

# 2022–2023 Annual report summary



Community Information  
& Support Victoria

Helping local communities

### A new direction

We completed our new strategic plan which clearly facilitates proactive action. Important fundamentals underpinning this plan include the enduring multidimensional impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the rising cost of daily living, the inadequacies of welfare payments, the diverse and complex needs of the community and the diversity of funding and other support arrangements for individual member agencies. The core pillars of our plan centre around; leadership and partnership, membership engagement and resourcing, research informing action, and organisational effectiveness.

### Powering relief

We successfully tendered for two energy support programs from State Government which we deliver in partnership with member agencies. These programs enable us to deliver targeted support to people with energy hardship by accessing the Power Saving Bonus, rounds 3 & 4, and deeper energy assistance and advocacy. They have provided the resources and capacity for us to deliver significant financial aid to the community.

### Addressing poverty

The growing cost of living pressures have continued to drive up the demand for our Emergency Relief and Commonwealth Financial Counselling programs. During this period, the federal government provided an additional 30% of funding and our members succeeded in attracting a further \$2.8 million of additional relief via community donations and philanthropy.

# We have 55 member agencies

Delivering services from **70 sites**

Operating across **30 Local Government Areas**

CISVic operates **3 branches**

We had a collective **791,111 individual contacts**

This is a **45% increase** on last year's total contacts

## Key highlights

### A voice for the sector

We continued to advocate on a range of key issues affecting our members and the communities they work with. We shifted our primary focus to the key areas of increasing emergency relief funding, and the introduction of coordination funding for all members.

### A fresh new look

During this year, we undertook a significant brand re-fresh and launched a new website. The new design reflects the evolution of the organisation, with beautiful visual imagery which speaks to our work, the work of our members and the people they work with. This new material includes the introduction of a membership badge and a suite of graphic collateral for our members to use (icons, font, colour schemes).

### Our path to reconciliation with First Nations peoples

We are committed to strategically taking meaningful action to advance reconciliation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Building on the foundations of relationships, respect and opportunities, our Reconciliation Action Plan will provide a firm blueprint for CISVic to increase economic equity and self-determination of First Nations peoples.



Our services are delivered by trained staff, many of whom are volunteers. Services are confidential, respectful, and in a caring and compassionate manner.



### Information & referral

Our members provide free information and referral service on topics such as housing, health, personal issues, families, education and much more. Referrals are made to the appropriate government or community services and other not-for-profit organisations.



### Advocacy

Our members can act on behalf of people to negotiate payments and discuss issues with a range of service providers, including:

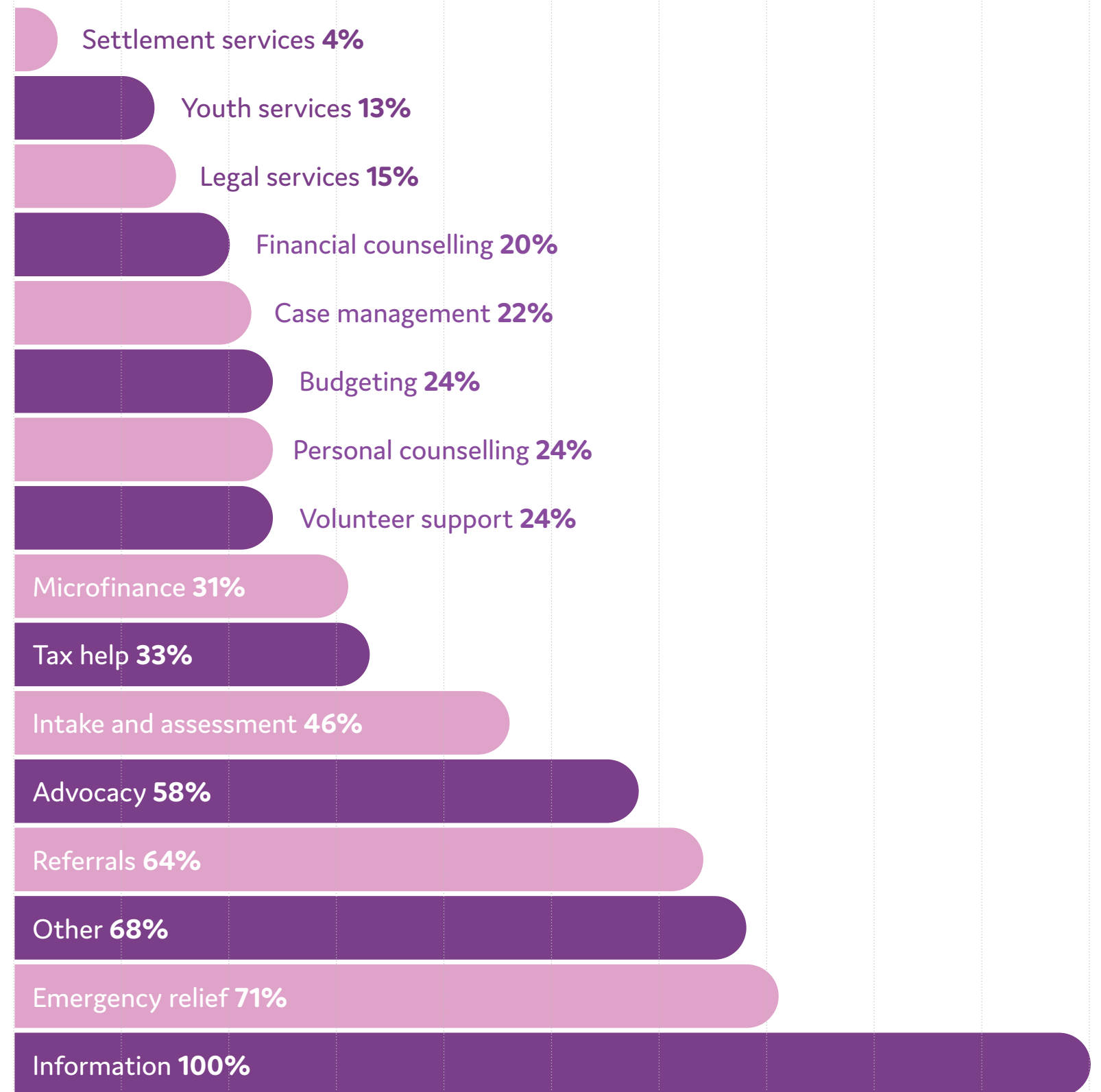
- Utilities (gas, electricity, water)
- Telephone companies
- Centrelink
- Real estate agents
- Government departments



