

Community Information & Support Victoria

2018 – 2019

FULL Annual Report



CISVic



INFORMING
VICTORIANS
FOR 50 YEARS

About us

Community Information & Support Victoria (CISVic) is the peak body representing local community information and support services.

Our local services assist people experiencing personal and financial difficulties by providing information, referral and support services including Emergency Relief.

We direct people who need help to local centres for services.

We liaise with local, state and federal governments on behalf of local centres for funding and support.

We undertake research and training.

CISVic and its members are committed to volunteering and offer a range of opportunities for people to work with us.

And we seek and arrange funding from philanthropic organisations and private donors.

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President's report

This year CISVic consolidated its efforts and with the appointment of new staff has been able to gain significant traction in our major programs.

We have been well guided by our Strategic Plan 2018- 2020 which focusses our activities into five core areas, namely: Leadership, Advocacy & Partnerships Membership: Connecting & Convening Professional Services Research & Data Organisational Effectiveness.

Last year the Board saw an increasing imperative for CISVic to further expand our research and advocacy efforts for the benefit of our members and the sector. We are pleased to see the positive outcomes being achieved through the appointment of Dr Jennifer Borrell, Research, Advocacy & Policy Manager and the establishment of the Advocacy Working Group.

The effective work of CISVic and our members was acknowledged through the renewal of significant contracts including the ER Consortia, Financial Counselling Program and the Volunteer Management Program. The CISVic Branch Model has now been extended to include CIS Moreland in addition to CIS Glen Eira.

In 2018, the Board strongly supported Kate Wheller to go on a UK Study Tour to ascertain learnings that could be brought back to CISVic – and her report and recommendations as approved by the Board are included in this Annual Report.

As President, I would like to thank Kate Wheller for her exceptional professionalism and commitment to CISVic. I would also like to thank all Board Members for their participation and contributions; and the staff for their hard work and expertise on behalf of members and the sector.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to personally thank the following Board Member who are leaving us: James Dent for his outstanding support as our Treasurer since 2009; Jinny McGrath a Board Member since 2010; and Denise Budge, who joined the Board in 2017.

Congratulations again to all staff and members for your efforts which have been crucial to this highly successful year.

Chris Wootton

Executive Officer's report

Our strategic plan has really helped us to focus our attention during this last year and coupled with the appointment of new staff and the efforts of the whole team, we've been able to deliver on all key performance indicators.

We are a peak body, representing and supporting our members. But like other peaks we have a dual role which is the provision of direct service delivery. We do this through our Volunteer Management program and the Branch Model. We are very conscious of the implications of the dual role and always mindful of where our focus needs to be to ensure we work effectively to support the broader membership.

While the body of this report contains information about our key activities, the focus of my report here is to celebrate about our professional, dedicated and expert team.

We've welcomed new staff to the team this year, Dr Jennifer Borrell, Research, Advocacy & Policy Manager and Serah Rebana, Communications & Marketing Intern who have elevated our advocacy work and communications beyond expectations. Identifying key focus areas after consultation with our members, and the introduction of two working groups, Jennifer has developed distinct advocacy plans, commenced a data evaluation pilot, and prepared numerous policy written submissions for government. Our voice is stronger.

Jill Wilson, our Volunteer Development Manager became an accredited trainer during this period and joined Helen Byrne in delivering our Community Support Workers Course. Both Jill and Helen combine their years of experience with their engaging delivery to ensure we have a program which adequately equips our volunteers with the necessary knowledge and skills to assess and deliver services to people with complex needs. Both Helen & Jill have delivered a range of non-accredited training sessions across the year, including working with interpreters, and refresher training for mentors.

Megan Skehill, our indispensable Sector Development Manager has continued to provide both individual and consortia wide support to members while innovating our volunteer professional development through the introduction of VITAL (Volunteers Information Talking and Listening). This new format program has been overwhelmingly successful with very positive feedback from participants.

Deborah Rosenberg remains busy across Semester 1 & 2 coordinating our student placement program and undertaking both individual and group supervision to RMIT social work students. Students continue to add value to each site, through their fresh eyes, enthusiasm and work.

Anne Coughlin continues to lead the team at CIS Glen Eira. We employed Claire Kartsidimas as Branch Coordinator at our second branch CIS Moreland but also acknowledge the work of Daniela Markovic (also Case Worker at CIS Glen Eira) and casual Shayne Barnes in managing the centre prior to her appointment. Claire has hit the ground running and is making great gains - enhancing service delivery and developing strong networks in the local community. We are working closely with both coordinators to ensure delivery of high-quality service which meets the needs of the local community while supporting paid staff and volunteers.

Our Glen Eira case worker Daniela Markovic continues to provide intensive case management to clients in need of additional, expert support. Her care of, and respect for clients is exemplary.

Anne-Marie Yung, our Office Coordinator, Administration Officer Louise Howe at Glen Eira, and our admin casual Christy Snelleman have provided the vital administrative support which is the glue holding it all together.

The value of the work of our volunteers across the city office and both branches cannot be overstated. Their generosity, knowledge, skills, dedication and compassion mean we have capacity to open the doors and deliver service. Without the volunteers at our branches, and indeed across the whole sector, our important work supporting some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people could not be done.

As Executive Officer, I am grateful for the support and guidance I receive from our President Chris Wootton and indeed all Board members, whose conscientious governance ensures we are working effectively, never losing sight of who we are and what our mission is. I would make special mention of two long serving board members who have resigned this year; James Dent and Jinny McGrath.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge our funding bodies, State Department of Health & Human Services, Federal Department of Social Services, Department of Environment, Land Water & Planning, City of Glen Eira, City of Moreland, Telstra, and philanthropic foundations, Jack Brockhoff & RE Ross Trust. Its only through their backing that can fulfil our role; helping local communities help local people.

Kate Wheller

Treasurer's report

The CISVic board continues to focus on balancing the immediate needs of our member agencies, the development of the CISVic team with the ongoing financial stability of CISVic.

For the financial year ending 30 June 2019, CISVic generated a surplus of \$84,155 and net cash from operating activities of \$48,416.

CISVic remains in a secure financial position with majority of funding received from State government, State Department of Human Services and Federal government, Department of Social Services. We successfully retendered for the continued delivery of the Emergency Relief consortia with a slight increase in federal funding of \$53,876. Additionally we secured a new Financial Counselling contract worth just over \$100,000 annually. Consistent with 2018, 90% of funding is allocated to consortia members for direct service provision, and the balance retained for administration of the contract, our client management system and sector development activities.

Following the successful integration of the Glen Eira local centre, CISVic took on second branch in late 2018 located in the City of Moreland. Furthermore, CISVic has increased our policy & advocacy activity along with making available greater professional development opportunities to our almost 5,000 volunteers.

CISVic continues to explore opportunities to diversity our funding streams and monitor the risk of being over reliant on government funding.

