



Dingley Village Community Advice Bureau

Annual Report 2014 Celebrating 30 years in the Community



Photo courtesy Charles Strebtor

From September 1st 2014 we have changed our name to:



Crystal ball - 2022

The drivers of our sector for the next decade are many and various. Here are a few ideas of how the future may look.

- Service provision - there will be fewer state government funded service providers
- Enterprising organisations - They will include niche activity in social carer, health, employment, social connection, environment, and waste management and energy efficiency.
- Consumer activism - new generation 'consumer' organisations will have been strengthened by the 'occupy' global model
- Service reform - The centralisation of revenue generation powers will keep service delivery policy being tightly held at the national level with state and local government funding attached to performance
- Affordable housing - Australia will be leading a urban development revolution - with a mass roll out of affordable rental housing

All these ideas have roots in work and effort that is occurring now. However, government cannot initiate and implement structural reforms without the leadership and participation of communities and the community sector.

At times of uncertainty - and especially at times of public sector funding cuts - the natural urge is to bunker down and resist change. However the global financial economy and lack of confidence or capacity by governments - state and federal - to borrow adequately to invest in Australia's future look set to impose restrictions on recurrent funding for social spending for the next decade.

Right now, the challenge for the community sector is for movers, shakers and everyone in between to work together to ensure preferred visions for a more successful and inclusive society are not ditched - by governments or by ourselves. As a sector, we have the power to re-frame and reclaim change in ways that advance human rights, empowerment and better lives and communities.

By Cath Smith - who was Chief Executive Officer of the Victorian Council of Social Service (VCOSS) from 2002 - 2012, and is now Director of Social Performance with strategic consultancy firm Futureye.

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Dingley Village Community

Advice Bureau

Address: 31B Marcus Road
Dingley Village Victoria 3172

ABN: 78684267029

Inc: A0014674G

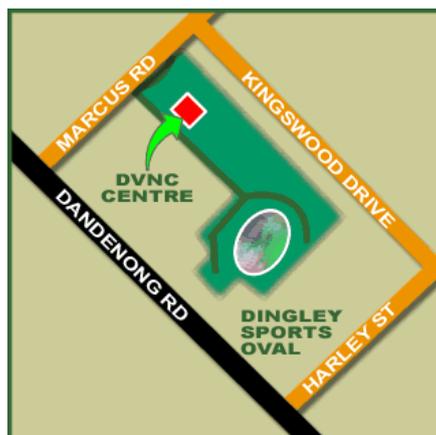
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Email: dvcab@bigpond.com

Website: www.dvcab.com.au

Office hours: Monday – Thursday, 9.00am – 3.00pm



The DVCAB office is located within the Dingley Village Neighbourhood Centre building.

Melways reference Map 88 F6

COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT

Chairperson
Public Officer
Treasurer
Social Worker
Members

Sue Anderson
Irene McInnes
Margarete Lehmann
Marion Harriden OAM

Kath Stephen
Anne Arnold
Noleen Barczak

Staff

Social Worker
Finance Officer
Administration

Marion Harriden OAM
Leeanne O'Connor
Judith Klarenbeek

Volunteers

Cyril Beverley
Ken Elvey
Jaffa Gross
Rodney Hilton
Murray Jones
George Kunz
Adeline Magee
Rosemary Maher
Jacqui Nally
Joan Nicol
Thelma Paull
Ray Smith
Anne Pellas
Kay Crane
Elizabeth Foxworthy
Alf Klarenbeek

Helen Dally
Rosemary Elvey
Margaret Irons
Gary Harriden
Faye De Boer
Karen Kinson
Pat Lucas
Alma Osbourne
Irene McInnes
Marlene Nanscawen
Norm Nicol
Susan Palfreman
Lauris Sherwood
Kath Stephen
Dianne Boadle
Ben Klarenbeek

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

This is the 30th year of providing welfare support to families.

In the first half of the year demand for food and support reached a level that could not be met with the current structure.

In the February we introduced boundaries designated by postcodes and restricted the hours of food bank.

With Second Bite now supplying us along with Vic Relief we were able to give a better level of support to the many in need of help.

We are most grateful for the ongoing support that we receive from philanthropic foundations, small business, the general community,

Federal and State Governments also City of Kingston Council.

Portland House is our major benefactor if it was not for them we could not continue our support.

Our gratitude must be expressed to the Southern Golf Club along with Bob & Kathy Shearer for their support of our charity golf day.

Thanks to our dedicated team of volunteers who donate many hours of their time. Social Worker Marion, office staff Judith and LEEANNE, members of our Committee of Management, Pam Gates and staff and committee of the Neighbourhood Centre.

The coming year is going to be harder as there is a big reduction in grants coming in.

The Department of Human Services have withdrawn our registration and the funding that went with it .

We are endeavouring to appeal this decision.

Sue Anderson
Chairperson

FROM THE SOCIAL WORKER'S

DESK

I was asked recently ----

“do we connect people with the right support, address the whole range of a person’s or family’s needs, and help people build their capabilities to improve their lives”

Yes - Minister Mary - we do!

We are small, but make no apologies for that, we believe we are

- family sensitive
- People centred
- Outcome focussed
- Holistic
- Strengths based

We don’t pretend we can solve the problems of the world, but no person who approaches us for help, leaves without - information, a referral to an appropriate agency, direct help in the form of food parcels, or simply a friendly ear, to allow people to express their concerns, worries and distress.

My role in the agency is to focus on outcomes. This means different things to different people. When they leave us, we hope to have implemented a plan with them, that leads to

- a strong financial management plan in which they prioritise spending or will live within their means
- Commitment to be positively connected to friends and family
- A plan to have strong positive relationships with their children, parents and others important to them

- A plan in which they have a positive view of their potential and act to achieve it.

A volunteer asked “how we help people”, we “support people to help themselves”.

Our next exciting plan is to change our name.

From the date of our annual meeting, we will be called Make a difference Dingley Village Inc.

How exciting for us all! Board members, staff and volunteers.