### Emergency relief

Food, food vouchers and other assistance are provided to local residents experiencing financial hardship.

### Services our members offer



23

e-bulletin were produced to a subscriber base of **782**

10.4%

increase in **Facebook followers**

We use social media platforms to share key news and information, acknowledge special events, and advocate for our core issues.

**316** posts on Facebook

**57** Instagram posts

**67** Tweets

Facilitated **2** Roundtables (discussing Christmas programs and Student Placements)

Facilitated **4** CISVic Members Meetings

Facilitated **7** Advocacy Working Group meetings

Facilitated **4** Caseworker Networks

Facilitated **9** Regional Network Meetings

Facilitated **4** Volunteer Coordinators Networks

Facilitated **4** Energy Mentor Networks

Network of Asylum Seeker Agencies Victorian Emergency Relief Network Meeting – attended **7** meetings

VCOSS States and Peaks Network – attended **3** meetings

VCOSS' Vic Utilities – attended **3** meetings

Department of Environment, Energy and Climate Action (DEECA) Energy Consumers Insights Forum **x 2**

Essential Services Commission Sector Roundtable **x 1**

Victorian Volunteer Support Network **x 2**

Victorian Emergency Relief Sub-Committee Meetings **x 2**



Key campaigns:

Coordination Funding for CISVic Agencies

Increased Emergency Relief Funding

Secondary campaigns:

Housing and homelessness

Centrelink payment levels

Schools costs

Utilities

Asylum seekers and refugees

Family violence

Climate change

Primary areas of advocacy:

3

Policy submissions



2

Research pieces



102

Letters to politicians



2

Letters in The Age



2

Election campaigns



6

Meetings with MPs



Addressing energy hardship is critical to our sector's support of vulnerable Victorians. To support this work at the start of 2023, with funding from the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA), CISVic led a partnership of member agencies to provide cost-of-living relief through the \$250 Power Saving Bonus and energy assistance to vulnerable and hard-to-reach community members.

The 32-member strong partnership delivered three programs, including the Power Saving Bonus 3 & 4, Community Outreach programs and the Energy Assistance Program. These programs will continue into the next financial year.

Program outcomes as of June 2023:

\$1,191,000 worth of cost-of-living relief provided to vulnerable Victorians.

5,059 Victorian households supported to access the program.

14,386 different occurrences of light affordability information and advice provided.

2,844 episodes of advocacy provided to access different energy affordability supports.

Case Study

When attending a local shopping centre, Silvia\*, a senior single woman, spoke with agency staff at their pop-up desk. Silvia was surprised to learn that she was eligible for the PSB and that concessions should appear on her bill. When the concessions were processed and backdated for 12 months, and with the PSB, Lauren found herself paying less, and the small debt she owed cleared.

"I didn't think I would get the bonus as I didn't have concessions. I then found out I should have been accessing concessions and other bonuses all along. This friendly volunteer called on my behalf to have my concessions applied. This has been very helpful as I have been struggling with the cost of everything. How wonderful!"