Anjali Ilsley

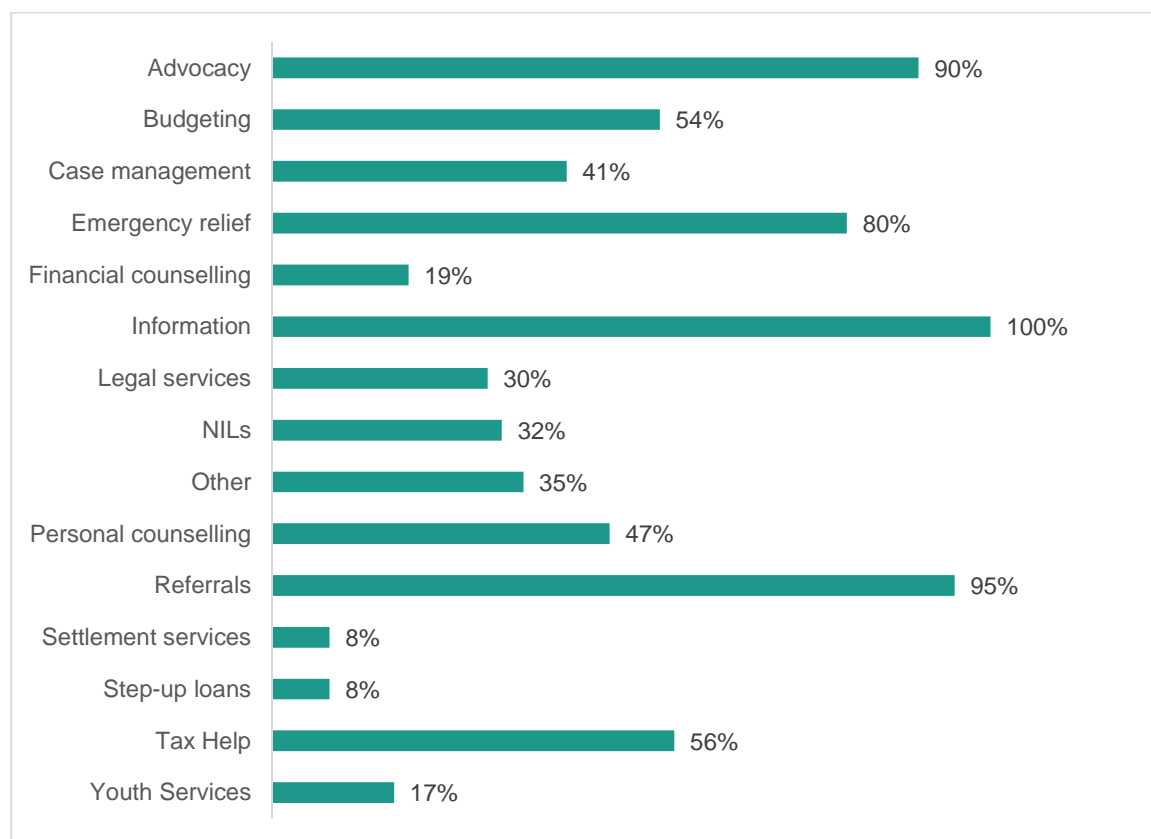
Membership: Connecting & Convening

CISVic members

Our members are independent, autonomous, community-based information & support services. They are diverse in their size and scope. We have **55 member agencies (full and associate) delivering service from 62 sites**. We also have **3 individual members**; individuals from outside the CISVic membership who serve on the Board.

CISVic now operates two branches, both which were previously independently run member agencies.

Services our members offer



Conference

CISVic's bi-annual conference, *The Poverty Problem; Whose Fault Is It Anyway* was conducted during Anti-Poverty Week October 2018. It featured guest speakers VCOSS CEO Emma King, ABC Radio Presenter Raf Epstein and Professor Shelley Mallet, BSL/Melbourne Uni.

The theme provided an opportunity to explore the systemic issues causing poverty and how we can, as individuals and a collective, bring about real change.

The conference comprised of plenary sessions, world café, workshops and ample time for networking. Workshops focused on key areas of homelessness, employment, health, education and co-design.



Keeping members informed

23 issues of our **e-bulletin produced**. Our subscription base increase by 20%.

1 edition of **Informed, our policy and practice newsletter** which focused on key messages from the Anti-Poverty Week conference.

Networks

CISVic facilitates and/or attends 5 different **regional network meetings** for managers of our local centres. We participated in 10 meetings during this period.

Case Workers Network: conducted 3 in this period. Guest speakers include Council of the Aging, Thorne Harbour Health, & Australian Dental Health Foundation

Resources

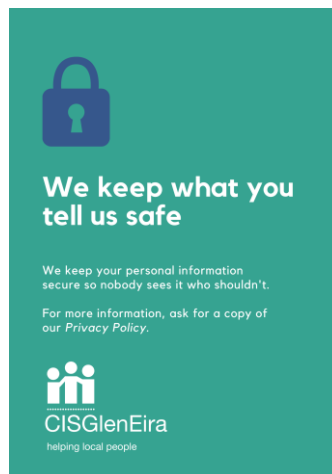
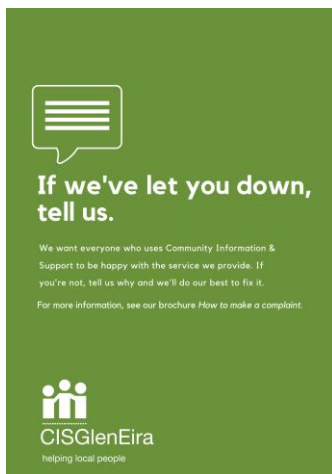
We've continued to develop resources to support our agencies service delivery and in this reporting period produced:

Five (5) new fact sheets/tip sheets:

- *Regional Networks Fact Sheet*
- *Student Placement Fact Sheet*
- *Branching Out Fact Sheet*
- *Member Obligations Fact Sheet*
- *Interpreters Fact Sheet*

One (1) Brochure for members

- *Complaints*



Five (5) new posters and brochures

- *Client Charter Poster*
- *Privacy Poster*
- *Use of Public Access Computers Poster*
- *Complaints Poster*

Agency support

CISVic conducts a range of activities to provide intensive support to individual agencies as required. These include facilitating merger discussions, co-opting onto boards, advocacy, developing governance policies and procedures, governance training and strategic plan development. In this reporting period CISVic provided **intensive support to 4 member agencies.**

Essendon CAB closed its doors after 50 years of serving the community

We were extremely disappointed to see Essendon CAB close its doors this year following loss of funding. CISVic had worked closely with the CAB and council to avert the closure but unfortunately our efforts were in vain.