We believe we do make a difference, we are committed to make a difference, and we can prove that this does happen.

At the writing of our annual report next year, we will share with you --- how successful we have been!

My thanks to all who have shared my commitment for this new adventure





**Dingley Village
Community Advice Bureau Inc**

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Email: dvcab@bigpond.com
www.dvcab.org.au

**Annual General Meeting
held on September 18 2013**

Minutes

Welcome and opening of Annual General Meeting in our 29th year

Present: - Irene McInnes, Noleen Barczak, Judy Collins, Anne Arnold, Kath Stephen, Alma Osborne, Marlene Nanscewen, Anne McAllister, Anne Pellas, Sandra Duncan, Joan Nicol, Norm Nicol, Cyril Beverley, Franks Jackson, Michael Foldi, George Kunz, Murray Jones, Andrew Davies, Judith Klarenbeek, LEEANNE O'CONNOR, Sue Anderson, Marion Harriden

Apologies: Robert Doherty, Lorraine Wreford, Meredith Glenister, Genevieve Timmons, Tony Coyle, Dingley Kindergartens, Helen Dally, Bill Dempster, Gabriel Ronkin, Margarete Lehman

Minutes – of the 2012 Annual General Meeting have been circulated to all members with no corrections, they were received as a true record. – Noleen/ Kath

Chairperson's report – Sue Anderson

Social Worker's Report – Marion Harriden

Presentation of 2012/13 financial reports – Due to Treasurers absence the report was presented as per Annual Report. accepted – Judy/Anne

Appointment of Auditor – 2013/14
Motion to appoint Bruce Hyden as auditor for 2013/14

**Election results and confirmation of 2013/14 Board Pam Gates
(DVNC Coordinator) declared all positions vacant and called for nominations.
Committee duly elected.**

Chairperson – Sue Anderson

Secretary – Irene McInnes

Treasurer – Margarete Lehman

Committee – Anne Arnold

Kath Stephen

Noleen Barczak

Invitation to Guest Speaker – Michael Foldi

Michael is the CEO of Make a Difference Office Supplies who are committee to donating back to the community through enterprises such as give and get where you can buy a restaurant voucher and the value of the voucher gets donated back to a community group. They also encourage there customers to donate food items that are then distributed to ER agencies (us included).

Michael also spoke of his experience of sleeping rough for the St Vinneys CEO Sleeping Rough on June 20th.

Copies of Annual Report were distributed

Close of meeting – Light refreshments served

Auditors Report

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF DINGLEY VILLAGE COMMUNITY ADVICE BUREAU INC

We have audited the attached financial report, being a special purpose financial report of Dingley Village Community Advice Bureau Inc which comprises the Statement of Financial Position as at 30th June 2014 and Statement of Financial Performance for the year then ended.

Committee's Responsibility for the Financial Report

The association's committee is responsible for the financial report and has determined that the financial statements are appropriate to meet the needs of the members and the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012.

Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on our audit. We have conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. These auditing standards require that we comply with relevant ethical requirements to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial report is free from misstatement.

We have conducted an independent audit of this financial report in order to express an opinion on it to the members of the association. No opinion is expressed as to whether the accounting policies used, are appropriate to the needs of the members.

Our procedures included examination on a test basis of evidence supporting the amounts and other disclosures in the financial report, and the evaluation of significant accounting estimates. These procedures have been undertaken to form an opinion whether, in all material respects, the financial report is presented fairly so as to present a view which is consistent with our understanding of the Association's financial position, the results of its operations and its cash flows.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Opinion

In our opinion, the financial report presents a true and fair view of the financial position of Dingley Village Community Advice Bureau Inc as at 30th June 2014 and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended.



BRUCE T. HYDON
Bruce Hydon Pty Ltd
10th September 2014
CPA 11972

Dingley Village Community Advice Bureau

31 Marcus Road

Dingley Village Vic. 3172

Income and Expenditure Statement for the Year Ended 30th June 2014

ABN: 7868 426 7029 Inc No: A0014674G

	2014	2013
<u>INCOME</u>		
Interest	\$2,190	\$3,753
Donations	\$48,820	\$57,043
DHS Grant	\$7,434	\$26,440
Community Grant C.O.K.	\$26,256	\$23,685
Emergency Account - Grant	\$4,125	\$4,125
Grant Other		\$0
DGR non public	\$111,326	\$57,361
Public Donations	\$1,000	\$0
Bob Shearers Golf Day	\$16,310	\$12,221
Emergency Acc. RENT	\$5,570	\$4,000
Bendigo Bank dividend	\$63	\$63
Other Income	-	<u>\$1,945</u>
Total Income	<u>\$223,093</u>	<u>\$190,635</u>
<u>EXPENSES</u>		
Bob Shearer Golf Day	\$7,414	\$0
Emergency Relief	\$25,890	\$67,690
Employment Expenses	\$112,961	\$128,192
Administration Costs	\$40,930	\$36,885
Depreciation	\$7,797	\$8,241
Total Expenses	<u>\$194,993</u>	<u>\$241,007</u>
Net Surplus / (Deficit)	\$28,100	-\$50,372

Dingley Village Vic. 3172

Balance Sheet for the Year Ended 30th June 2014

ABN: 7868 426 7029

Inc No: A0014674G

2014

2013

BALANCE SHEET

Current Assets

Cheque Account	68,458.17	8,110.00
BBL LSL	-	15,572.68
BBL Future Fund	36,903.57	35,657.38
Bendigo Money Extra Cash Manag	57,758.36	80,097.43
Petty Cash	300.00	300.00
Emergency Relief Bank Acc.	1.04	32.72
Bob Shearers Golf Day Account	-	<u>2,437.14</u>
Total Current Assets	<u>163,421.14</u>	<u>142,207.35</u>