Program Participant. (Name and some details have been changed to protect the participant's identity.)

(Photo from program launch – Kate Wheller, EO with Premier Dan Andrews, Minister Anthony Carbinos and Minister Lily D'Ambrosio)



Total number  
of unique people  
**24,214**

Underlying reasons for seeking assistance

1. Housing costs
2. Utilities/phone expenses
3. Transport expenses
4. Medical expenses
5. The need for material aid/  
household goods

**86,093** episodes  
of support

**16%** of people were homeless\*

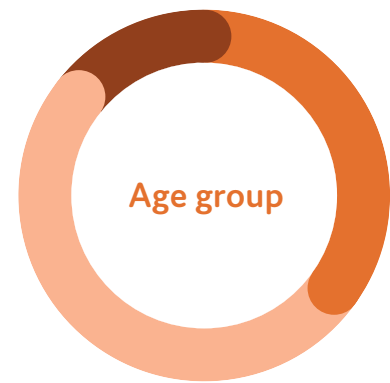
**21%** of people were living in public housing

**35%** of people were in private rental

**4%** of people had a mortgage

\*Definition of homelessness: Caravan Park, living in boarding/rooming house/severely crowded dwellings, emergency housing, rough sleeping, staying temporarily with others, living in supported accommodation for the homeless and unstable/insecure.

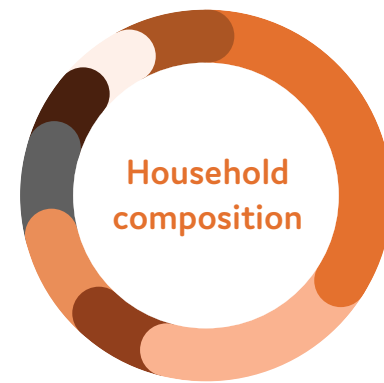




- **35%** of people were under 39 years of age
- **51%** of people were between 40-64 years of age
- **14%** of people were 65+ years of age



- **31%** Yes
- **65%** No
- **4%** Not stated



- **34%** Single person (living alone)
- **20%** Sole parent with dependant(s)
- **8%** Couple
- **9%** Couple with dependent(s)
- **9%** Group (related adults)
- **6%** Group (unrelated adults)
- **6%** Homeless/ No household
- **8%** Not stated or unknown

## 72% of clients assisted were Australian-born

### Top five countries of birth excluding Australia:

1. New Zealand
2. Afghanistan
3. England
4. Iran
5. Iraq



- **7%** New Zealand
- **6%** Afghanistan
- **6%** England
- **5%** Iran
- **4%** Iraq
- **3%** Greece
- **3%** China
- **66%** Others

English was the main language spoken at home for **85%** of people assisted. Below is a diagram that shows the percentages for the remaining **15%**.



- **17%** Arabic
- **7%** Dari
- **6%** Persian (excluding Dari)
- **4%** Russian
- **4%** Greek
- **4%** Mandarin
- **4%** Somali
- **54%** Other and not stated

There has been a **15%** increase in client presentations when comparing the data from the previous year.

Of note, there is a significant increase in the change of pre-COVID demand and funding levels. Demand has increased significantly while funding has reduced back to pre-COVID levels from July 2023.

	2018/2019	2022/2023
Base funding	\$2 million	<b>\$2 million</b>
Presentations	55,160	<b>86,093</b>

\*We did receive an extra **\$700,000** in additional ER, supplementation, and indexation, but in 2023/2024 funding has reduced to base levels.

Funding has returned to pre-covid levels however the demand for services has increased by **56%**.

There has been a

**56.07%**

increase in client presentations when comparing the data for 2022/23 to 2018/19.

There has been a

**14%**

increase in the # of unique clients when comparing the data for 2022/23 to 2018/19.

There has been a

**47%**

increase in the assistance provided when comparing the data for 2022/23 to 2018/19.

The CISVic Emergency Relief Consortia received **\$2.7M** in emergency relief funding from the Department of Social Services.

During the last financial year, our consortia partners successfully attracted over **\$2.8 million** in additional emergency relief funding from a variety of sources including, philanthropy, community donations, social enterprise, and local government.

During 2022/23, all consortia partners reported concerns about the increased demand for emergency relief alongside increased complexity of client support needs.

This was compounded by the fact that volunteer capacity was down by **30%**.



# Total number of clients 397

The average time spent with each person is **247 minutes**.

The average time spent with follow-up advocacy and support was **218 minutes** per client.

The average waiting time for financial counselling was **6-8 weeks**.