Farewell event for Essendon CAB volunteers

Emergency Relief program

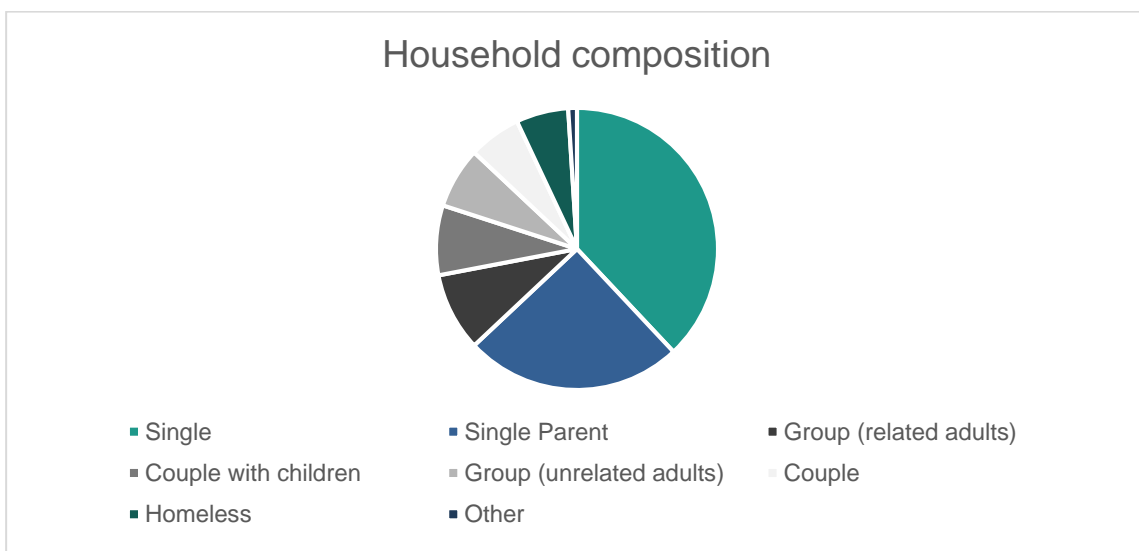
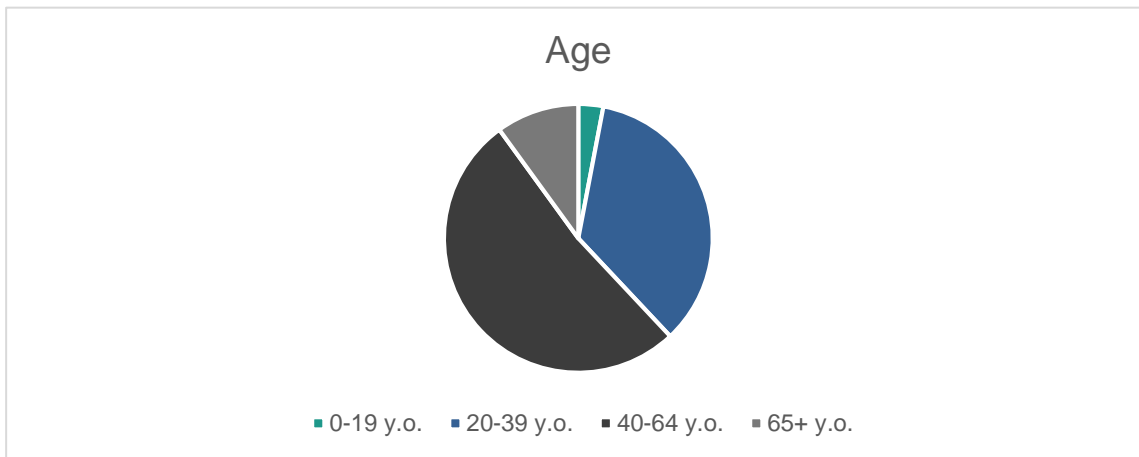
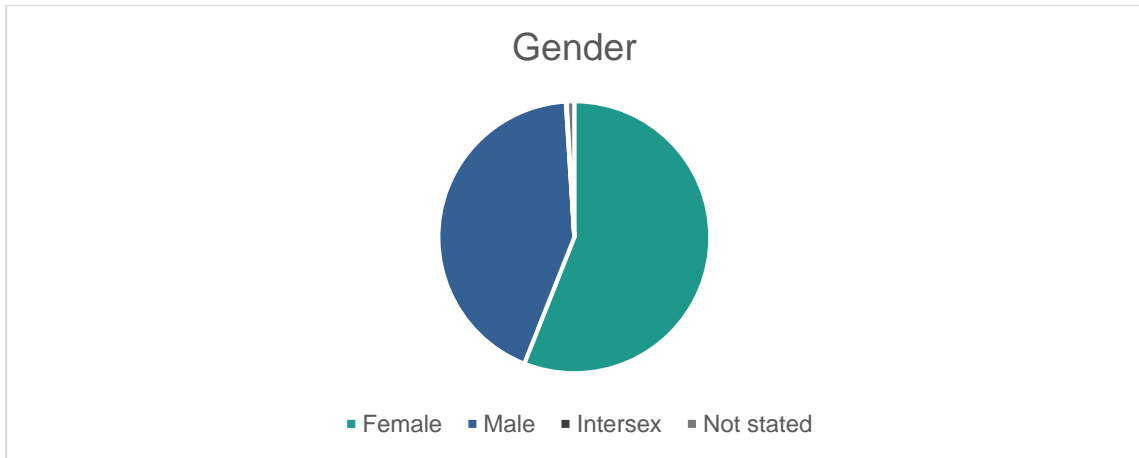
The ER Consortia were once again successful in tendering for the federally funded Emergency Relief program. Our new contract with Department of Social Services (DSS) saw a small increase in funding and some new territory in Melbourne's west. The contract's value is \$9,079,008 over four and a half years.

The activity is delivered from 36 different locations.

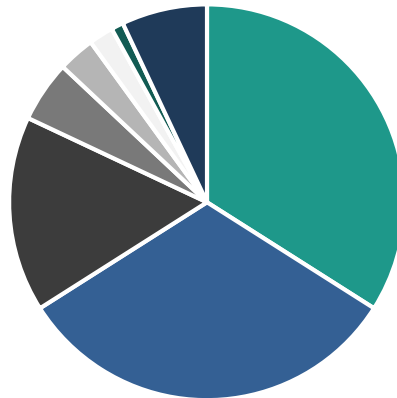
Agencies continue to report seeing an increase in the complexity of issues people are presenting with. Inadequate income, housing affordability, household bills and mental health issues are consistent drivers of demand. A number of agencies have reported seeing an increase in the number of asylum seekers in desperate circumstances, who having been cut-off from Centrelink payments are left with no income and no work rights.

Emergency Relief is delivered in the form of food parcels, food vouchers, travel cards, pharmaceutical assistance, swags for rough sleepers, vouchers for showers, op shop vouchers for second-hand goods, knitted good, toiletries, and assistance with household bills (utilities, medical bills, education costs).

