

STONNINGTON COMMUNITY ASSIST

ANNUAL REPORT 2025



CONTENTS

Acknowledgement of Country	3
Thank You	4
President's Report	5
Free Legal Service Report	8
Tax Help Report	9
Food Security Report	10
Food Pantry Report	11
Christmas Hampers Report	12
Emergency Relief Statistics Report	13
Treasurer's Report	14



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Stonnington Community Assist acknowledges that its office operates on the traditional lands of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and Bununrung people of the East Kulin nations. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

We extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We acknowledge their living connection to the Country, their relationship with the land and all living things extending back tens of thousands of years.





THANK YOU

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 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 2024-2025 we were pleased to have committee representatives as follows - Clare Duggan (President), Anthony Hyden (Treasurer), David Hilton (Secretary), Julie Woolhouse, Jenny Cox, Caroline Gray, Nicole Armstrong and Heidi Sanford (Committee Members).

Stonnington Community Assist recognises and thank all contributions from its volunteers and team. We appreciate the value of your efforts.



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

This is my sixth and final report for Stonnington Community Assist (SCA). On this note, I would like to reflect on the past, the present and the future as we venture into unknown waters in the coming year.

Firstly, **the past.**

SCA has been blessed with a continuity of service for the past fifty-six years. We were ably led by Marjorie Cox from 1969 – 2019 in a period when many of the volunteers clocked up between twenty to thirty years of service. My experience of the past eleven years is that we have rarely closed our doors, due to the incredible time and availability of our volunteers. Even during the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown, SCA volunteers were still able to assist clients over the phone. My term as President/Coordinator has been short in comparison. Since records were kept from 1971, we have had over 150 volunteers plus the current 22, which is remarkable when I consider that these are difficult times. During the past seven years we have hosted eight Diploma in Community Services students and three Social Work students who have each benefited from the multi-faceted experience gained.

I am also delighted to share the news that a previous volunteer, Rushi, celebrated her engagement this year to her partner, Ashe. Rushi was a dedicated volunteer and paid worker between September 2020 – September 2021 who did much to support SCA. We wish her all the success in her upcoming marriage.



And to **the present** and a look at 2024-2025.

I would like to share some statistics about our hardworking committee. We have been blessed with many of our office bearers offering continuous service, and we began the year with eight members. But alas, all good things come to an end, and we have reluctantly had to accept the following resignations apart from that of myself.

Anthony has been Treasurer since 2022, when he replaced Jennifer Orr, a very capable individual. He has guided us through the perils of COVID-19 and kept an eagle eye on our expenditure. He leaves us with a healthy bank balance.

Julie has managed the pantry for the past three years and is always ensuring that we have consistent food supplies. It is no mean task grappling with rising food costs and sometimes difficult suppliers.

Jenny handles a wide range of tasks, including the monthly roster, which is a challenging responsibility. She is also responsible for managing the Free Legal Service, overseeing Tax Help, and liaising with volunteers who pick up and deliver donated food.

Heidi has been our community representative on the committee for the past four years. She gives us a unique perspective on current community affairs. She has compiled our Annual Report for the past two years and advises us on training opportunities.

David took on the role of secretary this past year, but after six years of volunteering has decided to put more time into travelling with his wife.



PRESIDENT'S REPORT CONT.

I have also had to reluctantly accept a resignation from Jennifer Orr who is currently our longest serving volunteer and a person who has given so much of her time and energy over the past 13 years.

This leaves a huge gap in our volunteer workforce when the estimated time committee members spend is 30 hours per week in admin work to keep the things working well.



Caroline and Nicole remain on the committee. Unless we can fund a paid worker, who can take up the many tasks fulfilled by the committee, we are not able to continue our valuable work and Stonnington will be left without an emergency relief agency. As our statistics attest, the demand for our service has increased with the average visit per day of up to eleven clients. Recently we had twenty-one clients visit for food relief within the four and a half hours of opening. This amounted to an average interview time of ten minutes for each client to which was added time to write a case note and upload the outcome of the interview on to our database. There is little time to discuss with the client the underlying reasons as to why they may need food. We recognise the need to conduct holistic interviews; however, the reality is that in the past two years, we have undergone a financial crisis where the cost of food has increased dramatically. The government benefit has remained the same and clients need to eat!

