

ANNUAL REPORT

1 JULY 2021 TO 30 JUNE 2022



2022



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Stonnington Community Assist Incorporated, previously known as Prahran Citizens' Advice Bureau, has been serving the Stonnington community since 1969. Over this period, the service has expanded from assisting clients with community information and advice, to providing food and material goods assistance, a free Legal Service, Tax Help, NILs Loans, transport cards and importantly, always with a listening ear when people are in need.

We are grateful for the continued funding from the City of Stonnington and the Department of Social Services.

We would also like to acknowledge the financial support of the Community Bank Windsor, Hein's Bakery, Woolworths, Pino's Market Stall and the Melbourne Magistrates Court Fund.

Bill McMaster, Manager at the market has always provided a prompt response to our needs and we wish him well in his retirement.

Enormous thanks go to all the committed volunteers for their tireless efforts in keeping the organisation thriving.

The Committee of Management members for financial year 2021 to 2022 were:

Clare Duggan	President
Anthony Hyden	Treasurer
Frances Cooper	Secretary
Julie Woolhouse	Committee Member
Philippa Ryan	Committee Member
Jennifer Cox	Committee Member
Heidi Sanford	Committee Member



Australian Government
Department of Social Services



Woolworths

Community Bank Windsor



*Presentation of
\$5,000
contribution from
Community Bank
Windsor*



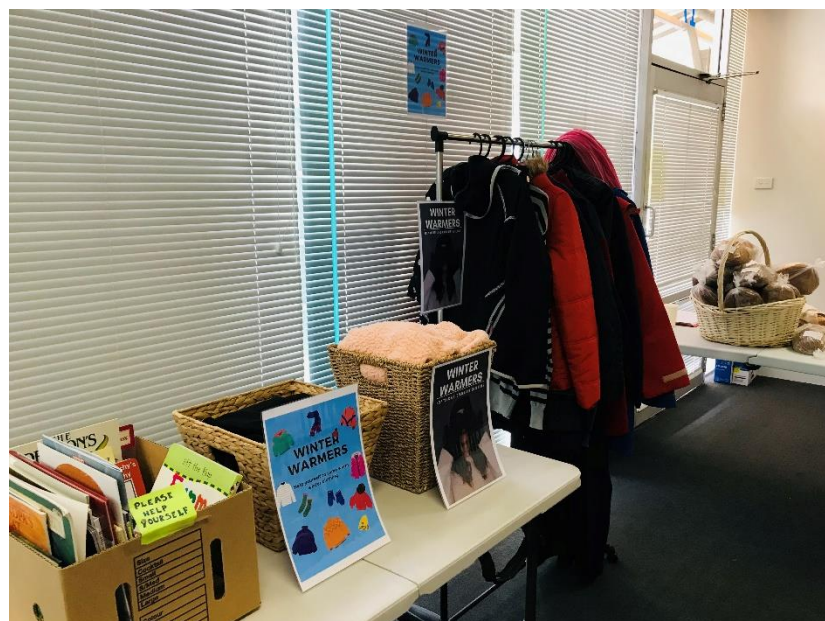
OUR MISSION

Our mission is to help members of the local community by providing support, information, advice and material aid. Our service is impartial, non-judgmental, and does not discriminate on the basis of ethnicity, gender, sexuality or disability.



Above: Stonnington Community Assist Front Signage

Below: Winter Warmers Appeal





PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I am pleased to report on the previous financial year at SCA and highlight the resilience shown by our volunteers.

During the long COVID lockdown in the last six months of 2021 and into 2022, SCA provided all services via the telephone. Volunteers initially worked from home accessing the answering machine remotely, then resumed at the office responding directly to calls. Food parcels were delivered via a council employee and vouchers were given out directly to bank accounts. The service adapted its program to face to face appointment-only from January to April then resumed the practice of receiving walk-ins without appointment. During the past year, despite the lockdowns, we have increased the number of unique clients by 11 % and the number of ER visits by 16%.

With the retention of many of our long-term volunteers during this past year and the recruitment of several younger ones, we have been able to deliver our services to the same standard as previously. As of June 2022, we had over 20 volunteers plus a student on placement from Swinburne University, an increase from the previous year. Of these, five are of a younger age group and all are studying a related community diploma or degree. We have managed some social occasions – a Christmas break-up and Volunteer Week afternoon tea.

Our office hours have remained the same despite the COVID restrictions with volunteers committed to working one three-hour shift per week and one six-hour shift, once per month.

As per our charter, SCA has provided community information and support to over 630 individual clients during the past year, an increase of 61 clients, despite the impact of the lockdown.