Our ER clients

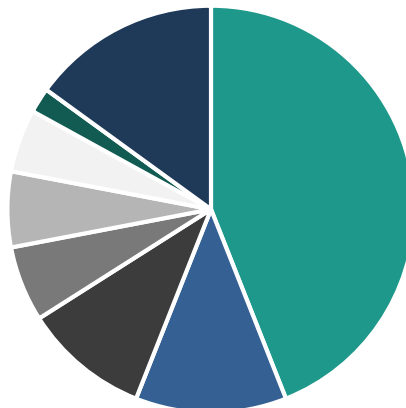


Accommodation type



- Private rental
- Public rental
- Homeless
- Own home- no mortgage
- Own home- mortgage
- Supported accommodation
- Caravan park
- Other

Reasons for seeking assistance



- No food
- Housing costs
- Utility bills
- Medical costs
- Transport costs
- Material aid
- Education costs
- Other

Financial Counselling Program

CISVic applied for DSS funded financial counselling program in 2018 with a consortium of 12 partners. Unfortunately, we were only successful in one of the 6 areas we had applied for. Our member agency delivers this program in City of Greater Bendigo. We were awarded \$546,769 over 4.5 years.

The contract commenced January 2019 and in the first 6 months of operation, our financial counsellors supported **83 individual clients**.

Volunteer Management Program

Funded by federal Department of Social Services, our Volunteer Management Activity supports and promotes volunteering across the City of Banyule.

- We assist individuals to find suitable volunteering opportunities
- Provide information to individuals and groups about volunteering
- Assist volunteer involving organisations with information and support
- Promote and celebrate volunteering throughout the community

During this reporting period we saw an increase of 26% in face-to-face interviews. Our move to Banyule Council's venue Shop 48-The Harmony Centre has seen an increase in our visibility and community profile.

Our program was awarded a grant from Watsonia RSL to commission a custom-built moveable kiosk that can be used to effectively engage with the community.

2,765 volunteer referrals made

305 face-to-face interviews conducted

3,911 views of our volunteer videos

Telstra Bill Assistance Program

The Telstra Bill Assistance Program provides an allocation of phone cards and vouchers which CISVic distributes to members throughout Melbourne and regional Victoria. It's a program which assists disadvantaged individuals and families to remain connected with families, friends and support services.

\$270,000 Telstra vouchers & phone cards distributed to help disadvantaged people stay connected.

This comprised of \$225,000 vouchers and \$45,000 phone cards, and represents an increase of \$32,500.

Leadership, Advocacy & Partnerships

Effective relationships

We continue to meet regularly with funding bodies to maintain strong working relationships. We meet with members of parliament on an ad hoc basis.

Strong networks

We participate in a range of formal networks:

- Banyule & Nillumbik Managers of Volunteers Network
- Consumer Affairs Victoria's Consumer Forum
- Education Equity Alliance
- Employee Volunteering Special Interest Group
- Energy Water Ombudsman of Victoria's Community Consultation Group
- Financial Wellbeing & Capability Network
- South East Coordinators of Volunteers
- VCOSS Peaks & Statewide Networks
- VCOSS' Vic Utilities
- Victorian Volunteer Support Network

Energy Affordability Training Partnership

Evidence shows that vulnerable consumers are disproportionately affected by the rise in energy prices. To help tackle this, we partnered with Consumer Policy & Research Centre (CPRC) and Elis Jones to develop a new training and information project to support consumers to take control of their energy costs. In this part year, the project has engaged a worker, volunteers and clients in three co-design sessions to inform the development and design of training and resources that are fit for that purpose. We have engaged **24 Energy Mentors** who will be placed in agencies to deliver specialised energy support and finished creating the training materials and resources that will be delivered to ER workers in 2019-2020.

Professional Services

Student Placement Program

The Student Placement Program (SPP) is a valuable partnership between CISVic, RMIT & our member agencies that provides 500-hour placements for social work students in direct practice, advocacy, research and policy development. Daily task supervision is provided by an onsite staff member. Deborah Rosenberg provides social worker education through both individual and group supervision sessions during the placement. Students bring a fresh perspective to our agencies, ask questions that help us reflect on our work and bring them skills and knowledge to undertake research projects, emergency relief interviews and short-term case work.

Students particularly value the combination of the group and individual supervision provided by this model and the opportunity to do direct practice work, research tasks and policy review/development.

During this period, we placed **19 students placed across 11 sites.**

Workforce development

Our annual training program aims to ensure that our workforce has access to free/low cost, quality, relevant training to ensure they have the necessary skills and knowledge to do their important and at times challenging work.

We deliver our nationally accredited training under the auspice of The Salvation Army's registered training organisation Training Plus. Demand for our accredited training course was down this year with 97 new volunteers trained down from 123 last year.

This year saw the introduction of a new regionally based, 1-day program called VITAL (Volunteers Information, Talking & Learning). This mixed format session (guest speakers, presentations and group activities) provided an opportunity for volunteers from a range of different agencies to come together in a less formal but highly engaging way. This initiative proved highly successful with overwhelmingly positive feedback for both the form and content.

Training delivered

Course	Sessions	Participants
Community Support Workers (CSW) Course	9	97
VITAL – Volunteer’s Talking, Information & Learning	4	179
Recognising & Responding to Family Violence	1	14
Mental Health Awareness	1	21
Ice Training	3	69
Tenancy Rights & Responsibilities	3	45
CSW Mentors – Introduction	1	5
CSW Mentors – Refresher	2	20
LGBTIQ+ Awareness	1	11
Working with Interpreters	2	27
Case Worker Discussion	1	12
Media Training	2	16
TOTALS	30	516

VITAL

Volunteer's Information, Talking and Listening



Introduction

Volunteers are vital to the work of local community information & support services. Our collective workforce comprises just 300 paid staff and in excess of 3,500 volunteers.

While our local centres offer a range of volunteering opportunities, those working directly with clients are required to undertake an accredited training course *Community Support Worker Course*. The work of Community Support Workers is rewarding yet can be challenging.

Ongoing training is important to ensure our volunteers have the knowledge, skills and confidence to work effectively.

The need for a new approach

The demand for our services continues to increase every year, as does the complexity of the issues facing our clients. We work primarily with people who are experiencing personal and financial hardship. Our professional development programs need to respond to new and emerging issues while being regionally-based, free and accessible.

We have found that volunteers are reluctant to travel outside their local area to attend training. Additionally, fees can be a barrier. Our city-based, bi-annual 2-day conference has been unsuccessful in attracting high numbers of volunteers and a new approach was required.

The VITAL solution

VITAL is a new approach to engaging with our volunteer workforce. It provides volunteers with the opportunity to attend a free, local, highly practical, and less formal event. In essence, the aims of the sessions are to:

- Inspire and motivate participants to enrich their volunteer experience
- Deepen empathy and understanding of other people's lives and circumstances
- Provide practical information & resources, promoting linkages to government funded programs & other services
- Foster communities of practice & peer support across sites

The VITAL format

Each session features:

- Hearing from a person with lived experience of a particular issue, e.g. homelessness.
- Guest speakers from specialist services
- Meeting volunteers from other local centres, strengthening relationships & providing peer support
- Sharing and discussing experiences in client work and through case studies; challenges, issues, solutions
- World Cafe session; hearing from a range of specialist services in the local area; their service offerings and how to refer people



Fostering integration

CISVic invites a range of government funded services to speak with the volunteers.