Key Activities Within the Agency

Volunteer Recruitment

Against the previous trend, we have been fortunate to welcome nine new volunteers, Sue, Mani, Andrew, Sandra, Catherine, Fran, Annie, Leigh and Carol, and to welcome back Karin who has decided to return after a break. Sadly, we accepted the resignations of Philippa Reed, who had been a volunteer for nearly eleven years, and David Hilton, as mentioned previously. This increase in new volunteers has helped to fill gaps as many of our volunteers take time to travel our great land or go further afield. Time out is a necessity in our busy lives.

Student Placements

We are grateful for two Swinburne students, Yu Cheng and Sonia Achary and two others from RMIT, Sanja Devic and Cheryl Jiang, for the youthful energy they have brought to our office. The projects they have been able to complete include client surveys, a holistic poster to assist with referrals, the addition of more intensive case work, and the facilitation of a training session, which was a great reflection of the cost of living reminder that our clients face on a weekly basis.

Training

We have fulfilled our charter to conduct three training sessions per year. These included three speakers from local networks, a review of our security procedures, a simulation exercise to walk in the shoes of our clients and online courses in Food Handling and Working with Interpreters.



PRESIDENT'S REPORT CONT.



Networking

We have participated in the Stonnington Connect and Discover Network and we were part of the Volunteer Expo held in March where we were able to recruit two new volunteers. I have attended numerous online CISVic meetings and connected with local agencies such as Uniting Vic.Tas, Prahran Place and Bangs Street Community Housing.

Funding

As our financial report shows, we have had a major increase in funding and were extremely grateful for DFFH funding of \$66,000 for Food Security. This was over and above the three-year Partnership Grant, DSS funding and the Court funds. Acquittals for these funds take time, as do applications for ongoing funding.



SCA's Future

As I write this report, I have reflected upon the meaning of a 'Volunteer Only' agency. What does this mean to our volunteers attending an Annual General Meeting in November which may well be the last in our notable history?

Each week, volunteers give 67.5 hours of direct client service plus an additional fifteen hours in administration work. We are open five days per week for 49 weeks per year. This amounts to 4,190 hours of unpaid work annually. Multiply this number by fifty-six years, and it is an incredible community service we have been part of.

Our records indicate that we provide a valuable and much-needed service to many disadvantaged individuals in our community. However, the capacity to offer this service in its present form is no longer viable. When I attend similar organisations, I am most often surrounded by workers who are attending meetings in their paid work time. As volunteer committee members, we do not shut down over a weekend; we attend to emails requesting shift replacements, we take on extra shifts, we attend nine committee meetings per year, and we follow through with planning tasks. We debrief about agency issues, write emails, complete evaluative surveys; the list goes on.

What is the profile of a typical volunteer at SCA? I can say that when someone who is under sixty walks through the door, excitement rises. We now have a more gender-balanced volunteer pool than in previous years, which is great. We also have a more diverse range of volunteers. We handle the many challenges presented to us every day on our shifts with professionalism; the most challenging is balancing the books at the end of the day. This keeps our minds active, even though it may result in a significant delay in shutting down the office. The mighty work we achieve is mostly positive. However, for some, the demand to provide a wraparound service without the consistency of a paid worker has eventually proved too much. The work we do should never be taken for granted.

I leave the position of President proud of what we have achieved over the past few years; grateful for the camaraderie and friendship I have experienced; and full of admiration for the capacity of our volunteers to provide genuine empathy and dedication to our clients. Thank you to all those with whom I have worked, and especially to those who are retiring. I shall remain and hopefully continue to witness a valuable and sustainable service provided to the residents of Stonnington.

Clare Duggan
President

FREE LEGAL SERVICES REPORT

From July until December 2024, we had two volunteer lawyers and myself as the Supervising Legal Practitioner. One of our solicitors, Shaun Miller, who had been with us for a very long time resigned. Shaun went to great lengths for our clients, following through with issues for clients for weeks after their initial consultation. Our other solicitor, Rodrigo Haddad, also has not been able to be on the roster since December 2024 due to work and study commitments. Although this left us in a dire position, I empathised with them and had only gratitude as they had given so much time and effort to us for a long period despite their heavy workloads. Regrettably, this left us with no option other than to close for a period between January to 10 April. Fortunately, we recruited a new volunteer, Andrew Hale, and were able to reopen and continue operating until the end of the financial year.