This assistance has been in the form of:

1. Financial Support

- Food assistance - Clients have received a Coles voucher once per three months and during this period can receive two food parcels. We have now negotiated with an individual stall holder who supplies our clients with a generous supply of fresh fruit and vegetables. A local bakery now supplies excess bread weekly and recently, Woolworths has contacted us to supply baked goods. We allocated \$3,000 of Stonnington funding to Christmas vouchers.
- Material goods - Clients who need clothing or bedding can receive a Big W or ALDI voucher or an OP shop voucher. We again initiated our Winter Warmers appeal to provide free coats and jackets to our clients.
- Education Support - Several children from local primary and secondary schools were given part payment for a school camp. These camps are an essential part of the curriculum. We are now working on protocols with Windsor and Toorak Primary Schools and Prahran Secondary College, to ensure these funds reach families experiencing financial hardship.
- Tax Help - Clients on low income were assisted with completing their tax return.



- **Free Legal Service.** All residents of Stonnington are eligible to receive this advice. They can receive a fifteen-minute consultation with a volunteer lawyer.
- **No Interest Loan Scheme.** This is a new service for SCA and enables clients to secure a loan payable through their Centrelink account.
- **Advocacy.** Clients were assisted with applying for a reduction of traffic fines or the securement of a payment plan through Stonnington Council. This also applies to utility bills when clients are in arrears. Volunteers contact the utility provider and advocate on the client's behalf to implement a late payment plan. Clients are informed about the Utility Relief Grant. Some volunteers have been trained as Energy Mentors to assist clients manage these bills.
- **Form Filling/Letter Writing.** Clients who do not have access to the internet or email have received assistance with applying for the Government Energy Bonus. They can use our email address to receive notification that their application has been approved. Well over fifty clients have been able to receive this bonus through our assistance.
- **Other examples** are of clients wishing to renew their passport or permanent residency visa to travel overseas. Recently, a client needed assistance with writing a letter of complaint to the Ministry of Housing about a very noisy tenant; another, needed to communicate with VCAT.
- **Information Giving** - Our desktops have a range of resources so we can inform clients about their rights and responsibilities and refer them to many relevant services including local community programs. This is part of our role every day. We constantly stock up on the many information brochures in our office.

2. Support of clients with complex needs

All volunteers must complete the accredited Community Support Workers training. They listen empathetically to each client to assess their situation and to respond in a holistic way to best understand their needs. This may involve referring to other professionals when specialised support or expertise is needed.

In May, eighteen volunteers attended a four-hour face to face capacity building training session with a focus on communicating with those with mental health issues. A second session focussed on navigating the Centrelink system. We are now more informed about referring clients to relevant services.

Other training sessions have included speakers from Launch Housing and Uniting Care. Three volunteers recently attended the Stonnington training: Understanding Financial Roles, Responsibilities and Reporting.

3. Reaching out to a broader range of clients and other organisations

The name, Stonnington Community Assist is now fully established. Our website has expanded, and we have a Facebook page. We have recently installed new corflutes and changed the Commercial Road Street sign. This has enabled us to have a broader reach. Committee members are involved in several networks, and we have been visited by local State and Federal MPs. This assists with our goal to lobby both State and Federal MPs to



provide funding for professional paid staff in each agency. Our agency is sorely missing the assistance of a full-time paid co-ordinator since September last year. With part of our funding, we were able to extend Ruchi's tenure for a further three months. We have now reverted to a volunteer only agency and would welcome a part-time paid worker to provide consistent support to volunteers and to seek out further outreach opportunities. We miss the constancy of Ruchi with her capacity to provide cheerful support to both clients and volunteers.

4. Strengthening client resilience and capacity

All volunteers are a constant source of knowledge and provide advocacy and information. Referrals are made to financial counsellors when clients have engaged with payday lenders. NILs loans can avoid the extra cost of interest payments. Clients are now well informed about the government energy bonus and have benefitted by encouragement to embrace a payment plan to manage the increased cost of living. Higher numbers of people are presenting at our agency with increasingly complex issues and volunteers are doing their best to support clients through these situations.

5. Promoting accessibility and inclusion

Our volunteers are now more reflective of the clients who use our service. We have recruited younger, more ethnically diverse volunteers and have achieved a more equal gender balance. During this past year we have supervised three TAFE students studying the Diploma of Community Services. These young students have added fresh eyes to our service and have assisted us to be more aware of our responses to clients. We use the Interpreter service with clients who are not proficient in English. Our in-service training three/four times per year emphasises the importance of inclusion.

I began with the word 'resilience' and with this in mind, wish to pay homage to firstly the COM and secondly to our volunteers. The COM is a strong and united group and despite the difficulties created by COVID, has remained innovative and committed to making changes for the better. As a volunteer only agency, everyone contributes to ensure the smooth running of our office.

Our volunteers have stepped up to fill the roster and proudly we have remained open consistently. Chris has worked tirelessly despite the many variables she is presented with as we start to travel again and have other responsibilities. Fortunately, she has a willing and selfless band of volunteers to call upon.