These have included:

- Council of the Aged
- Council to Homeless Persons
- Direct Line
- Energy Compare
- Financial Counsellors
- Good Shepherd Microfinance
- Orange Door
- Parent Line
- VALID
- Victims of Crime

Outcomes

VITAL is a one-day, regionally based, free training solution that has been successful in attracting & engaging high numbers of volunteers in professional development.

The feedback from participants is overwhelmingly positive and there is strong endorsement to continue delivering this format.

As of August 2019:

4

VITAL SESSIONS
CONDUCTED

191

VOLUNTEERS
ATTENDED



CAULFIELD,
MORNINGTON,
RINGWOOD (X2)

96%

INCREASED
KNOWLEDGE



Volunteer's feedback

"Well organised, lots of very helpful information"

"The environment and atmosphere were great, everyone was friendly, and the food and tea were lovely"

"Great opportunity to learn from others"

"Liked the format, especially the early speaker"

"Hope these are regular"

"I gained knowledge I didn't have before"

"The entire session was interesting, presenters were excellent and it was such a good day"

"I've spent the last couple of weeks worrying about a client that I didn't know how to help. After attending this session, I now know exactly how to help that client. That's a wonderful feeling"

"I loved the dynamic nature of the learning/sharing event"

Advocacy, Research & Data

Our activities in this area have intensified with the appointment of our Research, Advocacy & Policy Manager.

In consultation with our members we identified three key focus areas for the next 12 months:

1. Inadequacy of Newstart and other payments
2. The lack of safe and affordable housing
3. The school cost crisis.

We convened an **Advocacy Working Group** with membership from CISVic member agencies. The Group works to create systemic change on issues that people in the community are struggling with. The main issues are low Centrelink payments that do not cover the basic cost of living (such as Newstart), a dire shortage of affordable housing leading to an upsurge in homelessness, and rising school costs for families with children in public schools. CISVic has led and resourced agencies to campaign on these issues, while linking with other peak bodies.

We engaged a Communications and Marketing Intern, who has really brought our social media to life and helped to raise the profile of our work and the issues that community members struggle with. They have also provided expert advice to member agencies to improve their social media strategies

We convened a **Data Evaluation Working Group** with membership from CISVic member agencies and RMIT University. A CISVic Evaluation Framework has been developed, that has clear aims and data collection methods. As part of this, we ran a pilot of service follow-up interviews, with the assistance of a Social Work student from RMIT on placement, and approval by the RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee.

It has been great to have agencies so highly engaged in the development of the Evaluation Framework and in the design and implementation of advocacy strategies.

Other highlights include:

- **3 media releases produced**
- **9 letters sent to politicians**
- **94 social media posts**
- **3 letters published in newspapers**

Policy Submissions were made to both state and federal government concerning relevant issues.

Federal Government

- Social Security Commission Bill
- Adequacy of Newstart and Related Payments and alternative mechanisms to determine the level of income support payments in Australia

State Government

- ESC New Requirements for Energy Bills
- Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System

UK Study Tour Report



Introduction

In late 2018, our Executive Officer conducted a study tour to UK visiting our counterpart Citizens Advice. The purpose of this study tour was to investigate the workings of the sector with a view to enhancing the role of CISVic and its member agencies to deliver effective and sustainable services to the most-needy in a time of increasing demand, reduced funding & welfare reforms.



Findings

- The UK Citizens Advice sector is trusted and respected by stakeholders, with a high profile and strong brand recognition.
- Citizens Advice, the national office, receives substantial federal funding and offers a comprehensive range of services and infrastructure and program funding to members.
- The national office employs over 600 staff across 6 offices.
- There are 280 members ('local centres') offering service from 2,400 sites.
- In FY2018 the sector provided assistance to 2.6 million people.
- The membership has shrunk by 35% in the last 10 years.
- Core funding for local centres comes from local government.
- Local centres remain independent, autonomous entities and are diverse in size and scope. There are no branches.
- Local Citizens Advice workforce consists of 6,100 paid staff and 19,000 volunteers.
- Volunteers remain critical to service delivery and they ask a lot of them.
- Almost a decade of austerity measures has hit the sector hard – local government has delivered 50-100% cuts to core funding effecting countless local Citizens Advice centres to close or merge. CA are considering branch model as a sustainability solution.
- Comprehensive Membership Agreements and an accreditation process between CA & local centres frame the roles and responsibilities of both parties and are renewed annually.
- A recently enhanced Performance & Quality Framework promotes best practice while adding value.
- Demand for services continues to increase.
- There is significant anxiety, both from the sector & the public about Brexit.
- Emergency relief isn't traditionally part of their service suite but there is a shift towards it.

Recommendations

Build brand awareness & profile

- In consultation with the membership, devise a strategy to build brand recognition and the profile of the sector. Consider the success of the UK's common names, logo, templates and style guides.
- Develop & implement an annual communications & media strategy, build relationships with media outlets and increase media presence at local and state levels.

Strengthen the local centres

- Consider introducing a formal, cyclical accreditation process. For members, this would enhance credibility. With a lens of "what we measure we support" this process, through the appraisal of the local centre's governance, operations and service delivery would help CISVic identify and respond to any weaknesses or vulnerabilities of individual centres.
- Review & revise current membership agreements to ensure they clearly articulate;
 - how the parties will work together
 - what the collective will do
 - what CISVic will do
 - what the local centres will do and how the members will contribute to shared delivery
 - individual exemptions, and
 - compliance

Demonstrate collective impact

- Expand the availability of database across all local centres to enable the collection of consistent, reliable data.
- Review and refine mandatory data reporting for all members.
- Invest in a business intelligence system that can comprehensively interrogate data and produce meaningful reports.
- Continue work to develop CISVic's evaluation framework to demonstrate the collective impact of our service, producing annual reports demonstrating the value of the sector.

Training & professional development

- Enhance the accessibility and availability of the Community Support Workers Course through the development of a e-learning option
- Continue to identify opportunities for centralised recruitment and training of new, specialised (centre-based) volunteer roles including fundraising, advocacy, communications and media, and governance.
- Increase engagement and professional development opportunities with managers and governing bodies through targeted events and training.

Branch Model Evaluation 2019



Introduction

In late 2016, member agency, Community Information Glen Eira (CIGE) approached CISVic for management support. The previous Manager of 29 years as well as the long-term Case Worker had left and a few members of the Committee of Management had concerns about governance and financial management. This was communicated to the agency's core funding body Glen Eira Council, which subsequently arranged for an audit (by Oakton Services) and appointed an accountant to assist with financial management on an interim basis.

