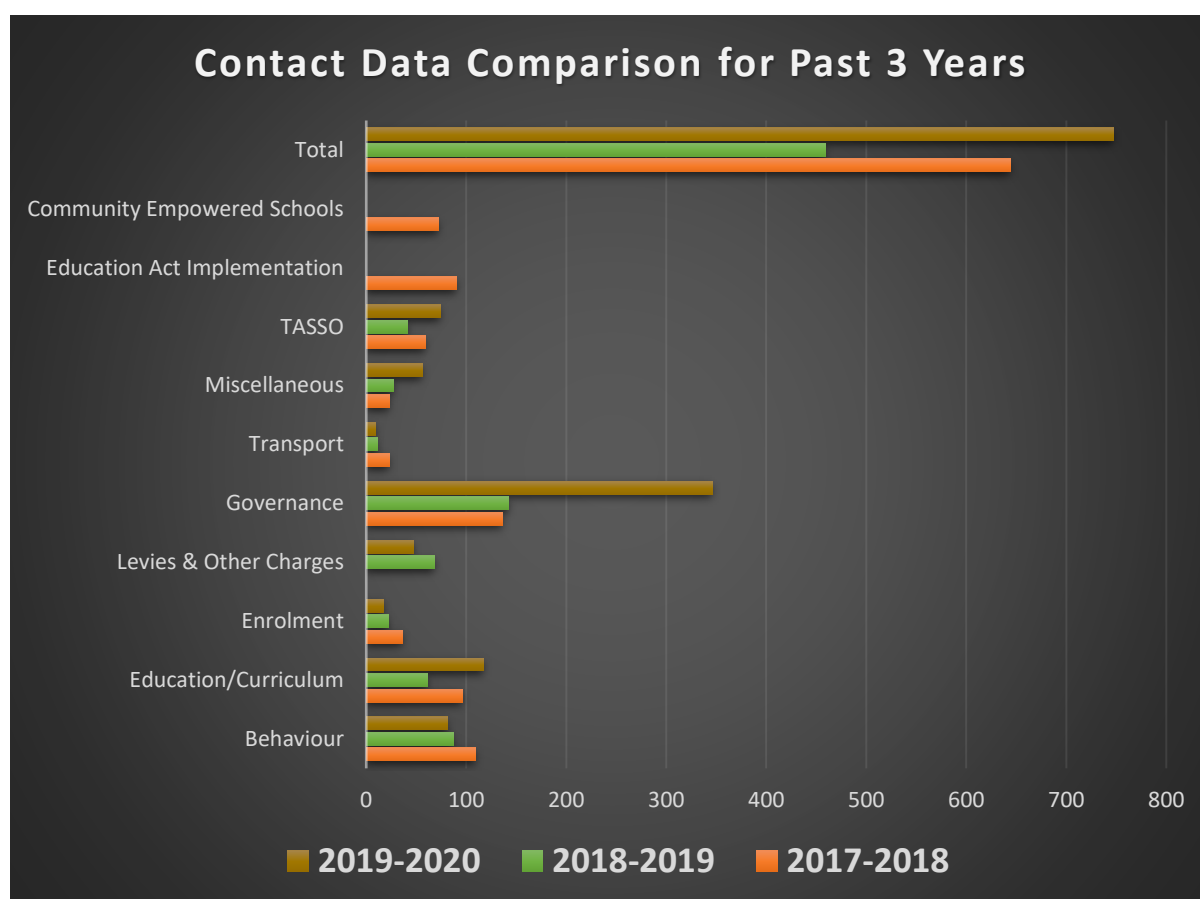
2019 saw the Management Committee trial a hub and spoke method for conducting the AGM, with the main location being the TASSO Office in Lindisfarne and offering the ability for others to link in from the paranple centre in Devonport. In August 2020, we see TASSO Regional meetings being conducted from a central location in each of the three regions, with members of school associations participating online and TASSO staff participating remotely from Lindisfarne.

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

2019-2020 Focus

School Associations, their Committees, Families and Community

The core objective of TASSO is the provision of support, guidance, and information to all members of school associations, their families and communities and is central in our decision making. It is this work that is the most satisfying, particularly when the outcome is of benefit to student learning and the greater engagement of families with the school. The graph below depicts the number of phone and email contacts received by staff and volunteer Management Committee members for the previous year, grouped into specific topics. Many of these 747 contacts require a minimum of 40 minutes each in the initial contact and generally result in follow up conversations, emails and correspondence with more than one party, and may potentially include several units of the DoE, school associations and supporting bodies, before a positive and effective outcome is achieved. This equates to a minimum of 498 hours of the provision of direct assistance and service to those we represent.



