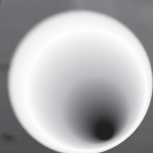


2019–2020 Annual Report summary

Community Information
& Support Victoria



INFORMING
VICTORIANS
FOR 50 YEARS

Key achievements

Continuity of service during the global pandemic

COVID-19 has had a significant global impact since the pandemic began with devastating health, social and economic implications. CISVic agencies demonstrated their adaptability, agility & responsiveness as they transformed service delivery models almost overnight in March 2020 to accommodate infection control and social distancing measures. For many this meant closing the doors and moving from face-to-face service delivery to remote delivery; with client interactions via phone and using electronic avenues to deliver funds and vouchers. In addition, many have been delivering food parcels to people's home, or introduced a 'click and collect' system. Staff have been either onsite but behind closed doors or working from home. Some have made structural changes to their building, so that on-site services are still possible, for example having screens erected or phone counselling and support from another room.

Almost overnight, many local centres lost their volunteer workforce with the vast majority over 65 years old, making them particularly vulnerable to the COVID-19. Our local centres had to operate with reduced capacity in a time of growing demand.

CISVic has played a key role in providing its members with information, support and resources during this time including policies, procedures, COVID safe plans, and re-opening plans.

We have embraced technology, conducting regular zoom member's meetings, facilitating stronger connections and enhanced communication. During the period March-May, these meetings were conducted on a weekly basis before stretching out to a fortnightly schedule.

Implementing social distancing measures meant that face-to-face training programs had to be cancelled, but we used this time to fast-track the planned adoption of the Community Support Workers Course to an online environment. This new mode of delivery, with its suite of learning tools including videos and word documents, offers enhanced accessibility and flexibility. The content remains practical, relevant and up-to-date. To enable interaction with our expert trainers, we offer digital group sessions and one-on-one sessions. We have also created other online training content in the form of webinars.

The pandemic has driven government action at all levels and CISVic has been called on to provide advice and representation on behalf of our members and the communities they work with. This has been through sub-committees, reference groups or direct liaison with government departments and members of parliament.

Support to people in hardship

We've been fortunate to receive additional income for our federally funded Emergency Relief and Financial Counselling programs. Responding swiftly to the pandemic, the Federal Government injected an additional 40% to our ER funding in this period. During this time, we've seen a significant increase in new cohorts; those who are accessing our services for the first time, those with COVID-related job losses, international students and migrants who have work rights but no entitlement to Centrelink benefits.

Working for Victoria

In May 2020 we successfully tendered for State Government's Working for Victoria funding which will enable CISVic and participating member agencies to immediately employ 51 full-time staff on a 6-month contract. These workers will be directly involved in providing information, referral, advocacy and support services including Emergency Relief to people in need, particularly those affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. This will enable agencies to backfill volunteer roles and enhance service delivery capacity.

Advocacy in action

We have continued to strengthen our advocacy role with focused activities on key issues as determined by our membership. During this period, we've:

- Supported national campaigns; Raise the Rate and Everybody's Home
- Conducted our own state campaign #schoolCOSTS which featured a flash mob in Federation Square, two research reports, Better Access Better Education pilot and a dedicated #GivingTuesday fundraiser
- Made numerous social policy submissions to government including one to the Federal Senate Inquiry into Australia's Response to COVID-19
- Developed resources and templates for our local centres to use in their own advocacy

Saving our sector

We remain steadfast in our work to ensure the sustainability of a sector and in late 2019, took on our third branch, CIS Yarra Ranges (formerly Lilydale Assist), once again saving a local centre for the community.

Power to the people

Vulnerable consumers are disproportionately affected by the rise in energy prices and the high cost of bills is a constant driver of demand for Emergency Relief. In a project spanning both the last financial year and this, we have proudly delivered the Energy Affordability Training Program alongside Consumer Policy Research Centre, Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning (DELWP) and design partners Ellis Jones. This seen the development of simple, new resources to help community workers support clients save energy and money and Energy Hardship Training delivered to 600 workers.