In April 2017, an internal audit of CIGE's financial systems, governance and financial position was conducted, which revealed a lack of governance over the operations of CIGE, and insufficient understanding, expertise and mix of skills within the Committee of Management to effectively govern the agency. Glen Eira Council commissioned CISVic to run the service for 12 months and implement the audit recommendations. An audit review was conducted in March 2018 to determine whether the actions were satisfactorily implemented

Despite evident management issues, Glen Eira Council recognised the value of CIGE's work in supporting the community. Thus it resourced CISVic to initially implement the audit recommendations, and eventually to directly manage the agency on an ongoing basis. This is referred to as the 'Branch Model'. The service was subsequently re-branded Community Information and Support Glen Eira (CISGE). In 2018, CISVic was awarded three-year funding from R E Ross Trust, in large part to evaluate and scale up the Branch Model as a way to save local, generalist support services through direct management.

Evaluation methodology

The overall aims of the evaluation included the following:

- Evaluate the pilot of the 'Branch Model' as implemented with CIS Glen Eira
- Provide CISVic with a service delivery model - 'Branch Model' as a potential solution to save local support services as required

Evaluation activities included:

- Document analysis
- Interviews with staff, volunteers, managers and a Glen Eira Council representative
- Synthesis of information
- Summary of findings
- Development of recommendations.

Findings

The general consensus was that the intervention by CISVic to keep CISGE operational, was successful. The doors to a vital community service were kept open, while serious governance and financial management issues were identified and addressed. A trusting and fruitful relationship has been developed between Glen Eira Council and CISVic in the process of saving the service, and as a result CISGE has some stability and funding certainty, at least for the next three years.

The process of the audit was evidently successful, leading to a clear governance and management plan, which has been mostly implemented. The Branch Coordinator has successfully overseen the introduction of a range of policies, procedures and management practices for the agency. The new Case Worker's support for people with complex issues, and for volunteers assisting the public is greatly appreciated, especially by volunteers who work on the same two days as her and receive expert guidance and support face-to-face. Volunteers working on other days also appreciate having a Case Worker to refer people to who have more complex needs.

Reportedly there was considerable anxiety and uncertainty for some volunteers in the process of the transition. This can be attributed to several intersecting factors including: suddenness of the change, some feeling uninformed or under-valued, long-held personal bonds with the previous coordinator, and change in the role of the coordinator. Despite these difficulties, most volunteers remained with CISGE. This is certainly a testament to their commitment in supporting the local community and people who come to the agency for help. In addition, new volunteers have been recruited who appear to be equally committed.

Recommendations

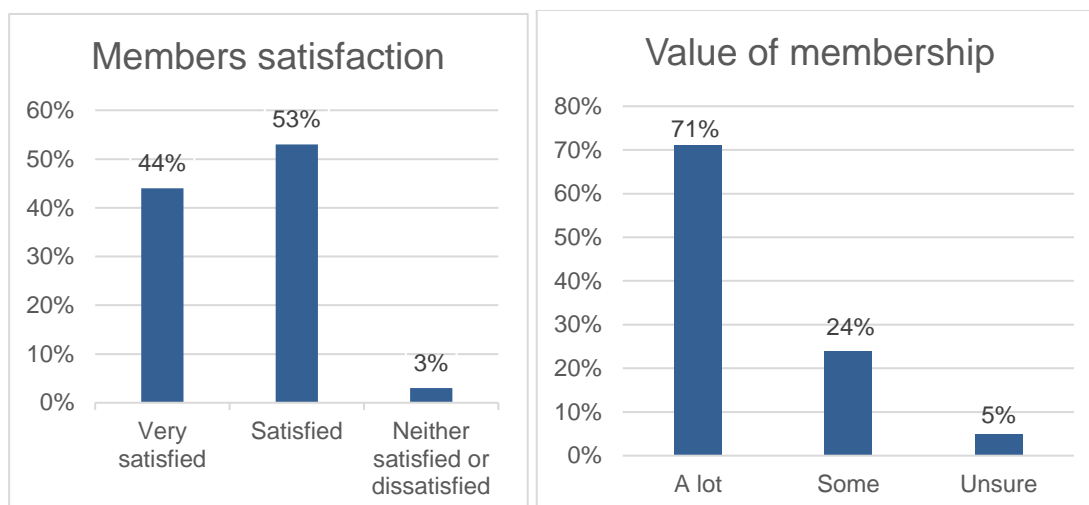
Principles of a good Branch Model:

1. Place based services are necessary for relevant and accessible support for community members
2. Leadership is required, both from CISVic and at Branch level
3. Volunteer skills and knowledge are essential for availability and quality of service
4. Staff & volunteer empowerment and well-being is paramount
5. Communities are best served by CISVic's Common Service Model which encompasses holistic, wrap-around support and promotes social and financial inclusion
6. Communities are best supported by consistent and high-quality service across all sites.

Process for intervention:

1. CISVic appoint an assessor for an organisational audit, with a focus on financial management & governance
2. Based on the audit results, design a transition plan
3. Design a communication strategy
4. With reference to the communication strategy, provide staff, volunteers and key stakeholders with information about what is happening with the service, and provide regular updates
5. Design an evaluation plan for the intervention, including the impact of introducing CISVic policies and the Common Service Model
6. Recruit a Branch Coordinator, with skills in management, governance, networking and social support
7. Implement the transition plan & communication strategy with Branch Sub-Committee assessing progress at regular intervals.

Annual member satisfaction survey



How we add value to our members

“Provides opportunities to promote grass roots organisations to a wider audience”

“Opportunity to leverage the broader membership in terms of consortium bids. Provision of high quality training, Access to template policies. Linking us with other like minded organisations”

General comments about our performance

“Very pleased with the advocacy component and the establishment of the working groups”

“Kudos to all the hardworking staff at CISVic. You do a very professional job. Thank you”

What we did well in last 12 months

“Represent us as peak body with relevant stakeholders. Organise clear consultations for members – all network meetings and follow up are extremely well run, fosters and nurtures and inclusive and transparent culture within the membership. Trustworthy and reliable”

“Expanded the training schedule”

“Obtaining (consortia) funding for services through the tender process”

What we could improve on

“There needs to be a greater emphasis on a common identification for the membership and marketing this for the benefit of all members”

“Sometimes communication can be a bit slow or unclear”

Organisational effectiveness

Fiscal responsibility

We have delivered services and programs in accordance with the budget and resources available. We set an annual budget before each new financial year and regular reports are submitted to the Board.

A strong, healthy, high performing team

The introduction of a new operational plans translates to workplans for individual staff. New plans are being introduced in the next financial year, will ensure all workers have a clear understanding of their role and what is expected of them.

Regular team meetings, and team building activities aim to keep all workers engaged, informed and working cohesively.

Sub-committees to support the board

In the last reporting period, 3 new sub-committees were formed to support the work of the board, and they have continued to meet over the last 12 months. They are:

1. Audit & Risk Sub-Committee
2. Advocacy, Research & Training Sub-Committee
3. Membership Sub-Committee

Each group comprises board members and appropriate staff. They have both distinct and organic areas of responsibility and key actions. They set workplans and make regular reports to the board.

CIS Glen Eira

CIS Glen Eira became CISVic's first branch in 2018. Based in Glen Huntly, CIS Glen Eira offers information, referral, advocacy and support services. Emergency relief includes food vouchers, food parcels, travel cards, assistance with pharmaceuticals.