Working with Stakeholders

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

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

| Event | Frequency |
|--|------------------|
| ACSSO AGM | 1 |
| ACSSO Board Meeting | 3 |
| ACSSO Member Representative Meeting | 5 |
| ACSSO Roundtable | 1 |
| Alcohol & Drug Foundation Community | 1 |
| ARACY Learning from Lockdown | 1 |
| Association of Children with Disabilities AGM | 1 |
| Bus Operators | 1 |
| Catholic Parents Tasmania 60 th Annual Conference & AGM | 1 |
| Children's Commissioner | 1 |
| CPSU | 1 |
| DoE - Minister for Education Jeremy Rockliff | 1 |
| DoE - Mobile Phone Ban | 1 |
| DoE - Approved Learning Program - Years 9-12 | 1 |
| DoE - Community Liaison Managers | 1 |
| DoE – COVID Response Team | 2 |
| DoE – Deputy Secretary of Learning | 1 |
| DoE - School Levies and Charges Policy and Procedure | 1 |
| DoE - Family Partnership Approach | 3 |
| DoE - Finance TASSO Grant | 2 |
| DoE - Get Involved Project Update | 4 |
| DoE - Inclusion and Diversity | 1 |
| DoE - Intake Area review & briefings | 3 |
| DoE - Kindergarten Funding | 1 |
| DoE - Learning Services, English as an Additional Language | 1 |
| DoE - NAPLAN Briefing | 1 |
| DoE - School Association Unit re FAQ's review | 2 |
| DoE - Secretary Tim Bullard | 5 |
| DoE - Social Media Policy review | 1 |
| DoE - Student Awards (Southern) | 1 |
| DoE - Years 11-12 Extension Program Reference Group | 3 |
| DoE Child & Student Wellbeing Unit | 1 |
| Employment Workshop & Meeting | 1 |
| FaCT AGM | 1 |
| Labor's - Education, Science, Research & the Antarctic Industry Advisory Council | 3 |
| Melbourne Declaration Review Stakeholder Forum | 1 |
| Ministerial Inclusion Advisory Panel | 2 |
| Northern Regional Meeting (Launceston) | 2 |
| North-West Regional Meeting (Burnie) | 2 |
| Shadow Minister for Education & Training Josh Willie | 1 |

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|--|---|
| Southern Regional Meeting (Lindisfarne) | 2 |
| Southern School Association – Government Workshop | 1 |
| Tas Assessment Standards & Certification (TASC) | 2 |
| TasCOSS Community Services COVID-19 | 9 |
| TasCOSS Policy Conversation – Engaging with Education | 1 |
| Tasmanian Principal Association | 1 |
| Tasmanian School Canteen Association Board | 3 |
| UTAS Course Advisory Committee | 1 |
| Volunteer Tas. - Volunteers Managers | 1 |
| Volunteering Tas. - Connect & Share – Road to Recovery | 1 |

Working in collaboration with likeminded groups, to enable us to better represent the voice of families of students in Tasmanian government schools and colleges has occurred on 89 occasions. Each occasion on average takes 2.5 hours, this includes attendance, pre & post preparation and in some circumstances travel time, which equates to 222.5 hours.

TASSO Management Committee and staff were members of Boards, Reference Groups and Advisory Panels during the Association Year of 2019-2020 of:

| Group | Representative |
|--|---|
| ACSSO Board of Directors | Gary Morse, Jared Dickason |
| ACSSO Member Representative | Lyn Spaulding, Debra McOrist-Mitchell |
| Community Empowered Schools & Education Act | Jared Dickason, Debra McOrist-Mitchell |
| DoE Years 11 - 12 Extension Program Reference Group | Wendy Timperon |
| DoE Years 9 to 12 Curriculum Framework | Chris Lynch |
| Ministerial Inclusion Advisory Panel | Nigel Jones |
| Move Well Eat Well | Petra Parker |
| NAPLAN Stakeholders | Jared Dickason, Debra McOrist-Mitchell |
| Tasmanian Schools Canteen Association Board | Jared Dickason |
| UTas Faculty of Education Course Advisory Committee | Chris Lynch |
| Labor's Education, Science, Research & the Antarctic Industry Advisory Council | Nigel Jones |

In 2019-2020 TASSO were financial members of:

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

TASSO & the Media

Some years back, during a strategic planning and risk mitigation exercise, the then TASSO Management Committee, identified the importance of TASSO being the first point of contact for the media when seeking comment on educational matters that have an effect on students and their families. Amazing inroads have been made in this space, with a minimum number of 170 contacts made to TASSO by media outlets from Tasmania and mainland Australia this year. Media now operating in a cycle of 24 hours per day seven days a week has increased demand for instant responses.

TASSO Goals for 2019-2020 and their progress

Workshop Modules

The work that began as an extension to Community Empowered Schools and the Education Act 2016 continues and trials have been held since the last TASSO AGM through the delivery of nine regional meetings. Attendance at regional meetings has been steadily increasing. The modules are ever evolving and being refined.

TASSO Constitution

A proposed new TASSO Constitution is to be presented as a motion for deliberation at the TASSO 2020 AGM. To ensure that the proposed constitution meets all legal requirements regarding compliancy, is adaptable to the modern world, aligns as much as possible with the constitutions of school associations, Justice Connect was approached and they organised for Hive Legal to offer their services pro bono in assisting with the writing of what we hope becomes the new Constitution for TASSO. To both Justice Connect and Hive Legal we wish to acknowledge our appreciation.

