

# 2020–2021 Annual report summary



**CISVic**

Helping local  
communities

### We are strongly connected

We've not only maintained strong connections with our members during lockdown, by using now common-place video technologies for online meetings, e-newsletters, and social media, we have enhanced our connections and communication channels. These aren't our only channels of communication either - we're still using old school methods. We're in constant contact with individual members, via phone and email, and this is evidenced by our phone contact data, which has recorded over 700 phone calls with individual member agencies this year.

Our collective sector has, even with reduced capacity and remote service delivery, continued to support almost half a million Victorians this year– with 476,511 contacts recorded across the membership.

### Greater resources to meet greater need

Our strong and trusted relationship with the federal Department of Social Services coupled with generous cash injections by the Morrison Coalition government has delivered a 124% increase to our Emergency Relief & Financial Counselling consortia funding this year. This funding has been critical for our services to ensure they have the resources and flexibility to support the vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals and families presenting to their services every day.

### Our voice is getting louder

The service delivery of our members directly informs our advocacy and representation and we've increased our capacity to focus on an increasing number of areas and issues. We are preparing more submissions, writing more letters to members of parliament and decision makers, attracting more media, and partnering with key stakeholders, speaking loud and clear about the issues impacting our community and our members. We've been able to actively advocate on more than our 3 primary advocacy issues of school costs, housing, and inadequate welfare payments, responding to our members calls for action on other issues including energy hardship and affordable dental treatment. We'll add to this in the next financial year family violence, climate change, sector workforce needs, and the plight of asylum seekers and refugees.

Our social media engagement has increased significantly, and this provides a broader platform for us to speak of our experiences, share our clients stories, call for action and promote our causes.

Our collective sector has, even with reduced capacity and remote service delivery, continued to support almost half a million Victorians this year– with **476,511** contacts recorded across the membership.



### Working for Victoria worked for us

The Andrews Government COVID response initiative, Working for Victoria, was a game changer for our sector, delivering much needed professional staff to our local centres whose predominantly volunteer workforce had been inordinately diminished during the global pandemic. We were able to place over 50 full-time staff – the majority of whom went into direct service roles as support workers and case workers, in our local centres to support the community and indeed, the existing staff.

As evidenced in our evaluation of this project, Working for Victoria delivered broad sector benefit. You'll find a summary of this evaluation on our website. We employed some terrific workers who enhanced our services and provided comprehensive, holistic support to people in need.

This project was a huge undertaking for us, and it couldn't have happened without the exceptional and steadfast project team and the Department's support.

Finally, this project demonstrated the value of dedicated, paid staff in a sector so reliant on volunteers. COVID has exposed the vulnerability of a predominantly volunteer workforce, and we need to shore up the sustainability of our critical sector by adequately resourcing each and every local centre.

### We surveyed you, and then surveyed you some more

We conducted both our bi-annual Volunteer Census and our annual Member's Satisfaction survey during this financial year. Both reports help us understand our workforce and our members needs consistently and comprehensively, and we're grateful to all who have taken the time to participate in these surveys. We've included summary reports for each in the body of this report.

### The branches are out

While the operations of the 3 CISVic branches and the op shop remain firmly under the governance of CISVic, we've extracted their reports from this document and will instead, publish standalone operational reports for each. These will be available on our website. The standalone reports will allow us to publish more detailed accounts, giving each branch the credit and respect, it deserves.

### Change it is a-coming

Lockdown has given the opportunity to consider and test new ways of working, and we've decided to formally adopt a hybrid working model for the city team. This will see the actual closure of a permanent city office, with staff continuing to work both from home and at local branches, coupled with monthly city-based team days. The team has demonstrated during this period that this is a productive and viable model and money saved on a city-rental will be reinvested into building staffing capacity.

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# We have 53 member agencies

(full and associate)

Delivering  
services from  
**61 sites**

CISVic now  
operates  
**3 branches**

We had  
a collective  
**476,511  
individual  
contacts**

## Services our members offer

Advocacy **90%**

Budgeting **54%**

Case management **41%**

Emergency relief **80%**

Financial counselling **19%**

Information **100%**

Legal services **30%**

NILs **32%**

Other **35%**

Personal counselling **47%**

Referrals **95%**

Settlement services **8%**

Step-up loans **8%**

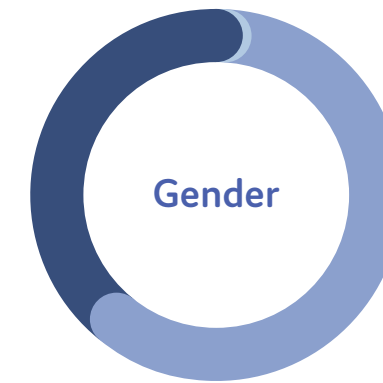
Tax Help **56%**

Youth Services **17%**

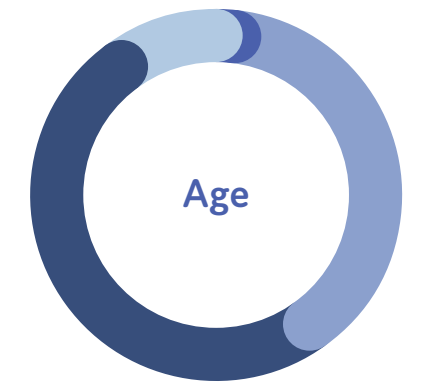
\$4,381,446.36  
in ER funding  
distributed