Contact Us

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visit www.cisvic.org.au



CISVic

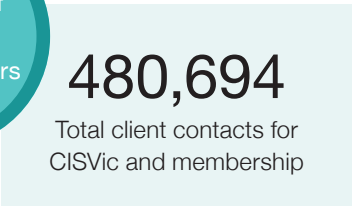
helping local communities
help local people

A snapshot

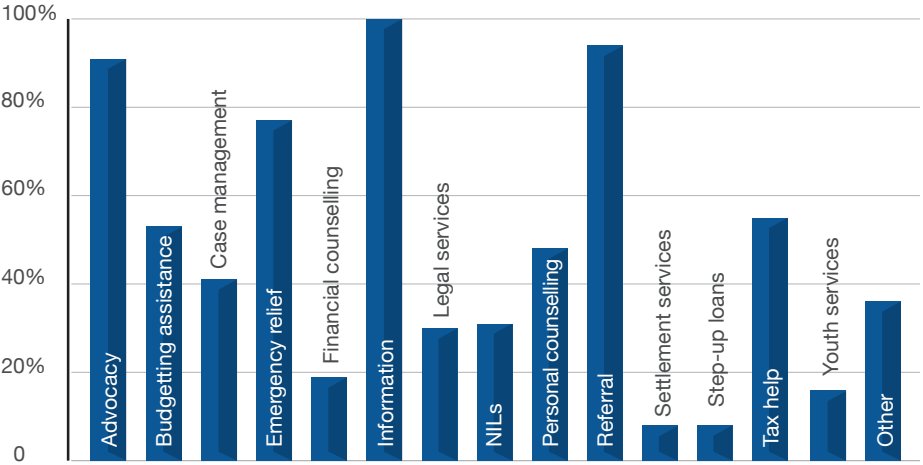
CISVic members



Our collective workforce



Services members offer



Research, Advocacy and Policy

Three advocacy focus areas;