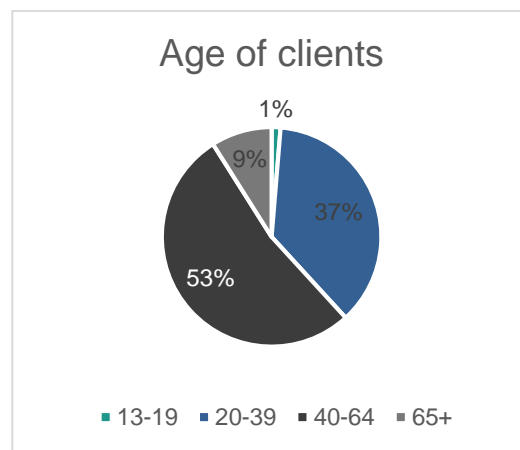
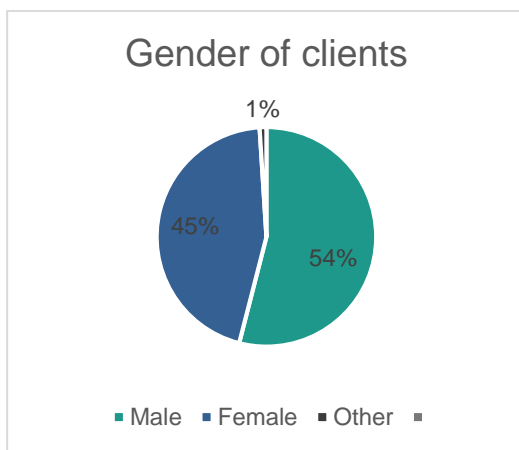
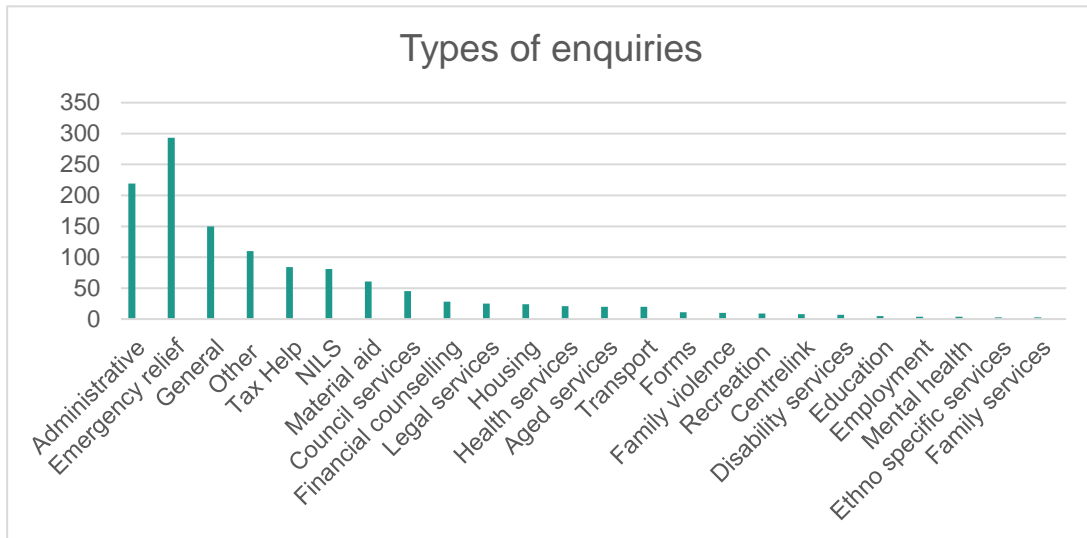
The service operates 5 days per week with a small number of paid staff and a wonderful team of volunteers.

Highlights during this reporting period included:

- Volunteer Grant – we received a grant from federal Department of Social Services to upgrade office furniture.
- ICT upgrade – we received a grant of from Jack Brockhoff Foundation to upgrade our software and hardware
- Public Access computers – we received 2 donated computers from Infoxchange to use as public access computers
- Glen Eira Rotary Club donated a new fridge
- Regular donations for our food pantry from local Rotary Clubs, churches and schools
- Winter Soup drive – received donations from a local school
- 4 new volunteers joined the team

Service delivery

- **1,243 general enquiries**
- **2,105 people assisted with emergency relief**
- **30% of clients were new to the service**
- **80 individuals and families received Christmas Hampers, toys and bonuses**
- **36 clients received intensive support from our case worker**



Volunteer Program

We deliver volunteer support services in the municipality. We:

- Assist individuals to find suitable volunteering opportunities
- Provide information to individuals and groups about volunteering
- Assist volunteer involving organisations with information and support
- Promote and celebrate volunteering throughout the community

During this reporting period:

- **2,175 volunteer referrals made**
- **125 face-to-face & phone interviews conducted**
- **Hosted volunteer opportunities for 135 organisations**

CIS Moreland

CIS Moreland became CISVic's second branch in October 2018. Based in Coburg, CIS Moreland offers information, referral, advocacy and support services. Emergency relief includes food vouchers, food parcels, travel cards, assistance with pharmaceuticals.

The service operates 3 days per week with a part-time Branch Coordinator leading a small team of dedicated volunteers.

Highlights during this reporting period included:

- ICT upgrade – we received a grant of from Jack Brockhoff Foundation to upgrade our software and hardware
- Public Access computers – we received 2 donated computers from Infoxchange to use as public access computers
- Secured pro-bono office refurbishment through property developer Multiplex
- Introduced a community pantry offering non-perishables
- Increased engagement with local stakeholders and partners

Service delivery

- **756 people assisted with emergency relief**

HONOUR

ROLL



This award recognises people who have made a significant contribution to the CISVic sector by adding their names to the Honour Roll. 2018 Inductees:

Alan Roberts, Whittlesea Community Connections

Alan Roberts has been a volunteer at Whittlesea Community Connections for over 10 years, volunteering his time in the emergency relief program. Alan has developed a very good understanding of the local service system and is highly skilled in providing facilitated referrals for community members due to his relationships with other agencies and workers in the community.

Alan's practice is very consultative, client centred, non-judgmental and culturally inclusive. He is a strong advocate who informs clients of all their rights, is respectful of their decisions and views a person as the best placed to assess their own circumstances and priorities.

Allan is well known within the local community, his reputation as easy going and non-judgmental means that he is frequently asked for by members of the community. Alan has made a significant contribution to his community through his reliability, commitment, passion, inclusive and gentle nature. For 10 years Alan has volunteered two days a week with extreme reliable attendance.

Helen Besley, CISVic & Diamond Valley Community Support

Helen was employed as a Trainer with CISVic in July 2006, and retired in September 2017. With a strong education background and own voluntary experience as a Community Support Worker, Helen was an ideal trainer. While at CISVic, Helen personally delivered over 30 training sessions of our accredited training program Community Support Workers Course to over 330 volunteers. The direct impact of this is evident – if those 330 volunteers helped just 2 clients per week over a 12-month period, that's over 34,000 clients we've been able to assist as a direct result of her training. She also delivered countless sessions of non-accredited training programs.