Our Emergency Relief Consortia clients

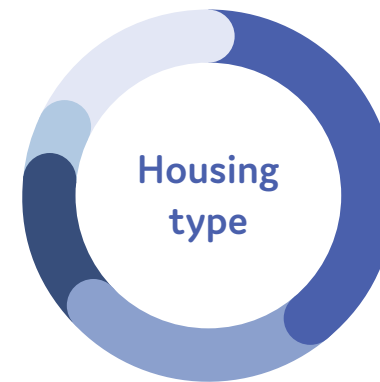
During this period, we helped 20,394 emergency relief clients.



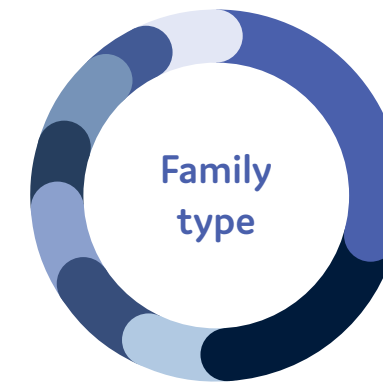
- 1% Intersex/other
- 60% Female
- 39% Male



- 2% 0-19 y.o.
- 38% 20-39 y.o.
- 50% 40-64 y.o.
- 10% 65 y.o. +



- 37% Private rental
- 23% Public housing
- 13% Homeless
- 5% Own home (no mortgage)
- 17% Not stated/Inadequately described



- 29% Single
- 20% Single parent
- 8% Group (related adults)
- 9% Couple with children
- 8% Group (unrelated)
- 6% Couple
- 8% Group (related)
- 5% No household/Homeless
- 7% Not stated/Inadequate description



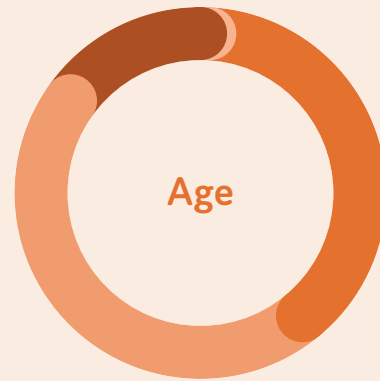
- 39% No food
- 9% Utility bills
- 11% Housing bills
- 4% Transport costs
- 10% Other
- 4% Medical costs
- 2% Relationship issues
- 5% COVID related
- 6% Material aid
- 1% Family Violence
- 2% Education costs
- 7% Dept, changes in income, no income

## Our Financial Counselling clients

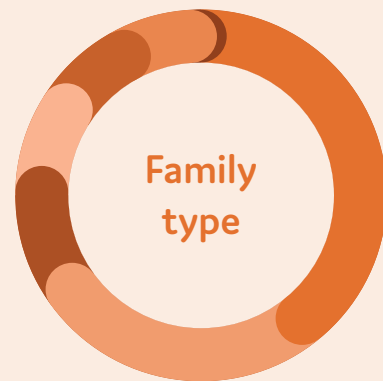
During this period, we supported 433 clients.



- 36.4% Female
- 63.6% Male



- 1% 0-19 y.o.
- 38% 20-39 y.o.
- 46% 40-64 y.o.
- 15% 65 y.o. +



- 39% Single
- 26% Single parent
- 10% Group (related adults)
- 9% Couple with children
- 8% Group (unrelated)
- 7% Couple
- 1% Other

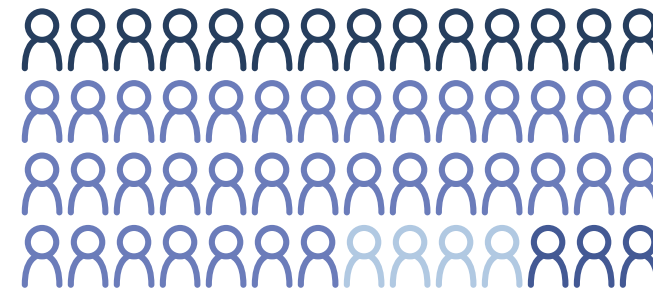


- 82% Govt. payment
- 8% Wages
- 6% Not stated/inadequately described
- 4% No income

## Working for Victoria

**\$2.14 million** in funding received

**56 staff** were recruited to help deliver support services at local centres.



- 14 full-time Case Workers
- 35 full-time Support Workers
- 4 Administrators
- 3 Project Coordinators

“The WfV project allowed our agency to continue to operate, and not only that, to grow and develop its services to meet the need of the community that was in desperate need of an agency like ours” — Manager

### Program evaluation key findings:

The program increased agency capacity to meet individual and community needs

The program improved employment outcomes for recruits

The CISVic sector is critical and under-resourced

### Key recommendation from the evaluation:

That state government provides funding for professional support staff at every CISVic member agency.