This meant continuing our practice of conducting consultations with clients by telephone on Thursday evenings from 6:30 pm, and I also sometimes provided face-to-face advice to clients in the office while rostered with SCA.

This resulted in assisting a total of 43 clients. This was significantly fewer than in previous years, largely due to our having to close for part of the year.

Unfortunately, apart from SCA, there remains a significant lack of free legal services available in the area. The other Community Legal Centres currently assist with a very limited range of issues, not the everyday concerns that our clients have, such as fines, disputes with neighbours, and disputes with tradespeople.

We appreciate the Stonnington Community Assist volunteers who make our appointments and email 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, the service would not be operating. Thank you for your help – it is appreciated.

I would like to thank our lawyers: Rodrigo Haddad, Shaun Miller and Andrew Hale for their time and support of the Stonnington Free Legal Service. Without their dedication and efforts, we would not have been able to operate this year.

Jenny Cox
Supervising Legal Practitioner



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 for returns processed for the 2022-2023 tax year. Many clients have been coming for years. In the previous tax year, we had two Tax Help volunteers; Wendy has volunteered for several years and Lesley and Stuart for a couple of years now. Wendy no longer comes into the office in the evening; she uses the computer, internet and MS Teams to help people submit their returns online. Wendy was able to assist two clients this year.

Some clients required repeat visits, and there were several 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'.

Lesley McCrann

Tax Help Specialist

Action	Number
Lodged	26
Non-Lodgement advice	6
Info	8
Nil	2
Total	42



FOOD SECURITY REPORT

Stonnington Community Assist received a grant of \$66,000 from the Victorian Government Department of Families Fairness and Housing (DFFH). The purpose of the grant was to improve the food security of social housing renters, including those living in public housing towers. The grant was received early October 2024, with expenditure to run to 30 September 2025. The grant enabled us to increase allocations of food vouchers to clients, purchase additional food, increase the value of Christmas Hampers and purchase a freezer to store food not yet distributed. Grant expenditure to 30 June 2025 is listed in the table below.

Item	Amount (\$)
Food	7,028.86
Food vouchers	35,720.00
Freezer	548.00
Printing	580.00
Christmas Hampers	5,000.00
TOTAL	48,876.86

Anthony Hyden
Treasurer



FOOD PANTRY REPORT



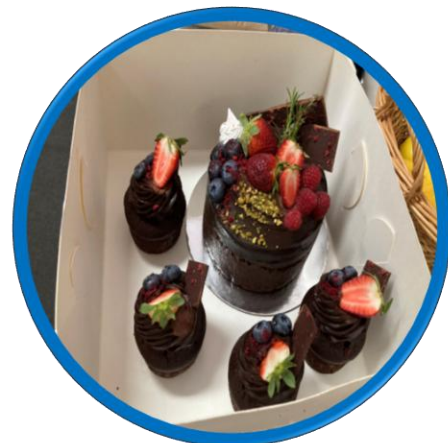
It has been another year of increased demand for our food pantry supplies. Many clients come to the office to request a food parcel, especially between times when they are not eligible for a food voucher. We increased the range of items offered, yet the most requested items continue to be tea and coffee, milk, breakfast cereal, pasta and rice.

Another change that is included in our pantry supplies is tub meals that can be prepared using boiling water or a microwave oven. These are given to anyone who says they are homeless and hungry for a quick meal.

We have been able to supplement our pantry items with very generous fruit and vegetable boxes from Pino's at Prahran Market. Donations of soup, meals, cakes and salads from Sweet Greek, also from the Prahran Market, are very popular. We receive donations on Tuesdays and Thursdays from Woolworths (Toorak) of fresh bread and other bakery items, which are very popular with many clients.

In the last financial year, we also received twice-weekly donations of fresh fruit and vegetables from Woolworths (Toorak), but unfortunately, this has now ceased and will be missed by our clients. We would also like to thank our volunteers who made these donations possible by picking up from Woolworths mid-morning on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Thank you to our donor partners and the volunteers who facilitate these donations.

Julie Woolhouse
Pantry Coordinator



CHRISTMAS HAMPERS REPORT

The 2024 Christmas Hampers project was a huge success. Overwhelmingly successful with our clients, and enjoyable for us organising it!