Inadequacy of Newstart and other payments



Lack of safe and affordable housing



Rising cost of state education

3

Research Reports published

5

Social Policy submissions

1

Flash mob

7

Letters to politicians

164

Social Media posts

18%

increase in Facebook likes

Programs

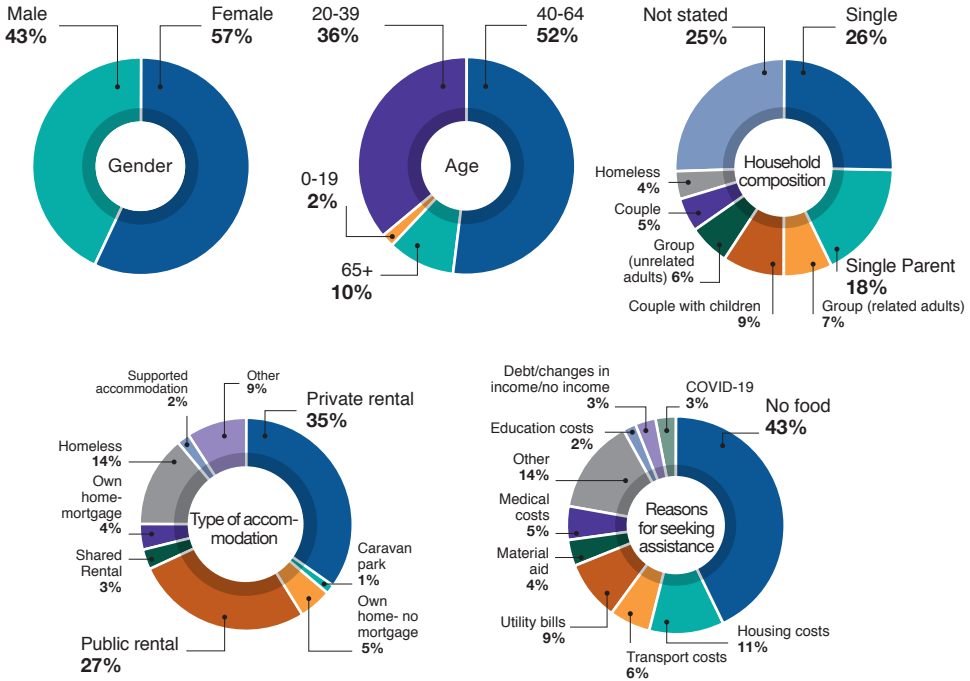
Emergency Relief Consortia



helped 21,102
emergency relief clients



\$2,891,201
Govt funding



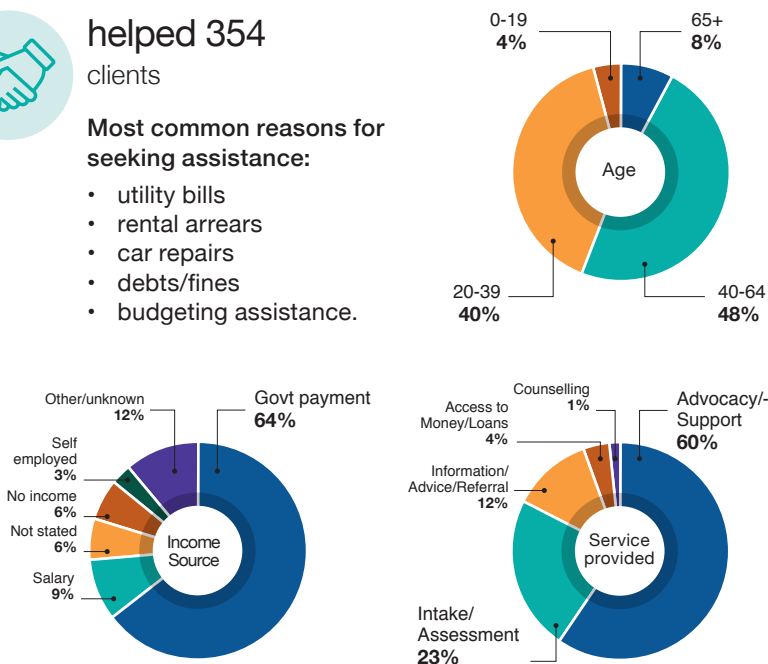
Federal Financial Counselling program



helped 354
clients

Most common reasons for seeking assistance:

- utility bills
- rental arrears
- car repairs
- debts/fines
- budgeting assistance.



Volunteer management program

4,026 volunteer referrals made

5 Participated in Community events

15,321 views of our volunteer videos

133 community organisations supported

12 e-newsletters published

Student Placement Program – partnership with RMIT

12 placed students...

...across **7** sites

Telstra Bill Assistance Program

Distributed \$225,000 in vouchers & \$50,000 in phone cards to disadvantaged people to help them stay connected.

\$275k

Telstra vouchers and phone cards distributed

E-bulletin

Keeping our members informed and up-to-date with current activities, events, developments, funding opportunities.

20 issues of our e-bulletin released

29% increase in our subscription base

About the training we delivered

We delivered a range of accredited and non-accredited training professional development programs to support the learning needs of our workforce.

Course	Sessions	Participants
Case Note Training Webinar		230 views
Community Support Workers Course	5	64
Dealing with Challenging Behaviours	1	12
Ice Training	2	16
Tenancy Rights & Responsibilities	1	20
VITAL – Volunteer Information, Talking and Learning	3	86
Working with Interpreters	3	40
Working with LGBTIQ+ community	1	14

Branches

Branch	Paid staff	Volunteers	Clients
Glen Eira	3	42	3,647
Moreland	1	15	2,002
Yarra Ranges	1	25*	2,008

*includes Op Shop volunteers