



*This was then...1969*

*This is now...2023*



**STONNINGTON COMMUNITY ASSIST**

# **ANNUAL REPORT**

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**1 JULY 2022 TO 30 JUNE 2023**

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Stonnington Community Assist has a dedicated committee, a team of volunteers and supporting organisations that have allowed it to serve effectively for over 50 years.

We proudly acknowledge the continued support of The City of Stonnington, The Department of Social Services (DSS), Community Information and Support Victoria (CISVic), Community Bank Windsor and the Magistrates' Court of Victoria.

In 2022 we were pleased to have committee representatives as follows - Clare Duggan (President), Anthony Hyden (Treasurer), Frances Cooper (Secretary), Julie Woolhouse (Pantry Coordinator) and Jenny Cox, Philippa Reed and Heidi Sanford (Committee members).

The Stonnington Community Assist wants to recognise and thank all contributions from its volunteers and team. We appreciate the value of your efforts.



## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I am pleased to present my fourth report as President. Despite a rapidly increasing demand for our services and a fall in volunteer numbers, as a volunteer only agency we have still been able to fulfil our mission to assist members of the Stonnington local community by providing support, information and material aid.

Other volunteers will report on the positive results gained through our many services.

However, I would like to highlight the following activities:

Training continues to be an important focus which enables us to better support clients with complex needs and to inform ourselves about current resources. We have held four training sessions in the past year to include cultural awareness given by Meriki Hood, Stonnington Aboriginal Liaison Officer; a session given by CISVic trainer Jill Wilson which centred around developing empathy and non-judgmental attitudes and two sessions to review our Portal procedures, referral resources and our policies. Six volunteers also participated in the Power Saving Bonus training.

Our busiest time has undoubtedly been the implementation of the government Power Saving Bonus scheme. Amidst increasing client demand, decreasing volunteer numbers, we managed to launch the program. Anthony and Lynn set up a stall outside Prahran Town Hall and we staffed it for three separate dates.

It was during this time with the extra client visits, that it became obvious that we needed another interview room and thus the purchase of privacy screens.

Jenny Cox successfully applied for a \$5000 grant from Community Bank Windsor, and this enabled us to spend this money and nearly \$3000 dollars of our own funds on Aldi vouchers for Christmas. This was supplemented by \$1500 worth of hamper items donated by the Grade four/five students at St. Mary's Primary School, East Malvern.

We have continued with our Summer and Winter appeals for donations of clothing.

In May this year, we attended the Boroondara Volunteer Expo and four volunteers set up a stall for the day. Unfortunately, we did not attract a single volunteer. We put this down to being out of the catchment area.

We were again supported by Woolworths and Hein's bakery and have been able to supply clients with vouchers for fresh fruit and vegetables from Pino's market stall.

We have revamped our brochures and developed appointment cards for NILs, Legal Service, Tax and PSB appointments. This has led to an increase in attendance at appointments.

Due to an increase in funding from DSS, we provided monthly vouchers from May to July of \$80 to clients who are on the Job Seeker benefit. In March, we increased the voucher amount to all categories of clients in recognition of the increased cost of living.

Seven students from Prahran High School and Windsor Primary School received money to support school camp and uniform costs.

Clients who have recently relocated or who are homeless, are able to receive a Big W or Aldi voucher of \$50. This can go towards the purchase of a mobile phone, bedding, school uniforms or household items.

We have recently begun networking with Prahran Place Neighbourhood Centre and used this very facility for a recent volunteer training. We have been able to refer our clients to activities offered by the centre. We liaise with Malvern Emergency Food Program, Vinnies, and Uniting Care as extra referral points for our clients as they do with us.

We have celebrated several milestones and sadly have had to say good-bye to some long term volunteers, namely, Pauline Goldsworthy, Karin Bull and Fran Cooper. I would also like to mention the passing of Chris Kellam last November. Chris was the epitome of all the characteristics we seek in a volunteer. She was with us for over eighteen years and served on the COM and then took on the role of organising the roster. She left a huge hole.

We have appreciated our younger volunteers who bring fresh ideas and enthusiasm even though often for shorter periods. Study commitments and the need for employment means that they are not with us long term. As part of the Diploma of Community Services, Bec Dunn a Swinburne student completed a 200-hour placement at our agency last year. Bec used her initiative and was willing to go that extra mile in whatever task she took on.

Thank you to the many volunteers who have supported the agency in the past year and who have stepped in to do more shifts when we have been short of volunteers. Thank you to the Committee of Management who have supported the many changes we have implemented. To Philippa Reed who leaves the COM - a big thank you for your input over the past three years.

Our volunteer numbers are climbing back up and we look forward to another successful year.

Thank you.

**Clare Duggan**  
**(President)**

## FREE LEGAL SERVICE REPORT

Stonnington Free Legal Service (under various names), has been operating under Stonnington Community Assist (with its various names) since 1981. We are 12 years younger than Stonnington Community Assist which was established in 1969 but I am still proud of our 42 years.