Non Current Assets

Furniture & Fixtures at Cost	7,924.25	13,601.82
Furniture & Fixtures Acc Dep	<u>- 3,591.81</u>	<u>- 8,364.86</u>
	<u>4,332.44</u>	<u>5,236.96</u>
Office Equipment at Cost	2,552.39	5,381.82
Office Equipmt Acc Depn	<u>- 1,171.77</u>	<u>- 4,464.91</u>
	<u>1,380.62</u>	<u>916.91</u>
Motor Vehicle @ Cost	28,280.00	28,280.00
Motor Vehicles Acc Dep'n	<u>- 12,532.52</u>	<u>- 6,588.40</u>
	<u>15,747.48</u>	<u>21,691.60</u>

Investments

Bendigo Bank Shares	450.00	450.00
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TOTAL ASSETS **185,331.68** **170,502.82**

Current Liabilities

Provision for LSL	4,347.24	19,521.45
Provision for AL	2,531.85	-
GST Collected		553.00
GST Paid	<u>- 75.40</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>6,803.69</u>	<u>20,074.45</u>
	<u>178,527.99</u>	<u>150,428.37</u>

Represented by

Balance at beginning of year	150,427.90	200,799.00
deficit/surplus for the year	<u>28,100.09</u>	<u>- 50,372.00</u>
	<u>178,527.99</u>	<u>150,427.00</u>

To the best of my knowledge and belief, this financial statement is an accurate account of the financial affairs of THE DINGLEY VILLAGE COMMUNITY ADVICE BUREAU for the year ending 30th June 2014.
Leeanne O'Connor - Finance Officer

DINGLEY VILLAGE COMMUNITY ADVICE BUREAU INC

STATEMENT OF CASHFLOWS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2014

\$

CASHFLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES

Donations	160,146
Grants	38,814
Golf Day Proceeds	16,310
Rent	5,570
Payments to suppliers and employees	<u>-200,467</u>
Net cash generated from operating activities	20,373

CASHFLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES

Interest Received	2,190
Capital Expenditure	-1,411
Dividend Received	<u>62</u>
Net cash used in investing activities	841

Net increase in cash held 21,214

Cash on hand at beginning of year 142,207

Cash on hand at end of year 163,421

Represented by

Cheque accounts	68,458
Extra Cash Management	57,758
Future Fund	36,904
Other	<u>301</u>
	<u>163,421</u>

DINGLEY VILLAGE COMMUNITY ADVICE BUREAU INC.
31B Marcus Rd, Dingley Village 3172
ABN: 78 684 267 029 Inc: A0014674G

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 30TH JUNE 2014

Note 1: Statement of Significant Accounting Policies

This financial report is a special purpose financial report prepared in order to satisfy the financial reporting requirements of the Associations Incorporations Reform Act 2012 (Vic). The committee has determined that the association is not a reporting entity.

The financial report has been prepared on an accruals basis and is based on historical costs and does not take into account changing money values or, except where specifically stated, current valuation of non-current assets.

The following significant accounting policies, which are consistent with the previous period unless otherwise stated, have been adopted in preparation of this financial report.

Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents includes cash on hand, deposits held at call with banks, and other short-term highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less.

b. Income Tax

The Association is exempt from paying Income Tax by virtue of Section 50-45 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997. Accordingly, tax effective accounting has not been adopted

c. Fixed Assets

Fixtures, fittings, plant and equipment are carried at cost less, where applicable, any accumulated depreciation.

Assets costing less than \$500 are expensed in the year of acquisition.

d. Depreciation.

During the reporting period July 2013 to June 2014 the method of depreciation used was diminishing value.

e. Employee Entitlements

Provision is made for the Association's liability for employee benefits arising from services rendered by employees to the end of the reporting period. Employee benefits have been measured at the amounts expected to be paid when the liability is settled.

Provision is made for the Association's liability for long service leave from commencement of employment, not from the 5 year employment period normally accrued as industry practice.

f. Provisions

Provisions are recognised when the Association has a legal or constructive obligation, as a result of past events, for which it is probable that an outflow of economic benefits will result and that outflow can be reliably measured. Provisions are measured at the best estimate of the amounts required to settle the obligation at the end of the reporting period.

g. Revenue

Revenue is brought to account when received and to the extent that it relates to the subsequent period it is disclosed as a liability.

Grant Income

Grant income received, other than for specific purposes, is brought to account over the period to which the grant relates.

Deferred Income

Unspent grant income received in relation to specific projects and events is not brought to account as revenue in the current year but deferred as a liability in the financial statement until spent for the purpose received.

Interest Revenue

Interest revenue is recognised using the effective interest rate method, which for floating rate financial assets is the rate inherent in the instrument.

Donations

Donation income is recognised when the entity obtains control over the funds which is generally at the time of receipt.

All revenue is stated net of the amount of goods and services tax (GST).

h. Goods and services Tax (GST)

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of GST, except where the GST amount incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO)

Endorsement as a deductible gift recipient.

Endorsement as a deductible gift recipient under Subdivision 30-BA of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997 – 4.1.1 public benevolent institution. Effective from 1st July 2000.

At the time the report or financial statements are provided, Dingley Village Community Advice bureau Inc. is 'able to pay all debts as and when they fall due and have sufficient resources to discharge all debts at the end of the current financial year'.

Dingley Village Community Advice Bureau
31B Marcus Rd. Dingley Village 3172
ABN: 78 684 267 029 Inc: A0014674G

**Annual statements give true and fair view of financial position of
incorporated association**

We, Sue Anderson and Nolcen Barczak , being members of the Committee of the Dingley
Village Community Advice Bureau Inc., certify that—

The statements attached to this certificate give a true and fair view of the financial position
of the Dingley Village Community Advice Bureau Inc. during and at the end of the financial
year of the association ending on 30th June 2014.

Signed: 

Dated: 11/9/14

Signed: 

Dated: 11/9/14



Housing & Accommodation Education Health & Wellbeing Employment Emergency Relief Life Skills Community Connection

The 7 Pillars of Service

2013 - 2014



Ray and Irene preparing food parcels

Thanks to Secondbite we receive fresh fruit and vegetables on a weekly basis for our clients to choose.