TASSO Funding

One of the key recommendations in our 2019-2020 sundry grant application to the Department of Education (DoE) and the Minister for Education and Training Jeremy Rockliff MP was for additional funding of \$14,000.00 to directly fund membership of all school associations with TASSO, thus removing the cost to associations. In 2020 we wrote to all school associations advising them that:

The Minister for Education and Training Jeremy Rockliff MP and the Department of Education recognise the value of school associations being members of TASSO, given the quality of our knowledge, work and support and have therefore provided TASSO with a small grant to cover the memberships ordinarily paid by school associations.

The funding to TASSO has covered all school associations being a member of TASSO. If you wish to opt out of your TASSO membership...

One hundred and ninety school associations, out of the possible 191, are members of TASSO. Many of the 190 expressed their appreciation of the Minister and Department in allowing them to be financial members of TASSO without having to use their own funds, and that they too recognise the value of the support and knowledge TASSO offer.

With the outbreak of COVID-19 all current funding arrangements have only been guaranteed for the 2020-2021 period. We will commence discussions with the Minister and Department over coming months with a view to re-establishing the triennial funding format.

TASSO Looking Forward

TASSO as a peak body understand much of the work supporting our school associations and their members is undertaken in a reactionary manner when advocating for and offering positive support to, those who contact us. We believe the more proactive we become in the development of resources and upskilling of members that the anxiety which can exist within school associations, families and school communities will decline.

TASSO as a management committee have identified 4 key areas we will continue to work on over the coming years:

- Increased engagement with school associations through newsletters, surveys, working groups, and regional meetings.
- Focus on the development and growth of our management committee and staff.
- Continue to explore the use of a variety of platforms to engage with all stakeholders in the education sector.
- Review of all current tools at our disposal to support our members and the redevelopment of these as required.

TASSO Management Committee 2019-2020

A vital element of any community based, not for profit organisation, like TASSO, is the invaluable contribution of volunteers.

At the 2019 AGM, Dannielle Murfet joined the TASSO Management Committee as a Northern Delegate, bringing talent and skills to the table which are truly appreciated and needed.

December of 2019 Petra Parker, Southern Delegate, resigned her position as Southern Delegate because of relocating to Queensland. Petra first joined the Management Committee at the AGM in 2018. Petra is missed for the knowledge and willingness to give things a try that she brought to TASSO.

April 2020 the Management Committee welcomed back Rena Henderson as a North-West Delegate. Rena previously served on the Management Committee from 2016 to 2017. Rena's enthusiasm in encouraging people to attend TASSO events is inspirational.

The rise of the 2020 AGM will see the end of Lyn Spaulding's (Williams) time with the TASSO Management Committee. Lyn first joined the Committee in 2011 and remained until 2020 during which time served as a Northern Delegate, Junior and Senior Vice President, and the TASSO Member Representative with the Australian Council of State School Organisations. Lyn provided invaluable support to members of the Management Committee and staff.

In Conclusion

It would be safe to say that 2019-2020 has been like no other year in our lifetime. This year has taught us all to review the way we interact with each other on all levels and situations. We have had to re-act to the changing situations of the world with a moment's notice and in many cases provide and create solutions that have required effort, workload and support over and above that which would be expected or required pre COVID-19.

TASSO Management Committee would like to acknowledge the amazing work done by the entire Department of Education led by Tim Bullard and his team. We acknowledge and appreciate each and every principal, teacher, support worker, facilities attendant, administration and support staff for their can do attitude to each and every change that was required to ensure the continual education of young Tasmanians, some of who will be future leaders.

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

The interaction between families and schools was unprecedented with all placing the best interests of young Tasmanians at the centre, whilst facing and dealing with COVID-19 concerns impacting their lives as individuals, partners, and families at the same time. The level of engagement undertaken by educators and families we hope is the new benchmark of what can be collaboratively achieved.

TASSO Management Committee would also like to acknowledge the hard work of the Tasmanian Government and politicians during this pandemic, ensuring the safety of all in our community.

Finally, the TASSO Management Committee acknowledge the tireless work undertaken by our small and amazing team of staff, whose ability to adapt to the ever changing scene of education over the 2019-2020 year has been incredible. The continued delivery of information in a timely manner to our school associations, through to dealing with the individual needs of those parents we support as an organisation. Their ability as a team to embrace these changes required and, in many cases, bring and support the Management Committee along the way cannot be acknowledged enough.

If nothing else, 2019-2020 has taught us as individuals, parents, families, a Management team and members of an organisation that we have the ability to embrace this ever changing environment, adapt where required and continue to offer support, solutions and positive outcomes for those that most need it in our community.

We look forward to continuing our journey on delivering positive outcomes for all in education and provide time sensitive support and understanding to the ever changing needs of our current world.



Nigel Jones, President.