During Helen's time with us, she participated in at least 2 reviews and redevelopment of our accredited courses. She was a key contributor to the development and delivery of our energy hardship and tenancy rights training programs and other accredited training programs. Helen served on the CISVic training sub-committee – which directed and oversaw the training activities of the organisation, and she provided support to the CISVic team and overall operations of CISVic.

Those she works with and train know her to be a gentle, passionate, patient and caring person with a strong commitment to social justice. While her time with CISVic came to an end in 2017, Helen continues to volunteer at Diamond Valley Community Support where she has worked for around 16 years.

Our team

The Board

Anjali Ilsley, Treasurer (appointed Sept 2019)
Anne Catanese
Bill Morton
Chris Wootton, President
Denise Budge
Ian Parker, Vice President
James Dent (resigned August 2019)
Jinny McGrath, Hon. Secretary
John Lambert
Leanne Petrides

CBD office

Paid staff

Anne-Marie Yung, Office Coordinator
Christy Snelleman, Administrative Officer
Deborah Rosenberg, Student Program Coordinator
Helen Byrne, Trainer
Dr Jennifer Borrell, Advocacy & Research
Jill Wilson, Volunteer Development
Kate Wheller Executive Officer
Meagan Skehill, Sector Development

Volunteers

Serah Rabana, Communications & Media Intern
Lynn Vernon, Researcher
Caitlin Bennetto, Researcher

Students

Miranda Cross
Georgia Hoy
Matthew Bonnetti

CIS Glen Eira

Paid staff

Anne Coughlin, Branch Coordinator
Daniela Markovic, Case Worker
Louise Howe, Administration Officer

Volunteers

Adrienne Kraus
Anne Orre
Bernie Brady
Carmen Dienhoff
David McVilly
Diana Cole
Doron Shlezinger
Fran Shearer
Gaby Pozo
Gaye Ellerey
Gitta Stanger
Irene Havryluk-Davies
Irene Rosenvais
Isabelle Tabain
Izabella Hobeika
Jacquie Wissenden
Joanne Gubieski
Julie Blashki
Kay Schmidt
Lane Shmerling
Leora Jacks
Lesley Skilney
Lily Teichman
Maree Connolly
Mary Lewin
Maryann Katz
Michael O'Donovan
Peter Vine
Phyllis James
Rob O'Brien
Rowena Han
Shane Brunning
Sue Wald
Susan Rutherford
Tallilah May

Student

Rose Ova

CIS Moreland

Paid staff

Claire Kartsidimas, Branch Coordinator
Daniela Markovic
Shayne

Volunteers

Anna
Sue
Lesleigh
Faizee
Rita
Gerry
Riki
Sarah
Jessie
Johanna
Roderick
Anand
Stefania
Michael
Vanessa
Damien

Students

Roderick Timms
Stefania Cagnin

Volunteers of Banyule

Paid staff

Jill Wilson

Volunteers

Bruce Thomas
Carolyn Oxe
Christine Reynolds

Acknowledgements

CISVic would like to thank and acknowledge the following for their support:

360 Edge
Adrian Campon (Tenants Victoria)
Bentleigh Rotary Club
Bentleigh/Moorabbin Rotary Club
Carsen Petersen (Department of Health & Human Services)
Caulfield Community House
Christine Davies (The Salvation Army Training Plus)
Christine Spence (Green Wedge Business Services)
City of Banyule
City of Glen Eira
City of Moreland
Consumer Policy Research Centre
Daniel Skehill
Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning
Department of Health & Human Services
Department of Social Services
Etz Chayim Synagogue
Frances Gianinotti (City of Banyule)
Good 360
Hope for Glen Eira Appeal
Infoxchange
Jack Brockhoff Foundation
Jobs Australia
John Corcoran (Russell Kennedy Solicitors)
Jonathan Teh (Russell Kennedy Solicitors)
Magistrates Court of Victoria
Mazon Australia
Multiplex
Nadav Sztrajjt
Nancy Bugeja & team, HM Group
Ormond Anglican Church
RE Ross Trust
Robert Morsillo (Telstra)
Rotary Club of Glen Eira
Russell Kennedy Solicitors
Share the Dignity
Sholeim Aleichem College
Sittichai Jittatad
St Anthony's Church
The Holland Foundation
Thorne Harbour
Uniting Church Coburg
WIZO

Celebrating Milestones

Long service certificates have been awarded to the following people:

5 YEARS

Bayside Community Information & Support Service: **Molly May**
Casey North Community Information & Support Service: **Mary Polglase, Charlotte George**
CIS Glen Eira: **Bernard Brady, Diana Cole, Susan Rutherford, Kay Schmidt**
Community Support Frankston: **Lorraine Pato, Diane Spender**
Darebin Information Volunteer & Resource Service: **Marie-Louise Drew, Albina Dal Santo**
Knox Infolink: **Robyn Brown, Teresa Walker**
Maroondah Community Assist: **Jenner Carter, Gwenda Moffatt, Marion Payne, Ron Major**
Monash Oakleigh Community Support & Information Service: **Sana Dabbous, Maria Lia-Szabo**
Monash Waverley Community Information & Support: **Sharon Smith, Carol Richardson, Elsie Teer, Genevieve Cormick**
Southern Peninsula Community Support & Information Centre: **Joyce Hanley**
Western Port Community Support: **Janet Round**

10 YEARS

CISGlenEira: **Izabella Hobeika, Maryann Katz, Adrienne Kraus**
Community Support Frankston: **Gail Forbes**
Maroondah Community Asssit: **Laurel Kennedy, Yvonne May**
Monash Oakleigh Community Support & Information Service: **Sue Brown, Judy Collard**
Western Port Community Support: **Alison Smyrk, Peter Stevens, Rhonda MacDonald**

15 YEARS

Monash Waverley Community Information & Support: **Sue Ratcliffe**
South Gippsland Citizens Advice Bureau: **Nicholas Peck, Judith Holmes**
Southern Peninsula Community Support & Information Centre: **Pam Capper, Rose Mynott**

20 YEARS

Bayside Community Information & Support Service: **Greg Lay**
Casey North Community Information & Support Service: **Nancy Mitchell**
Community Support Frankston: **Anthony Glenwright**
Darebin Information, Volunteer & Resource Service: **Sue Pinchbeck**
Knox Infolink: **Cherry Fuller**
Maroondah Community Assist: **Barbara Watson**
Monash Waverley Community Information & Support: **Dorothy Archer**
Western Port Community Support: **Babs Peters**

25 YEARS

Bayside Community Information & Support Service: Rowland Hassall
Southern Peninsula Community Support & Information Centre: **Jill Fearon**

30 YEARS

Community Support Frankston: **Rhonda Holloway**

35 YEARS

Bayside Community Information & Support Service: **Michael Heffernan**



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CISVic

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