



Annual Report 2015

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Make a Difference Dingley Village Inc

Address: 31B Marcus Road
Dingley Village Victoria 3172

ABN: 78684267029

Inc: A0014674G

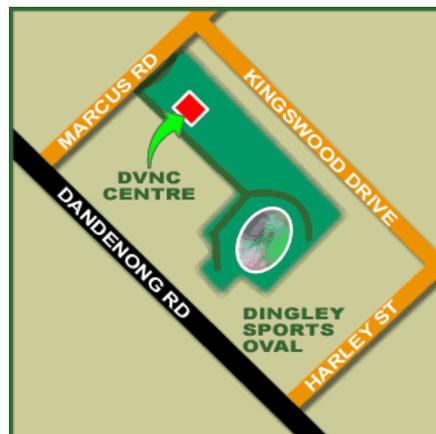
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Website: www.maddv.com.au

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



*The Make a Difference office is located within the
Dingley Village Neighbourhood Centre building.*

Melways reference Map 88 F6

COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT

Chairperson
Public Officer
Treasurer

Sue Anderson
Irene McInnes
Margarete Lehmann

Members

Noleen Barczak
Marlene Nanscrewan
Alma Osbourne
Margaret Irons
Jacqui Nally
Maria D'Silva

Staff

Social Worker
Finance Officer
Administration

Marion Harriden OAM
Leeanne O'Connor
Judith Klarenbeek

Volunteers

Cyril Beverley
Murray Jones
George Kunz
Joan Nicol
Marlene Nanscrewan
Jacqui Nally
Thelma Paull
Ray Smith
Anne Pellas
Kay Crane
Alf Klarenbeek
Debra Belza
Mark Belza
Don Waters
Lorraine Waters
Elizabeth Tweedale

Helen Dally
Margaret Irons
Gary Harriden
Faye De Boer
Karen Kinson
Alma Osbourne
Irene McInnes
Marlene Nanscawen
Norm Nicol
Susan Palfreman
Dianne Boadle
Ben Klarenbeek
Anil Kumar
Sammi Reindl
Vena Fernandes
Maria D'Silva

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Our 31st year of providing welfare assistance saw a lot of changes, gone the old name that was becoming so confusing with all the other names commencing with Dingley Village..... we decided after much deliberation on names , rebranding to Make A Difference Dingley Village Inc (MADDV) was the way to go.

Not realising what a big job it was going to be, however with the arrival last week of our new Prospectus all is complete. A big thank you to Marion, Judith, Leanne and Noleen .

It was with great regret that we had to cancel our annual golf day as this has been an important fundraiser for the last 15 years but due to lack of numbers it had to go.

At the moment we have ideas for a replacement fundraiser for next year. We have been awarded a grant from the Dingley Village Bendigo Bank to engage a Financial Councillor 1 day a week.

We are most grateful for the ongoing support we receive from philanthropic foundations, Council , small business and our general community.

Thanks to:

Our dedicated team of volunteers who donate many hours of their time. Social worker Marion, Admin staff Judith and Leanne and Members of our Committee of Management.

Pam Gates and Staff of the Neighbourhood Centre are a great support which is a big help when sharing the same building.

Sue Anderson
Chairperson



FROM THE SOCIAL WORKER'S

DESK



Our friends in the Disney production of “The Lion King” use this phrase to -- “there isn't a problem”.

In our work at “Make A Difference”, we do see problems, but are committed to our role to assist households living on the margins, who experience significant levels of deprivation as they choose between having sufficient food to feed their families, securing stable and affordable accommodation and

paying utility and medical bills. The experience can be one of isolation and social disconnection from family and friends and a significant struggle to protect their children from the worst effects of such poverty.

I am pleased that our triage approach is a positive way of working with families. The system prioritising needs and determining the immediate priority and addressing this first, and then sequencing the other needs.

The second stage may be a referral to either our caseworker or financial counsellor where pathways are created to assist each individual to identify the goals they want to achieve, and then help them map out a pathway to this destination.

Sincere thanks to our team of volunteers who deal so efficiently with the first contact families make with this agency.

These volunteers include those who assist with administrative tasks and whose help is invaluable.

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My task to oversee the organisation and its strategic goals are made easier by the assistance provided by the administrative and professional staff.

We have weathered many storms in recent years and my thanks to the team for their support.

Marion Harriden OAM

Social Worker



Staff

Marian Harriden

Social Worker



Judith Klarenbeek
Administrative Assistant

Leeanne O'Connor
Finance Officer



Margarete Lehmann

Financial Counsellor



Vina Fernandez

Caseworker

Financial Counsellor Annual Report

This is our first year offering a regular financial counselling program. We started four month ago in March 2015, offering a free service on a regular basis one day per week.