Volunteers handed out 234 Christmas Hampers. This was far more than we had expected and far more than we have ever handed out before. The year before, 2023, had been our record with 135, which pales in comparison to last year's 234.

The 234 hampers comprised a total of \$12,340 in Aldi gift cards plus goods in kind.

Similarly with donations, we were able to provide more than ever before, but with so much enthusiasm for the hampers, we needed them all. As in the previous year, we received donations from the public via a trolley outside Woolworths (Toorak). This year, the Stonnington Council also joined in and set up donation boxes in the Toorak/South Yarra area, Phoenix Park and Malvern Libraries, as well as in the Prahran and Malvern Council Service Centres.

Julie Woolhouse's friends and family once again made some donations and Woolworths donated some Christmas items and a bagful of wrapped toys for us to put into hampers. The staff loved wrapping the toys.

One man donated a Woolworths trolley full of goods, valued at over \$400. A touching donation came from a mother and her two children – they had each put aside \$1 every week throughout the year, the children from their pocket money, and used it to purchase toys for us to give to other children for Christmas.

The Community Bank Windsor (Bendigo Bank) supported our project once again this year, donating \$5,000 towards the Aldi vouchers. We are very appreciative of its long-standing support of this project.

Collecting numerous donations from the public made it a truly community-driven project. I am grateful to The Community Bank Windsor (Bendigo Bank), Woolworths, and the Stonnington Council, particularly Lisa Stafford, for their support of our project.

I would like to acknowledge the many hours that Julie Woolhouse devoted to preparing the pink sheets and distributing the hampers. Having all the pink sheets prepared beforehand made the handout run so smoothly and efficiently. Her hand must have been absolutely aching after handwriting 275 pink sheets!

Further, an enormous thank you to all the volunteers for their work on the Christmas Hampers. I know that the Registrations and the Handout in December created extra work, but it definitely was worth it.

Jenny Cox



EMERGENCY RELIEF STATISTICS

The achievements during Financial Year 2024-2025 (FY2025) are detailed in the table below. Of particular note is the increase in the number of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander clients assisted from 41 in FY2024 to 50 in FY2025, a 22% increase. Interestingly, the number of individual clients assisted increased by 11%, while the number of new clients increased by 32%.

	July '24 to June '25	July '23 to June '24
Total ER visits	3049	2352
Individual Clients assisted	912	823
New Clients	320	243
Homeless Clients	103	98
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Clients	50	41
Asylum seekers	17	17
International students	6	7
Clients aged less than 20 years	1%	1%
Clients aged 20 to 39 years	23%	22%
Clients aged 40 to 64 years	53%	53%
Clients aged 65 years or older	23%	23%

Client's main language spoken at home

Our clients spoke a total of 30 different languages at home, including English.

English	85%	84%
Language Other Than English (LOTE)	15%	16%

In addition to the 3,049 emergency relief visits, we report an additional 243 enquiries for which we provided support. These are related to the support needed for food relief, legal services and tax help. The 132 phone enquiries reported are considered a serious underestimate, given the number of telephone enquiries fielded by volunteers every shift that were not able to be attributed to a specific client. It is estimated that a total of 1,470 phone enquiries were responded to over the course of the year.

Total Aid Provided July 2024 – June 2025

	July '24 to June '25	July '23 to June '24
Total amount	\$158,854	\$120,496

Anthony Hyden
Treasurer





TREASURER'S REPORT

STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 2025 (FY2025)