Thank you to all for contributing to a successful year and may we remain energised to tackle the future whatever that may be.

Clare Duggan President



FREE LEGAL SERVICE REPORT

With the easing of Covid restrictions the Stonnington Free Legal Service was able to throughout the whole year, unlike the previous two years. We continued to consult with clients by telephone on Thursday evenings from 6.30pm but on occasions altered the time slot to accommodate the lawyer and in addition I have provided advice to clients face-to-face in the office while rostered on with Stonnington Community Assist.

During the year we had 113 appointments, with 94 clients. This was well up on last year's 68 appointments but still down on the pre-pandemic numbers of 150 appointments in 2017.

Without Ruchi, our full-time employee, we had to devise a new system for providing the appointment details to the lawyers. Once we all got used to the new system of the Wednesday volunteers emailing the details to me each week this generally worked well.

Throughout the year we had 8 volunteer lawyers and me as the Supervising Legal Practitioner. The solicitors from Matthews Family Law led by Kristian La Rocca resigned at the end of June 2022 and I would like to thank them and, Kristian, for volunteering with us for over three years.

I would like to thank our lawyers, Rodrigo Haddad, Kristian La Rocca, Vanessa Matthews, Shaun Miller, Ashleigh Pearse, Phoebe Smillie and Chloe Taylor for their time and ongoing support of the Stonnington Free Legal Service.

Jenny Cox



TAX HELP REPORT

The Australian Tax Office provides free Tax Help to people on low to moderate incomes whose tax affairs are reasonably simple. Volunteers are Police checked and undertake training in straightforward tax situations. Ideally they guide the client through submitting the return; in some cases they submit on behalf of the client but always the content of the return is provided and authorised by the client.

Stonnington Community Assist has offered Tax Help for many years and this continued into the 2020-2021 year. Many clients have been coming for years. There are two Tax Help volunteers; Wendy has volunteered for several years (Monday evenings) and Lesley more recently. The 2020-2021 return period has been particularly challenging as for much of the year returns were dealt with over phone and by computer!

Some clients were assisted outside the official Tax Help period which was again extended to the end of November. They do not appear on this report as they are treated as 'helping clients fill in forms'.

Some clients required repeat visits and there were a couple of no-shows.

Month	Appointments	Lodged
July	2	2
Lesley	2	2
August	8	6
Lesley	8	6
September	5	5
Wendy	5	5
October	4	2
Lesley	4	2
November	1	1
Lesley	1	1
Grand Total	20	16

Lesley McCrann
(Tax Help Volunteer)



EMERGENCY RELIEF STATISTICS REPORT

The achievements of the CAB during FY 2021-2022 are best illustrated by the below chart of unique emergency response clients assisted per month. Data is presented by calendar month.

The following observations may be made on the chart:

Other statistics describing the operation of SCA during 2021-202 are presented in the table below:

	July 2021 – June 2022	July 2020 – June 2021
Total ER visits	1684	1451
Clients assisted	629	568
New Clients	200	173
Homeless Clients	58	59
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Clients	29	26
Asylum Seekers	7	12
International Students	6	13

Clients aged less than 20 years	2%	1%
Clients aged 20 to 39 years	20%	24%
Clients aged 40 to 64 years	56%	56%
Clients 65 years or older	22%	20%



Clients' main language spoken at home

English	83%	82%
Russian	7%	6%
Spanish		1%
Ukrainian	1%	1%
Greek		
Mandarin/Cantonese	1%	1%

Total aid provided, as reported on CISVIC Portal	\$71,639	\$72,726
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Anthony Hyden

(Non-executive Committee Member)



TREASURER'S REPORT

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS CERTIFICATE
YEAR ENDING 30 JUNE 2022

STONNINGTON COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE INCORPORATED

This is to certify that we have reviewed the financial statements, namely:

Statement of Receipts and Payments,
and Statement of Operations

and find that they provide a true and fair view of the financial position and performance of Stonnington Community Assistance Incorporated during and at the end of the financial year ended 30 June 2022.

NAME: CLARE DUGGAN NAME: Julie Woolhouse

POSITION: PRESIDENT POSITION Committee Member

SIGNED: Clare Duggan SIGNED Julie Woolhouse

DATE: 27.9.2022. DATE 29-9-2022.