Gary, George and Murray sort the delivery from Secondbite each week

Golf Day 2014

We were blessed with a beautiful day once again at the lovely Southern Golf Club. Bob and Kathy Shearer were our supporters and Bendigo Bank Community Bank Dingley Village sponsored us. We had 2 cars up for hole in one contention from Gary and Warren Smith Mazda neither were won. Ray White helped with advertising boards. A great day was had by all and we finished up with finger food and drinks (supplied by Ocean 8 Winery) presentation and Auction. Thank you to all teams for making this a successful fundraising event.



Middle class, hard working and homeless

Julia May

Published: April 8, 2014

It was hot water Joan Lansbury missed the most. If she felt some warmth in the kitchen tap she'd strip off and race to the shower, no matter the hour. "It didn't last long and you didn't know when the hot water was going to come on again," says Lansbury, 71.

Normally she would fill the kitchen sink with water she had heated on the stove and sponge herself down. "Try that in the middle of winter. It's not much fun."

That was 2012, and Lansbury was living in a rundown flat in Pascoe Vale, in Melbourne's north, with dodgy hot water, a leaky toilet and appliances that didn't work properly.

She put up with it for as long as she could, too scared to complain in case the owner of the flat she had rented for 15 years put the price up—because she knew she couldn't afford 2012 rental rates.

But suddenly, he did just that, raising it from \$280 to \$500 a fortnight. That left Lansbury, then retired after 25 years as a nursing aide, just \$70 a fortnight to live on. She didn't know where to turn. "I must admit that things were so bad at some stages that I didn't care whether I was alive or dead," she says.

Lansbury is one of a soaring number of women who find themselves on the verge of homelessness in older age after living relatively conventional lives. These are women you might call middle-class: they have had careers or stayed home to raise children, they have owned a home or rented long-term.

Most have never had any interaction with welfare services. But a confluence of events or a sudden calamity can trigger a housing crisis.

Lansbury had the strength and courage to raise two children alone after escaping a violent marriage.

She had put herself through nursing training and worked full-time for 25 years in aged care, earning long-service leave and a little but not much superannuation. But none of this safeguarded her from the unexpected and she was left to turn to charity to put a roof over her head.

In 2012-13, some 4800 Victorian women aged over 55 sought assistance from homelessness services, an increase of 34 per cent on the previous year, according to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. Housing sector advocates say the jump is no surprise as the labour market shrinks, property prices and rental rates skyrocket and baby-boomer women hit retirement with low levels of superannuation.

Affordable one bedroom rental lettings in Melbourne



SOURCE: DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Jenny Smith, chief executive of the Council to Homeless Persons, says a shortage of public housing compounds this dramatic feminisation of poverty and homelessness. She says the old formula of working, paying off a house or living in long-term rental and retiring on superannuation or the pension is no longer relevant: the spiralling cost of living leaves many people, particularly women, without a buffer.

“The population is aging and the numbers are going to get larger,” Smith says. “We’re very concerned that without the appropriate responses now, we are allowing a perfectly able group of people to fall into the merry-go-round of homelessness and crisis accommodation.”

Lansbury was lucky. A friend referred her to the Housing for the Aged Action Group. It was able to arrange new accommodation—a modern 2-bedroom social housing flat in Heidelberg, which costs her \$330 a fortnight.

Two years later, Lansbury is as happy as a lark and the physical benefits of having stable housing are evident: she's quit smoking, lost 14 kilos and though diabetic, is able to manage her sugar levels without insulin.

She has a wardrobe full of clothes brought from the local second-hand shop. "In the other place I just gave up and thought, no one cares, so why should I? But here, I think, you've got a nice place, you can't be sloppy, you don't want people in the area to think you're a no-hoper."

A new report, *Older Women's Pathways Out of Homelessness in Australia*, commissioned by the Mercy Foundation, gathers the most recent research and makes several recommendations. Its authors, University of Queensland

researchers Maree Petersen and Cameron Parsell, found that while scant attention was paid to older people's homelessness internationally, in Australia people were becoming more aware of the problem.

While some have had long-term difficulties and transient lives, the highest proportion of older women in housing crisis— those 55 and over—had led conventional lives, turning the stereotype of the bag lady on its head.

Petersen and Parsell concluded that if action was taken quickly to rehouse these women, most would go on to live independent lives. But two crucial elements were needed: greater engagement between support services and older women, and more affordable housing.

More than a quarter of older women seeking housing support were escaping family violence, while more than 40 per cent reported a housing-related issue: financial stress, inadequate housing, or the end of a tenancy, the report found.

While a sudden crisis such as the death of a partner, the end of a relationship, loss of employment or a health problem can also lead to homelessness, underpinning all of these issues was a shortage of secure, stable housing.

In the past decade, Australian house prices increased by nearly 150 per cent but incomes grew by 57 per cent. For renters it is equally dire: city rents have risen at twice the rate of inflation and there's an national shortage of around 500,000 rental properties for lower income earners (those earning less than \$32,000).

But demand keeps rising: in the five years to 2011 the number of older Australian women renting privately jumped by 70 per cent to 135,000.

Katherine Campbell*, a housing worker for a large Melbourne council, says a “giant squeeze” has been under way for a decade. Baby-boomer women are coming of age in a contracting labour market, needing to rent, but lacking a nest egg to support them—the median level of superannuation for women over 55 is \$48,000, compared with \$104,000 for men.

It is difficult, however, to connect women in crisis with support services because they fly under the radar. Men are much more likely to stay in boarding houses or sleep rough, while women tend to be stoic and resourceful—sleeping on friend’s couches, house-sitting, sleeping in caravans or even their car—and will construct a narrative to conceal their problems.

They tend to avoid boarding houses because of a fear of violence. Even then, few define themselves as homeless.

Campbell recalls meeting an 80-year-old women who had lost her home and spent her savings on motel rooms. “She didn’t want to fill out a housing application form and when I asked her why, she said: “I’ve never used drugs.” She thought a homeless service was just for someone who had used drugs.