**75%** of recruits obtained further employment

**9%** commenced formal studies in the sector

**68%** of recruits secured ongoing work in the community sector.

**7%** of recruits secured new roles outside of the sector.

“I was able to learn a lot and gain more hands-on experience in assisting vulnerable clients. My agency and its members support me well through their advice, encouragement and mentoring which helped me confidently grow in the role” — WfV employee

## Advocacy, Research & Data

5

radio interviews



37

letters to politicians



4

joint-signatory to letters to politicians



5

policy submissions



7

research projects



## Some social media key highlights

### Growth in followers

CISVic's Facebook page followers increased by

89%



Increased activity - we made 733 posts across all 7 platforms.



Stronger engagement – we have increased our reach, reactions, and comments.

## Assistance Programs

\$325,000

Telstra vouchers & phone cards distributed to help disadvantaged people stay connected.

This comprised of \$275,000 vouchers and \$50,000 phone cards.

\$30,000

distributed to 98 international students with no income

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## Student placements

To enhance workforce capacity for members we facilitated 2 rounds of placements:



TAFE program:  
15 students across 8 agencies



RMIT program:  
8 students across 4 agencies

We conducted our second bi-annual Volunteer Census in mid-2020. We introduced new and specific questions related to volunteer's experiences during the pandemic.

Key findings

Volunteer involvement is critical to our sector & how we support the community. It is important to us that we regularly hear from our volunteers, to understand how we can better support them.



Volunteers have gained a sense of community, purpose and improved personal wellbeing from volunteering at CISVic agency.



Volunteers feel that volunteering has given them a greater awareness of the challenges that community members face.



Over half of CISVic volunteers have similar lived experiences to the community members they assist.



Agencies and CISVic could be doing more to facilitate networking between volunteers of different member agencies and between other organisations in the community sector.



Volunteers were impressed with how their agencies handled service delivery during the COVID-19 pandemic by meeting community need while keeping volunteers safe, paid staff and community members safe.



## Volunteer Census 2020

# 65%

have volunteered  
between  
2-10+ years

# 9102

collective average  
hours volunteered  
monthly

## Characteristics of our volunteers

**59%** Aged 65+ years old (28% 55-64 yrs, 13% other)

**83%** Female (16% Male, 1% Gender Diverse)

**1%** Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

**23%** Born outside Australia

**24%** Speak a language other than English

**10%** Have a disability

## Volunteer Management Program

9

# 2,302

volunteer referrals  
made



# 118

face-to-face  
interviews  
conducted



# 19,105

views of our  
volunteer videos



# 2,143

website visits  
by 1,639 unique  
website visitors



## Training delivered

Course	Sessions	Participants
Community Support Workers (CSW) Course	10	113
CDS Portal Training	online	165 views
CSW Refresher	1	12
ER Training for non-CISVic members	2	20
Helping clients with tenancy issues (in partnership with Tenants Victoria and VCOSS)	1	34
Indigenous Cultural Awareness Training	online	105 views
Introduction to EWOV	1	36
Working with Interpreters	online	233 views

## Members Satisfaction survey

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- 80% of surveyed members rate the value of CISVic membership highly
- Members satisfaction is high with 60% Very Satisfied, and 33% Satisfied
- Members were most satisfied with CISVic's provision of news and information during the COVID-19 pandemic, and CISVic's advocacy on behalf of vulnerable clients.

"They have a good reputation in the sector. Their advocacy work to funding bodies. Provision of information, issues/opportunities. Providing a sounding board on issues. They have a level of expertise gathered in the long term on issues and responses to need within the communities, which they share through the provision of training for staff and volunteers"

"CISVic staff were impressive with their adaptability and information sharing/provision during what was, uncharted territory with the global pandemic. Guidance, practical supports, documentation and information was shared and distributed in a timely and appropriate manner ensuring member agencies continued or managed the changes in a responsive and positive manner. This helped reduce down-time and closures in what was an extremely challenging space. Our agency relied heavily on the information provided including guidance on how to keep our agency open abiding by government legislation and compliance. We were also extremely encouraged to continue our services with flexibility and proactively thanks to the guidance and information received"



**CISVic**

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communities

Contact us

**Community Information and Support Victoria**

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Call 9672 2000

Email [admin@cisvic.org.au](mailto:admin@cisvic.org.au)

Visit [www.cisvic.org.au](http://www.cisvic.org.au)