**STONNINGTON COMMUNITY ASSIST INC
STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 2022 (FY2022)**

	FY 2022	FY 2021
	\$	\$
RECEIPTS		
City of Stonnington		
Community Grant	50,000	32,000
Operating Expenses	35,500	34,710
CIS Vic	43,698	58,030
Court Fund	6,000	2,000
Bendigo Bank Grant (Note 1)	5,000	-
Bank Interest	71	459
Donations	20	-
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TOTAL RECEIPTS	140,288	127,199
PAYMENTS		
AID		
Food vouchers	60,142	73,631
Food parcels	9,883	8,608
Education support	3,195	
Material goods	2,753	-
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SUBTOTAL AID	75,973	82,239
OPERATING EXPENSES		
Telephone & Internet	1,967	5,478
Office expenses & Petty Cash	4,027	2,852
Electricity	1,371	1,106
Bank fees	-	114
Rent	30,346	29,040
CIS Vic membership	330	250
Community Worker (Note 2)	36,751	-
Training	1,074	-
PO Box & postage	188	136
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SUBTOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	76,054	38,976
TOTAL PAYMENTS	152,027	121,215
Excess of (payments) receipts	-11,739	5,984



Opening Cash at Bank & Term Deposits	120,623	114,639
Cash at Bank & Term Deposits at 30th June 2022	108,884	120,623
Cash at Bank	88,885	74,849
Term Deposits Bendigo Bank	20,000	45,774
Cash Resources at 30th June 2022	108,885	120,623

Note 1: Grant for 2022 Xmas vouchers

Note 2: Statement of Receipts and Payments for FY 2021 listed a payment of \$19,670 for Community Worker. This amount was listed as a liability in the Statement of Operations and paid on 14 July 2021

**STONNINGTON COMMUNITY ASSIST INC STATEMENT OF
OPERATIONS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 2022 (FY2022)**



	FY 2022	FY 2021
	\$	\$
OPENING ASSETS		
Coles food vouchers	10,600	(Note 4)
Aldi vouchers	-	
Market vouchers	-	
BigW vouchers	2,250	
Pantry food (Note 1)	1,500	
St Vincent's vouchers (Note 2)	50	
Travel cards (Note 2)	105	
Petty cash (Note 2)	65	
Opening cash at bank and term deposits	120,623	114,639
TOTAL OPENING ASSETS	135,193	
RECEIPTS (SEE STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS)		
TOTAL RECEIPTS	140,288	127,199
OPERATIONS		
AID GIVEN (Note 3)		
Food vouchers	52,734	61,552
Food parcels	10,041	5,425
Education support	2,827	10
Material goods	5,664	4,542
Other	373	1,197
SUBTOTAL AID	71,639	72,726
OPERATING EXPENSES (SEE STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS)		
SUBTOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	76,054	38,976
EXPECTED CLOSING ASSETS		
Opening assets	135,193	
Plus receipts	140,288	127,199
Less aid given	-71,639	-72,726
Less operating expenses	-76,054	-38,976
NET EXPECTED CLOSING ASSETS	127,788	
MEASURED CLOSING ASSETS		
Coles food vouchers	15,950	10,600
Aldi vouchers	770	-
Market vouchers	370	-
BigW vouchers	750	2,250
Pantry food (Note 1)	1,000	1,500
St Vincent's vouchers (Note 5)	50	50



Travel cards (Note 5)	105	105
Petty cash (Note 5)	65	65
Closing cash at bank and term deposits	108,885	120,623
TOTAL CLOSING ASSETS	127,945	135,193

Note 1: Pantry food estimated by volunteer who purchases food, based on last order.

Note 2: Place holder, small item not recorded at 01/07/2021

Note 3: From CIS Vic database. Amounts are entered by volunteers following client interview.

Note 4: Inventory at 01/07/2020 not available

Note 5: Recorded at 01/07/2022 only. Place holder for 01/07/2021.

Anthony Hyden

(Honorary Treasurer)



PANTRY REPORT

The pantry at Stonnington Community Assist aims to provide emergency staples to cover the food needs of clients experiencing financial hardship for 3 or 4 days. These items include breakfast cereal, milk, rice, pasta and pasta sauces. Other items include canned vegetables and fruit. We also have a range of snack items, personal care items and can offer fresh bread donated by Hein's Bakery in Malvern, and Woolworths Toorak donate bread and other assorted items on a weekly basis.

In addition to the pantry items, we are able to provide a voucher for fresh vegetables supplied by Pino's of Prahran Market. This comes in the form of a box of fresh seasonal produce. This enables our clients to add fresh food to the pantry items we can supply.

Last Christmas, thanks to council funding, we were able to give out over 100 ALDI vouchers to our clients. We supplemented these with donations of cakes from Rotary. This Christmas gesture has proved popular as clients can choose from a variety of food items or presents to give to family members.

Julie Woolhouse

(Pantry Coordinator, Volunteer)





ADDITIONAL PHOTOS



Above: Pino's Fruit and Vegetables Stall

Below: SCA's new front window signage

Above: Visit by Sam Hibbins MLA for Malvern

Below: Assortment of baked goods and fresh produce available for clients