Throughout the 2022-2023 year the Stonnington Free Legal Service continued to consult with clients by telephone on Thursday evenings from 6.30pm with me providing advice to clients face-to-face in the office while rostered on with Stonnington Community Assist.

During the year we had 115 appointments, with 98 clients. This was slightly up on last year but still down on the pre-pandemic numbers, which were as high as 150 appointments in 2017.

We appreciate the Stonnington Community Assist volunteers making our appointments and emailing the details to me each week. On those days when they are frantically busy with their own clients it is just one more call on their time but without their help we would not be operating. Thank you for your help – we do appreciate it.

Throughout the year we had 5 volunteer lawyers and myself as the Supervising Legal Practitioner. Two solicitors, Chloe Taylor as she has moved interstate, and Deb Andronaco for medical reasons, have now resigned and I would like to thank them for volunteering with us. I am desperately trying to recruit some new volunteers but it is not easy. I want to ensure that we are still operating in eight years' time and reach our 50 year anniversary!

I would like to thank our lawyers, Rodrigo Haddad, Shaun Miller and Phoebe Smillie for their time and ongoing support of the Stonnington Free Legal Service. They have all been volunteering with us for a long time now and without them we would not be able to be operating.

**Jenny Cox**  
**(Supervising Legal Practitioner/ FLS Volunteer)**



## 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 2022-2023 year. Many clients have been coming for years. In the previous tax year there were two Tax Help volunteers; Wendy has volunteered for several years and Lesley for a couple of years now. Wendy no longer comes into the office of an evening; she uses computer, internet and MS Teams to help people submit their returns online. She assisted two clients this year.

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

A number of clients were assisted outside the official Tax Help period. They do not appear on this report as this is treated as 'helping clients fill in forms'.

Activity	Number
Amend	1
Appointment	11
Ineligible	3
Lodge	24
Query	5
Superannuation query	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>45</b>

**Lesley McCrann**  
**(Tax Help Volunteer)**



## NILS REPORT

This year we have slowly increased the number of people we have talked to about this service, resulting in more loan applications being prepared and submitted.

However, we have found one hindrance to the process is that some of our clients have had difficulties in sourcing all the necessary paperwork to enable the application to be prepared and submitted. Further some clients also have financial challenges and fail in being able to satisfy the lending requirements. This is all normal and expected.

Over this year we have submitted more loan applications and been successful with 6 clients. On a good note, of all the loans submitted they are progressing well and are in the process of being paid off.

The only issue with preparing the NILS loans is the overall time taken from start to finish i.e. approx. 4-6 hours. The impact of this is the extra time pressure on the other staff in the office to cope. This being said we do feel we provide a good service and overall we are getting more experienced and as such better at processing the applications. Ideally, we would welcome more volunteers to be trained to prepare the NILS loans.

**Stuart Nicol and Lynn Ghougassian**  
**(NILS Volunteers)**

## PANTRY REPORT

The 2022/2023 year has been difficult for our clients with increasing cost of food, as well as other cost increases such as utilities and pharmaceuticals which impact on their ability to pay for food staples.

In this period, we spent \$14,080 on food items for the pantry contrasting with \$10,041 in 21/22 financial year, an increase of 40%. This reflects the bigger demand for our pantry items by clients as well as higher costs we incur when items are purchased to stock the pantry.

We have had to reduce the size of some of the items we purchase but have added some personal care items to our list plus more canned fruit and vegetables.

We have also been adversely affected by shortages of some of our staple items from our supplier.

**Julie Woolhouse**  
**(Pantry Coordinator)**

# EMERGENCY RELIEF STATISTICS REPORT

The achievements of the SCA during Financial Year 2022-2023 (FY2023) are detailed in the table below. Of particular note is the increase in the number of individual clients assisted from 629 in FY2022 to 784 in FY2023, a 25% increase, and the increase in total aid provided from \$71,639 in FY2022 to \$122,337 in FY2023.

	July 2022 to June 2023	July 2021 to June 2023
Total ER visits	2376	1684
Individual Clients assisted	784	629
New Clients	293	200
Homeless Clients	96	58
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Clients	34	29
Asylum seekers	19	7
International students	4	6
Clients aged less than 20 years	1%	2%
Clients aged 20 to 39 years	24%	20%
Clients aged 40 to 64 years	52%	56%
Clients aged 65 years or older	23%	22%

Clients' reported main language spoken at home

English	84%	83%
Russian	7%	7%
Ukrainian	1%	1%
Greek	1%	1%
Mandarin/Cantonese	1%	1%
Language Other Than English (LOTE)	16%	17%

Total aid provided, as reported on the CISVIC portal	\$122,337	\$71,639
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In addition to supporting 2376 Emergency Relief visits, we logged on the CISVic portal a total of 602 enquiries. The main topics on which we provided information were legal services, Power Saving Bonus and emergency relief.