Campbell says her clients are shocked when they realise they are classified as homeless. “They find it labelling and confronting.” Smith says services need to be promoted in places where such women would be likely to look, such as Centrelink, the supermarket, a doctors’ surgery or senior citizens club. “We need to ... give people face-saving ways to find help.”

Jeff Fieldler, the co-manager of the Housing for the Aged Action Group, says about 70 per cent of the group’s clientele are older women like Lansbury. “Private rental housing is fundamentally insecure and unstable because it’s unregulated,” he says “So we encourage people to contact services like ours early, before they get into a situation where they might have legal action taken against them.”

Lansbury had been on the waiting list for public housing for 14 years; with the group’s support she was prioritised and rehoused after five months.

Transitional housing helps women get back on their feet, particularly those fleeing domestic violence.

Karen Thompson* is one such woman. The university-educated mother of three children had paid off her own apartment before marrying her former husband. She sold it to fund a move to Toorak, and took time out from her work as an IT trainer in financial services to have children.

But after seven years of abuse from her husband, she fled in 2012 with the children. She hasn't been able to achieve a financial settlement and lives on a single parent pension.

A councillor referred her to HomeGround, a homeless support agency.

"HomeGround told me they'd help me with a bond through the Department of Human Services and also pay my first month of rent. Once I found (a private rental), I approached them and they did all the paperwork. They were fantastic.

Though still in her forties she worries about her chances of securing a job after eight years out of the work force, but says having stable housing was the first crucial step.

"I don't think I ever could see myself living on the street. I thought no, it's not going to happen to me. I was so proactive, going to organisations and finding out what it was that I needed to do so that I would not end up living on the streets. Having said that, I didn't even know that homeless meant couch-surfing—I didn't know what homelessness was. But the costs of living are so high that it really can happen to anyone."

Thompson's story is not unusual, even in wealthy areas. In 2010, in response to the growing number of women seeking support, Boroondara Council, which encompasses the suburbs of Hawthorn, Camberwell and Kew, held a forum with the Salvation Army on older women and homelessness. It reported that family violence was a major reason for women seeking help, as well as reverse mortgages leaving no equity in homes and one-off triggers such as job loss or health problems.

It called for new models of housing for older women, such as well-supported rooming houses and affordable singles housing.

The Mercy report notes that these kinds of co-operative housing models haven't been embraced by the community sector or government.

It called for greater preventative action, such as advocacy for older women in negotiations with private landlords and increase in social housing stock. Fieldler and other leaders have called for economic and taxation reforms to stimulate the supply of new and affordable housing. Last month, the federal government said it would provide \$115 million to extend a national homelessness agreement for another year—\$44 million less than Labour promised.

Fieldler is concerned that this funding cut will come at the expense of new emergency accommodation for vulnerable older women. “Services and facilities go together. They both must be maintained if we’re to not reach the absolute tipping point of crisis on the streets.”

That announcement followed the release of the Victorian government’s social housing framework. It included \$149 million to upgrade old housing and a plan to reinvest money from the sale of old buildings into contemporary housing.

But Smith and other advocates say it fails to address the 34,000–strong waiting list for Victorian public housing. “We would have liked to have seen a plan that increases the (housing) stock. That’s the thing that drives the homelessness service system being at crisis point, because there’s no other way to get people back into housing they can afford.”

She says a mix of more social housing—comprising public and community housing—and funding for rental subsidies are needed to give vulnerable older women the “leg-up” they need to get back to normal, and, ultimately take the pressure off the health services and emergency departments—where they end up when they slip through the cracks and things go wrong. For Joan Lansbury, the impact on her life of being in comfortable, affordable housing is simply and beautifully illustrated at the supermarket checkout.

“I used to put all the important things first, then the semi-important things,” she says. “Then there’d be a gap and a few special things, like cashews. I’d say to the girl, “I’ll only put that through if I’ve got enough” - but half the time I’d have to take the semi-important things back. I’d be so embarrassed. “Now I go through the checkout and the cashews roll past without me even thinking about it.”

She cackles, “Mind you, I make them last a month.”

- Names have been changed for privacy reasons.
- Julia May is a Melbourne writer

Low income energy programs cut.

Author - Consumers Utilities Advocacy Centre newsletter Power + Water issue 9, 14/2/14

In December 2013, the Federal Government announced funding cuts to two major energy saving programs of which CUAC is a supporter: the Low Income Energy Efficiency Program (LIEEP) and the Home Energy Saver Scheme (HESS).

Low Income Energy Efficiency Program

The Government significantly reduced the budget of LIEEP, a merit-based grants program which provides funding to consortia of Government, business and community organisations for projects to improve the energy efficiency of low Income and vulnerable households.

CUAC joined a consortium of partners to support the Springvale Community Aid and Advice Bureau (SCAAB) in its application to LIEEP to fund the *Rewired-Saving Energy in CALD communities* project (*Rewired*). The *Rewired* project was designed to assist culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) families reduce their energy bills in the City of Greater Dandenong by engaging with 400 low income households with an aim to promote behavioural change and address barriers experienced by CALD communities.

In July 2013 SCAAB was awarded \$2.3 million for the project. It was officially launched with Commonwealth Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus, with a number of community organisations and local media in attendance. Subsequent funding cuts to the LIEEP program resulted in the withdrawal of funding for the *Rewired* project, in addition to other projects that had not progressed beyond the funding agreement negotiation phase.

Notwithstanding the funding cuts to LIEEP, due to the overwhelming community support for this program, SCAAB is committed to seeking new avenues for funding and new programs aimed at supporting local communities, particularly local migrant communities, who are financially vulnerable to rises in energy costs.

Home Energy Saver Scheme

Similarly, in December 2013 the Government announced that it would discontinue the national Home Energy Saver Scheme (HESS) by June 2014. The HESS program has been delivered by non-profit organisations that provide financial counselling services throughout Australia. The program aims to provide free support to low income households experiencing difficulty paying for energy costs by offering assistance, including one-on-one budgeting assistance and free home visits to eligible households to receive tailored energy and financial management information.