- 34% Male
- 64% Female
- 0% Intersex indeterminate
- 2% Not stated/Inadequately described



- 34% Yes
- 63% No
- 3% Not stated



- 2% Under 19
- 36% 20-39
- 52% 40-64
- 10% 65+



- 36% Single person (living alone)
- 23% Sole parent with dependant(s)
- 10% Couple
- 9% Couple with dependent(s)
- 9% Group (related adults)
- 6% Group (unrelated adults)
- 3% Homeless/No household
- 4% Not stated or unknown



## Workforce development

Course	Sessions
Community Support Workers (CSW) Course	9 sessions, 79 participants
Indigenous Cultural Awareness	38 registrations
Working with Interpreters	86 registrations
CISVic Portal On-line	34 registrations
CISVic Portal Face-to-face	1 session, 5 participants
Dealing with Challenging Situations	1 session, 16 participants
Working Smart, Not Harder	1 session, 10 participants
Suicide Conversations and Safety	1 session, 10 participants
Building Relationships with Clients & Colleagues	1 session, 17 participants

## Volunteer recruitment support



9 member agencies given support to recruit volunteers

## Student placements

To enhance organisational capacity and provide rich learning opportunities, we support student placements.



**8 RMIT Social Work students**  
placed at 6 sites



**13 TAFE Community Services students**  
were placed at 8 sites



## The Board

Leanne Petrides, President (Jan-Jun)

John Lambert, President (Jul-Dec),  
Vice President (Jan-Jun)

Anjali IIsley, Treasurer

Anne Catanese, Hon. Secretary

### Ordinary members:

Ian Parker

Karyn Doyle

Kathy Hosie

Hiyah Rahman

Jenny Elvey

## CISVic Team

Anne-Marie Yung, Office Coordinator

Bridgette Mortensen, Project Support Officer

Deborah Rosenberg, SPP Coordinator

Helen Byrne, Trainer

Jennifer Borrell, Research, Advocacy and  
Policy Manager

Jill Wilson, Volunteer Development Manager

Kate Wheller, Executive Officer

Kim Smythe, Branch Manager

Leanne Petrides, Acting EO (Jul-Dec)

Meagan Skehill, Sector Development  
Manager

Michael Conney, Trainer

Will Edmonds, Project Officer

Zoe Evans, Sector Support Officer

## CIS Glen Eira

Daniela Markovic, Branch Coordinator

Louise Howe, Administration Officer

## CIS Merri-bek

Claire Kartisidmas, Branch Coordinator

Kylie Farrugia, Case Worker – Food & Material  
Aid Worker

## CIS Yarra Ranges

Christine Falzon, Branch Coordinator

## Members

### Full Members

Banyule Support & Information Centre Inc  
(BANSIC)

Bayside Community & Information Support  
Service (BAYCISS)

Bendigo Family & Financial Services Inc

CamCare

Casey North Community Information &  
Support Service Inc (Casey North CISS)

Chelsea Community Support Services

Community Information & Support  
Cranbourne

Community Support Frankston Inc

Darebin Information, Volunteer & Resource  
Service Inc (DIVRS)

Diamond Valley Community Support Inc  
(DVCS)

Doncare

Knox Infolink

Maroondah Community Assist Inc

Mentone Community Assistance &  
Information Bureau Inc

Monash Oakleigh Community Support  
& Information Service Inc (MOCSIS)

Monash Waverley Community Information  
& Support Inc

Mornington Community Support

Port Phillip Community Group Inc

South East Community Links Inc

South Gippsland Citizens Advice Bureau Inc

Southern Peninsula Community Centre inc

Stonnington Community Assist Inc

Uniting (Victoria & Tasmania)

Western Port Community Support

Whitehorse Emergency Relief & Support Inc

Whittlesea Community Connections

### Associate Members

Albury Wodonga Regional Foodshare

The Ardoch Foundation

Ballarat Foundation United Way Inc

Bellarine Community Support Register

Bendigo Foodshare

Bendigo Volunteer Resource Centre

CityLife Community Care

Council of Single Mothers and their Children

Countrywide Community Missions Victoria

Diamond Valley Foodshare

Eastern Emergency Relief Network

Endeavour Ministries

Friends for Good

Geelong Food Relief Centre Inc

The Gianna Centre

Healesville Interchurch Community Care  
Incorporated (HICCI)

IndianCare

Laverton Community Integrated Services (LCIS)

LINC Yarra Valley

Make a Difference Dingley Village

North East Citizen Advocacy Inc

OZ Assist

Regional Food Security Alliance

Shepparton Foodshare Inc

Somali Australian Council of Victoria

Sunraysia Information & Referral Service Inc

Volunteer West

Volunteering Geelong

Women Wellbeing Australia Inc



**CISVic** Community Information  
& Support Victoria

## 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)

Helping local communities