**Anthony Hyden**  
**(Treasurer)**

# TREASURER'S REPORT

## STONNINGTON COMMUNITY ASSIST INC STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 2023 (FY2023)

	FY 2023	FY 2022
	\$	\$
<b>RECEIPTS</b>		
City of Stonnington		
Community Grant	50,000	50,000
Operating Expenses	34,485	35,500
CIS Vic		
DSS	37,855	43,698
CIS Vic		
PSB & Energy Support	6,884	
Court Fund	9,500	6,000
Bendigo Bank Grant (Note 1)	5,000	5,000
Bank Interest	329	71
Donations	20	20
<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>	<b>144,073</b>	<b>140,288</b>
<b>PAYMENTS</b>		
AID		
Food vouchers & ER EFT	82,235	60,142
Food parcels	12,252	9,883
Education support	2,243	3,195
Xmas 'hampers'	7,784	
Material goods	6,000	2,753
<b>SUBTOTAL AID</b>	<b>110,514</b>	<b>75,973</b>
<b>OPERATING EXPENSES</b>		
Telephone & Internet	1,961	1,967
Office expenses & Petty Cash (Note 3)	8,786	4,027
Electricity	1,103	1,371
Bank fees	-	-
Rent	29,040	30,346
CIS Vic membership	330	330
Community Worker (Note 2)	-	36,751
Training	715	1,074
PO Box & postage (Note 4)	4	188
<b>SUBTOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES</b>	<b>41,939</b>	<b>76,054</b>
<b>TOTAL PAYMENTS</b>	<b>152,453</b>	<b>152,027</b>
Excess of (payments) receipts	- 8,380	- 11,739
Opening Cash at Bank & Term Deposits	108,884	120,623
Cash at Bank & Term Deposits at 30th June 2022	100,505	108,884
Cash at Bank	80,505	88,885
Term Deposits Bendigo Bank	20,000	20,000
<b>Cash Resources at 30th June 2023</b>	<b>100,505</b>	<b>108,885</b>

Note 1: Grant for 2023 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

Note 3: FY 2023 Office Expenses includes \$5,057 for office equipment including laptop computer and mounting, portable partitions

Note 4: FY 2023 PO Box renewal \$153 coded as Office Expense

**STONNINGTON COMMUNITY ASSIST INC**  
**STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 2023 (FY2023)**

	FY2023	FY 2022
<b>OPENING ASSETS</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
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	50	50
Travel cards	105	105
Petty cash	65	65
Opening cash at bank and term deposits	108,884	120,623
<b>TOTAL OPENING ASSETS</b>	<b>127,944</b>	<b>135,193</b>
 <b>RECEIPTS</b>		
<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS (Note 3)</b>	<b>144,073</b>	<b>140,288</b>
 <b>OPERATIONS</b>		
<b>AID GIVEN (Note 2)</b>		
Food vouchers	101,814	52,734
Food parcels	14,080	10,041
Education support	1,517	2,827
Material goods	4,326	5,664
Other	600	373
<b>SUBTOTAL AID</b>	<b>122,337</b>	<b>71,639</b>
 <b>OPERATING EXPENSES (Note 3)</b>		
<b>SUBTOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES</b>	<b>41,939</b>	<b>76,054</b>
 <b>EXPECTED CLOSING ASSETS</b>		
Opening assets	127,944	135,193
Plus receipts	144,073	140,288
Less aid given (Note 2)	- 122,337	- 71,639
Less operating expenses	- 41,939	- 76,054
<b>NET EXPECTED CLOSING ASSETS</b>	<b>107,741</b>	<b>127,788</b>
 <b>MEASURED CLOSING ASSETS</b>		
Coles food vouchers	6,356	15,950
Aldi vouchers	30	770
Market vouchers	240	370
BigW vouchers	750	750
Pantry food (Note 1)	1,985	1,000
St Vincent's vouchers	-	50
Travel cards	90	105
Petty cash	76	65
Closing cash at bank and term deposits	100,505	108,885
<b>TOTAL CLOSING ASSETS</b>	<b>110,032</b>	<b>127,945</b>

Note 1: Pantry food inventoried on 30/06/2023. Previously estimated by volunteer who purchases food, based on last order.

Note 2: From CIS Vic database. Amounts are entered by volunteers following client interview.

Note 3: See Receipts and Payments for details.

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS CERTIFICATE – YEAR ENDING 30 JUNE 2023**

**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 2023.

NAME: JENNIFER COX

NAME: Julie Woolhouse

POSITION: COMMITTEE MEMBER POSITION

Committee Member

SIGNED: Jennifer Cox

SIGNED

Julie Woolhouse

DATE: 28 September 2023

DATE

5-10-23.



## KEY HIGHLIGHTS



Christmas food donations from St Mary's school, Malvern



Lynn and Anthony at our Power Saving Bonus outreach, outside Prahran Town Hall



Our table at the Boroondara Volunteer Expo



Baked goods donation from Woolworths Supermarket, Toorak





Bendigo Bank Grant



Movable partitions making a new, temporary work space



Winter Warmers



**STONNINGTON COMMUNITY ASSIST**

[stonnassist.org.au](http://stonnassist.org.au)