Kildonan UnitingCare has been funded by HESS to provide assistance to low-income households in Victoria since the program's inception in July 2013. Kildonan UnitingCare publically expressed their disappointment that HESS was subject to funding cuts, noting that it has provided assistance to vulnerable households, helping them to achieve up to \$300 in yearly savings on energy bills.

CUAC is disappointed at the loss of these important programs and will work with stakeholders in 2014 to promote further energy efficiency initiatives.

Recommendations

Taken from UnitingCare's emergency relief and crisis support for asylum seekers living in the community - Robert Gruhn Advocacy and Public Policy March 2014

1 Provide sufficient funding for emergency relief and material aid

This report's findings confirm the perception that there is a serious need that agencies are trying to address without sufficient government funding. As asylum seekers are supported by referral agencies such as the Red Cross and AMES, the government general policy position is that they should not rely on additional ER and material aid support. In other words, except in "extreme circumstances", people should be encouraged to live with the

financial support received from ASAS or CAS. Our research however confirms that on the contrary, demand for ER and other support services dramatically increased in 2013 and that UnitingCare agencies are being forced to spread their limited resources to increasing numbers of service users. Given this increasing need which is not being met through ASAS or CAS, funding models need to recognise the gap in ER and material aid

for this user group, and funding agencies accordingly. Without this, agencies will be under a growing strain on their resources, with adverse outcomes for both asylum seekers and other user groups.

2. Provide adequate funding for meaningful engagement programs and activities

The research findings suggest that in addition to ER and material aid, asylum seekers are in desperate need of access to activities which facilitate their community connection and engagement tailored to their unique needs and situations.

UnitingCare staff emphasises how beneficial community engagement and social activities are for asylum seekers. Projects that provide participants an opportunity to express themselves, to use their strengths and give them something meaningful to do were considered particularly valuable. In addition to expanding existing services and programs agencies need to be supported to develop further services, such as men's sheds, community gardens, cultural events and other activities which help reduce social isolation and build new skills.

A number of UnitingCare agencies already offer this through innovative local based models of engagement. As they have already established a trust base with this emerging group, these agencies are well placed to implement and lead additional engagement and support programs.

Further, programs utilising a strengths-based model as, for example, by the ASWC were considered to be "*vital for people's wellbeing helping them to feel useful, build connection and find community—a second home*". An issue raised by the majority of the UnitingCare agency respondents was, however, that those programs eg recreational activities, photography, exhibitions, painting and dancing and singing classes can only be offered when sufficient funds are available. UCWS&H is another service provider who developed a coordinated, proactive approach in response to the emerging needs of this group of new residents which is vital to successful engagement.

Last year, the agency initiated a number of successful projects with local sporting clubs, service providers and churches to focus on community development and engagement. To facilitate these support services, the regulations that hinder agencies in providing engagement opportunities need to be reconsidered.

Agencies interviewed find it difficult to meet obligations regarding privacy, safety and security. For example, to successfully gain police checks for asylum seekers who may be keen to volunteer for a social provider was very difficult.

3 Provide additional funding for specialist staff

Additional funding for specialist staff is also a key priority to enable agencies to provide effective and appropriate support. This would greatly support users to navigate their daily lives through providing intensive casework, targeted advice, referrals, and individual advocacy. For example, one participant said *“We want a system for asylum seekers to volunteer but they would need so much more support. They would need a support worker to have them assisting in volunteering because we can’t just integrate them easily into the “normal” system.”*

Also, additional staff would enable providers to develop innovative and targeted programs that help asylum seekers to “orientate” themselves in their new living environment, including through innovative education and planning initiatives. The financial management issues identified in the Findings section could also be addressed for example, through targeted financial education and planning.

4 Address communication, language and cultural barriers

As outlined, as communication and language barriers were considered to be a major issue, agencies would benefit from building their capacity to more directly engage with asylum seekers accessing Eg, material aid and other resources. Apart from facilitating community inclusion and support, culturally appropriate resources and information was seen to facilitate access. Interviewees outlined how their agencies address these needs in a practical way, for example, by putting charts with the pictures of household goods or providing information sheets in community languages detailing how agency visitors can apply for food vouchers or food parcels in their local area. These initiatives need to be provided with additional resources to enable agencies to deliver services where they are most needed. Also, the sharing of such expertise and resources within the community services network needs to be encouraged to further improve service effectiveness. In addition to build agency capacity, participants talked about the importance of English classes as this improves people’s ability to interact with their local communities and improve future opportunities.

One UnitingCare agency has already engaged with AMES to set up larger scale English classes programs in the near future. Such efforts also need to be further supported by adequate funding.

5 Provide opportunities for education, training and volunteering

Training and education

This report and previous research (eg. By the ARSC) demonstrates the potential for future employment and community becomes severely limited when asylum seekers are prevented from undertaking education, training and skills development.

Historically, a large majority of asylum seekers do eventually obtain permanent residency in Australia and become permanent community members. It is therefore vital that all asylum seekers living in the community are permitted and supported to take up training and educational opportunities (combined with the right to work) so that they become self-sufficient and informed. Training and education has a direct impact on developing this self-dependency, particularly to facilitate gaining employment and becoming financially independent. Educational programs should encompass life skills development, eg. On financial literacy and planning. In the context of UnitingCare, the set-up of financial literacy groups to provide asylum seekers with information regarding bills, fines and money management has been proven successful in preventing financial crisis at the early stages. More agency sites are currently considering similar programs to assist.

This would however require additional financial resources.

Volunteering

The opportunities to undertake volunteering for asylum seekers in the community are very limited. This is despite the fact that many asylum seekers would like to become engaged and give something back. Our initial interviews with two groups of asylum seekers and with agency staff confirms this, and see finding work as initial steps to build their future careers and lives UnitingCare agencies reported previously how the ability to give back and feel active improves wellbeing and integration into the community.