RECEIPTS		FY 2025	FY 2024
		\$	\$
City of Stonnington			
	Community Grant	50,000.00	50,000.00
	Operating Expenses	35,000.00	35,000.00
CIS Vic	DSS	44,639.92	36,156.99
Court Fund		3,500.00	8,650.00
Bendigo Bank Grant (Note 1)		5,000.00	5,000.00
Bank Interest		1,154.84	786.18
DFFH Food Security		66,000.00	
Donations		-	-
TOTAL RECEIPTS		205,294.76	135,593.17
PAYMENTS			
AID			
Food vouchers & ER EFT		115,330.00	109,060.00
Food parcels + market vouchers		14,773.55	12,066.66
Education support		-	2,150.00
Xmas 'hampers'		14,572.50	8,442.00
Travel passes (Myki)		87.50	
Material goods		5,000.00	3,000.00
SUBTOTAL AID		149,763.55	134,718.66
OPERATING EXPENSES			
Telephone & Internet		1,660.08	1,463.43
Office expenses (Note 3)		2,561.90	1,063.62
Office equipment (Note 2)		2,996.99	727.99
Electricity		848.97	778.16
Insurance		782.69	-
Rent		29,220.00	28,860.00
CIS Vic membership		330.00	385.00
Training		269.64	724.04
SUBTOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES		38,670.27	34,002.24
TOTAL PAYMENTS		188,433.82	168,720.90
Net income (receipts-expenses)		16,860.94	- 33,127.73
Opening Cash at Bank & Term Deposits		67,377.48	100,505.21
Petty cash closeout (Note 4)		56.80	
Cash at Bank & Term Deposits at 30th June 2024		84,295.22	67,377.48
Bendigo Bank Club Account		46,815.93	47,377.48
Bendigo Bank Term Deposit		20,000.00	20,000.00
Bendigo Bank Savings Account (DFFH)		17,479.29	
Cash Resources at 30th June		84,295.22	67,377.48

Note 1: Grant for 2025 Christmas vouchers

Note 2: FY2025 Office equipment includes IT system, blinds, two printers, freezer and an office chair

Note 3: FY2025 Office expense includes \$464.60 to Consumer Affairs for change in Constitution, \$748.00 for printing

Note 4: Petty Cash previously counted as an asset



TREASURER'S REPORT

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 2025 (FY2025)

	FY2025	FY2024
	\$	\$
OPENING ASSETS		
Coles food vouchers	25,990.00	6,356.00
Aldi vouchers	-	30.00
Market vouchers	60.00	240.00
BigW vouchers	750.00	750.00
Pantry food (Note 1)	1,147.08	1,985.00
St Vincent's vouchers	-	-
Travel cards	21.00	90.00
Petty cash	56.75	76.00
Opening cash at bank and term deposits	67,377.00	100,505.00
TOTAL OPENING ASSETS	95,401.83	110,032.00
RECEIPTS		
TOTAL RECEIPTS (Note 2)	205,294.76	135,593.00
OPERATIONS		
AID GIVEN (Note 3)		
Food vouchers	136,516.50	102,330.00
Food parcels	17,766.70	15,362.00
Education support	27.00	265.00
Material goods	3,594.00	2,165.00
Other	950.00	374.00
SUBTOTAL AID	158,854.20	120,496.00
OPERATING EXPENSES		
SUBTOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES (Note 2)	38,670.27	34,002.00
EXPECTED CLOSING ASSETS		
Opening assets	95,401.83	110,032.00
Plus receipts	205,294.76	135,593.00
Less aid given (Note 3)	-158,854.20	-120,496.00
Less operating expenses	- 38,670.27	- 34,002.00
NET EXPECTED CLOSING ASSETS	103,172.12	91,127.00
MEASURED CLOSING ASSETS		
Coles food vouchers	19,040.00	25,990.00
Aldi vouchers	1,450.00	-
Market vouchers	140.00	60.00
BigW vouchers	700.00	750.00
Pantry food (Note 1)	1,584.26	1,147.08
St Vincent's vouchers	-	-
Travel cards	14.00	21.00
Petty cash	-	56.75
Closing cash at bank and term deposits	84,295.22	67,377.48
TOTAL CLOSING ASSETS	107,223.48	95,402.31

Note 1: Pantry food inventoried on 30/06 2024 and 2025

Note 2: See Statement of Receipts and Payments for details

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

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS CERTIFICATE

YEAR ENDING 30 JUNE 2024

STONNINGTON COMMUNITY ASSIST 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 Assist Incorporated during and at the end of the financial year ended 30 June 2024.

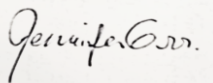
Name: Jennifer Orr

Name: Julie Woolhouse

Position: Volunteer

Position: Committee Member

Signed:



Signed:



Date: 07.08.25

Date: 22.07.25





Address: Suite 17, Level 1, Prahran Market
Commercial Road, Prahran

Phone: (03) 9804 7220

Email: support@stonnassist.org.au