As they are unable to work, they need opportunities to be linked to and access suitable volunteering options, preferably in their local communities, which enable them to train their professional skills, to attain new abilities and generally prepare them for future job opportunities. For example, volunteers could help agencies in the required community languages to support staff in their work. At the same time, this would assist their English skills, increase confidence and engagement, and improve knowledge of their local community and how to access services and information they require. As mentioned above this requires additional support staff to complementing ER/material aid provision and formal case work undertaken by others.

“I assume in their country they might be in a profession and then coming here that would probably impact quite significantly on their mental health and how they perceive themselves in their lives. It’s a big change coming to a country where you are not allowed to work, to study, to be engaged in things you would normally do in your own country.”

The lack of additional funding for specialist staff to help to find appropriate volunteering opportunities is a considerable challenge. For some Uniting-Care agencies having specialist staff would mean that they would be better able to provide these opportunities (see recommendation 3)

6 Grant all adult asylum seekers in the community the right to work and assist agencies to help with job searching

Our findings confirm the hopelessness that many asylum seekers feel in their inability to take on work and be financially independent. Giving all users the right to work is therefore a critical first step to addressing the material disadvantage faced by asylum seekers. Our research also confirms earlier work that users do not want to be dependent on welfare and only access ER and other support due to lack of other options available to them. Respondents mentioned that many people they support are highly educated, with university degrees, and have worked in a variety of professional fields back in their home country. Ideally, they want to work in that field of passion and expertise. The lack of additional funding for specialist staff for intensive casework is a barrier, not just for finding volunteering opportunities but to helping users find gainful employment (see recommendations 3 and 5)

7 Build and strengthen local networks to effectively respond to emerging needs

Our research also details the importance of continuing to identify, promote and build community partnerships to advance innovation and enable information sharing.

Several respondents reported how their agencies are already acting on this and how their local ER networks play a key role in identifying trends in people's needs. This is because agencies and their representatives have a demonstrated interest in joint work to help address common issues, including lack of resources at a local level or the challenge to source safe and secure accommodation for their service users. ER Victoria outlines how local ER networks can be used a "*mechanism for sharing information, resources, and key intelligence about what's happening on the ground when clients present to agencies*". One of the benefits of community partnerships is the ability of ER services to make referrals within their local network. Importantly, these partnerships may also include ethnic groups and multicultural organisations that can greatly contribute to capacity building and culturally appropriate service planning.

Further, local councils, for example, should be encouraged to take the lead to resource and coordinate such networks.

"The Wyndham Community Agencies Network, the Humanitarian Network, local churches and a number of community groups would like to work in collaboration with Council in hosting a forum enabling discussion and information sharing regarding our current involvement and capacity to support this new and growing group to engage in our local community. Senior staff from AMES, the Red Cross and other Melbourne based asylum seeker case management programs would be willing participants. It would be helpful to enable the local community to take a proactive coordinated approach." (Information provided by UCWS&H)

8. More support to find adequate and affordable housing, facilitate the creation of community-based networks to improve the housing options available to asylum seekers.

The shortage of affordable housing options, particularly for people on low incomes has been widely documented. To secure affordable housing was perceived as one of the main challenges asylum seekers using agency services are struggling with. *“There is limited assistance to find genuine good quality housing which is the challenge in the region.”*

The situation is made more difficult due to the fact that asylum seekers who are granted bridging visas are not eligible for social security payments through Centrelink and are not provided with public housing. As mentioned above, given very low incomes, they are generally forced to take the cheapest housing they can find. This results in housing stock that often is poor quality, unsafe and has a range of issues such as overcrowding and poor infrastructure. The report’s findings also confirm that high private rental costs and overcrowding contribute to the well-documented threat of homelessness.

The DIBP website states: *“It is expected that IMAs on bridging visas will find their own accommodation in the private rental market, just like anyone else in the community. Some might be provided with accommodation by friends and family, or, if they are eligible, transitional accommodation for up to six weeks.”* However, given the high levels of multiple disadvantages (including communications and cultural barriers already discussed) asylum seekers in the community face, it is of vital importance to support asylum seekers to source secure, affordable and suitable accommodation. Our research confirms that asylum seekers come to UnitingCare with support letters for assistance in finding private rental housing. Given the great need in this area it is recommended that—in addition to what referral agencies are already doing—community organisations are appropriately funded to provide such assistance.

On the basis of the overall report findings the following recommendation by the Australian Red Cross is supported: *for people seeking asylum with a particular focus on resourcing community based housing options. That the Australian Government and all State and Territory Governments work together and with the community sector to further improve community care arrangements*

2003-2014

Public Housing waiting lists compared

Victoria's top FIVE public housing waiting lists by region at March 2003

Southern Metro	12,683
	(1242 priority)
(includes Dandenong, Frankston)	
Northern Metro	7773
	(1232 priority)
(includes Broadmeadows, Collingwood, Richmond)	
Western Metro	6275
	(981 Priority)
(includes Sunshine, Footscray, Flemington, Ascot Vale)	
Eastern Metro	4723
	(498 priority)
(includes Box Hill, Ringwood)	
Loddon Mallee	1733
	(248 priority)
(Includes Bendigo, Mildura, Swan Hill)	
Barwon South West	1570
	(197 priority)
(includes Geelong, Portland, Warrnambool)	
Gippsland	1018
	(128 priority)
(includes Bairnesdale, Morwell, Sale)	
Grampians	811
	(128 priority)
(includes Ballarat, Horsham)	
Hume	1295
	(230 priority)
(includes Benalla, Seymour, Shepparton, Wangaratta, Wodonga)	

Applicants on the Public Housing Waiting List as at June 2014

Southern Division	10,236
	(2539 priority)
(Includes Cheltenham, Frankston, South Melbourne, Prahran, Dandenong, Morwell, Bairnsdale, Sale)	
Northern Division	7,848
	(2514 priority)
(Includes Fitzroy, Collingwood, Richmond, Preston, Broadmeadows, Bendigo, Mildura, Swan Hill)	
Western Division	10,334
	(2989 Priority)
(includes Ascot Vale, Footscray, Norht Melbourne, Carlton, Sunshine, Geelong, Ballarat, Horsham, Portland, Warrnambool)	
East Division	6,110
	(1,843 Priority)
(includes Box Hill, Ringwood, Seymour, Shepparton, Benalla, Wangaratta, Wodonga)	

Figures from DHS website

3. Healthy, Strong and Connected Communities

Taken from One Vision. City of Kingston Council Plan 2013-2017 & Living in Kingston 2035

Kingston is home to a number of different communities across all ages and backgrounds. Our focus is to bring people together to strengthen our sense of community, celebrate diversity and build quality of life. Council offers many programs to support and strengthen groups including young people, people with a disability, seniors, families with young children, Aboriginal people, people from culturally diverse backgrounds, and sporting and recreational groups, to build healthy and cohesive communities.

We will create an inclusive city by promoting diversity, supporting community interaction, and providing accessible and equitable services. This will be achieved through focussed and extensive community planning and analysis to identify community needs and developmental priorities. Our planning and service delivery will be adaptable to the changing needs and expectations of the community.

Projected Priorities

Enhance volunteering in Kingston - Construct the Active Youth Space Skate Park at Bicentennial Park - Review Council's Aged Care Strategy - Resolution of siting for Northcliffe residential aged care facility - A review of community committees to ensure greater participation - Attract and help facilitate events run in Kingston - Review and strengthen community grants program - Kingston Charitable Fund to reach \$1 million

Impacts on our organisation

3.1 Enhanced community wellbeing and participation in community life

3.1.1 Maintain a collaborative and visionary approach to the Positive Ageing Strategy

3.1.2 Provide high quality community care services for people of all ages

3.1.3 Implement the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan

3.1.4 Support people with complex needs

3.1.5 Meet the needs of young people, children and their families

3.1.6 Implement the Family and Children's Strategy

3.1.7 Implement the Kingston Youth Strategy

3.2 A city responsive to the needs and aspirations of the community

3.2.1 Undertake community development and social research initiatives to respond to community needs

3.2.2 Maintain awareness of and respond to relevant Commonwealth and State legislation, policies and strategies.

3.3 Connected and effective community groups

3.3.1 Support and strengthen community organisations and networks

3.3.2 Encourage volunteering to create active, confident and resilient communities

3.3.3 Utilise the Kingston Charitable Fund to support the community

3.4 A diverse and inclusive community

3.4.1 Promote intergenerational activities and spaces

3.4.2 Develop and implement specific placed based programs for disadvantaged communities

3.4.3 Promote access and equity principles to build inclusive communities

3.4.4 Facilitate local festivals and events to connect the community

3.5 Increase participation in physical activity through sport and recreation services

3.5.1 Promote and facilitate the use of sports and recreational facilities

3.5.2 Implement the Regional Soccer Strategy

3.5.3 Implement the Kingston Tennis Strategy

3.5.4 Implement the Active Youth Spaces Strategy



PARENTING MADE EASY

What Love means to a 4 – 8 year old

Touching words from the mouth of babes..

A group of professional people posed this question to a group of 4 – 8 year olds...

“What does love mean?”

The answers they got were broader and deeper than anyone could have imagined. See what you think:

“When my grandmother got arthritis, she couldn’t bend over and paint her toenails any more.. So my grandfather does it for her all the time, even when his hands got arthritis too. That’s love”.

Rebecca – age 8

“When someone loves you, the way they say your name is different. You just know that your name is safe in their mouth”

Billy – age 4.

“Love is when a girl puts on perfume and the boy puts on shaving cologne and they go out and smell each other”.

Karl – age 5.

“Love is when you go out to eat and give somebody most of your French fries without you making them give you any of theirs”

Chrissy – age 6.

“ Love is what makes you smile when you are tired”

Terri – age 4.

“Love is when you tell a guy you like his shirt, then he wears it every day”.

Noelle - age 7.

“Love is when my mommy makes coffee for my daddy and she takes a sip before giving it to him, to make sure the taste is OK”.

Danny – 7.

“Love is when you kiss all the time. Then when you get tired of kissing, you still want to be together and you talk more. My Mommy and Daddy are like that. They look gross when they kiss”

Emily – age 8.

“Love is what’s in a room with you at Christmas if you stop opening presents and listen”

Bobby – age 7.

(Wow!)

“If you want to learn to love better, you should start with a friend who you hate,”

Nikka – age 6.

(We need a few million more Nikka’s on this planet)

“Love is like a little old woman and a little old man who are still friends even after they know each other so well”.

Tommy – age 6.

“During my piano recital, I was on a stage and I was scared. I looked at all the people watching me and saw my daddy waving and smiling. He was the only one doing that. I wasn’t scared any more”.

Cindy – age 8.

My mommy loves me more than anybody. You don’t see anyone else kissing me to sleep at night”

Clare – age 6.

“Love is when Mommy gives daddy the best piece of chicken”

Elaine – age 5.

“Love is when Mommy sees Daddy smelly and sweaty and still says he is handsomer than Robert Redford”

Chris – age 7.

“Love is when your puppy licks”

Projected Priorities for

2014/ 2015

1. To roll out our new name -- to service providers and the community at large
2. To maintain our website --- www.maddv.com.au
3. To establish a staffing level that includes a social worker, bid writer, financial counsellor, ER co-ordinator, administrative staff and our (wonderful) volunteers
4. To conduct a community needs analysis for Dingley Village
5. To continue to take a lead role in the Southern Emergency Relief Network
6. To establish a membership that includes - corporate, community and individual members
7. To ensure that our funding model is sustainable with recurrent funding from Governments, and include donations from the world of philanthropy, and our fund raising efforts
8. To forge links with like minded agencies to lobby government for additional support of the not-for-profit sector
9. To consider the employment of a worker specifically trained to assist the CALD (culturally and linguistically diverse) community
10. To form partnerships with other support agencies to develop projects that include niche activity in social care, and social connection
11. To use our data base of emergency relief clients, to identify issues and bring to the attention of decision makers
12. To constantly relate to our seven pillars of service - housing, education, health and wellbeing, employment, emergency relief, life skills and community connection.