Our financial counsellor is a full member of the Financial and Consumer Rights Council. (FCRC) and has a Diploma in Financial Counselling. Regular network meetings with other financial counsellors provide valuable information about what is going on in the sector. In addition FC's have been to many seminars and training sessions which include Welfare Rights, Infringements training, Bankruptcy, Debt agreements. Thus to ensure that we here in Dingley can offer the best possible professional service to our clients.

What we do

MADDV Financial Counsellor value and respect the rights and needs of our clients.

Issues presented by clients are multiple, complex and often irresolvable due to lack of funding. Our service delivery model maintains an evidence-based approach that includes financial assessment through budget plans, case planning, monitoring and reviewing cases. Our model is designed to enhance the strengths in the individual/family through a goal oriented approach.

Our Role

The role of the financial counsellor is to

- Help people to overcome financial difficulty
- Provide information, support and advocacy in debt related matters
- Help with income entitlements,
- Check whether debts are correct and legally owed.
- Explore options and consequences
- Assist in completing more complex documentations, e.g. statement of affairs, letters to creditors
- Provide ongoing support

Our Goal

The goal of financial counselling is to empower people, giving them a fresh start and finding a way out of the debt spiral.

The success of the financial counselling program is demonstrated by the number of cases satisfactorily resolved. Clients are able to make informed decisions on resolving their financial difficulties based on the range of options provided.

We had some pleasing results in the short time our program is running. Success in negotiating debts to prevent repossession of a motor vehicle, hardship consideration for taxation debts and complete debt waivers are some.

Casework

From the start of our service in March to June a total of 15 new clients presented with multiple issues as the following table shows:

Presenting Issues	Number of new clients issue
General debt	6
Expenditure is greater than in come	3
Change to personal circumstances (loss job, illness, separation)	2
Contract Dispute	1
Other issues (including superannuation)	3
Utilities	5
Bankruptcy	1
Taxation	4
Budgeting	4

Margarete Lehmann
Financial Coun-

sellor





ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held on 17th September 2014

Minutes

1. Welcome to our Annual General Meeting to our friends, Volunteers, Board Members, supporters and a special welcome to Aunty Dianne Kerr from the Indigenous Community.
Aunty Dianne Kerr is an elder of the Wurundjeri Elders Council. Ms Kerr brings extensive governance experience, knowledge of native title issues from her position as elder in the Wurundjeri Tribe Land Cultural heritage Council. She spoke of her family history in the area, and the difficulties they experienced.
She left us with three positive messages -
 - . We need to work together, as this is the only way change will occur.
 - . Living in harmony must be our goal
 - . We all have a voice and must be determine to be heard
2. **Present:** Noleen Barczak, Margarete Lehmann, David Madill, Marion Harriden, Sue Anderson, Maris D'Silva, Marlene Nanscawen, Alma Osborne, Anne Arnold, Irene McInnes, Lynn Elder, Jacqui Nally, Cedric Roberts, Lorna Stevenson, Beverley Burdette, Joan Nicol, Norm Nicol, Gary Davies, Debbie Darvell, Helen Dally, Wayne Walters, Fionnuala Tate, Anne Pellas, Kath Stephen, Jill Page, Leeanne O'Connor, Judith Klarenbeek
3. **Apologies:** Don Cameron, Bill Dempster, Cr John Kelly CGD, Martin Pakula MP, Cr Sean O'Reilly CGD, Cr Paul Puelich CoK, Cr Steve Staikos CoK, Cr Tamara Barth CoK, Cr Ron Brownlees CoK, Cr Rosemary West CoK, Cr Geoff Gledhill CoK, Cr John Ronke CoK, Cr Tamsin bearsley CoK, Cr David Eden CoK, Tony Coyle, Hazel Coyle, Lauris Sherwood, Cathy Concotta, chris Brassington, Claire O'Neill MP, Lorraine Wreford MP, Margaret Irons, Meagan Skehill ERV
4. **Minutes:** of the 2013 Annual Meeting were presents/accepted
Noleen/Marlene

5. Chairperson Sue spoke of her work with the Agency which included the organising of our Charity Golf Day, with Corporate partners Bendigo Bank.

Marion thanked her for her commitment and presented flowers.

6. Social Workers report: Marion was too excited to say anything, but announce our new name - "Make A Difference Dingley Village" and explained that after 30 years of "Making a Difference" to those in need of our help, the name change was most appropriate. She spoke of our inspiration from the Starfish Story.

Starfish Story

One day an old man was walking down the beach just before dawn. In the distance he saw a young man picking up stranded starfish and throwing them back into the sea. As the old man approached the young man, he asked, "Why do you spend so much energy doing what seems to be a waste of time?" The young man explained that the stranded starfish would die if left in the morning sun. The old man exclaimed, "But there must be thousands of starfish. How can your efforts "make a difference?" The young man looked down at the starfish in his hand as he threw it to safety in the sea, he said, "It makes a difference to this one!"

"We look forward to making a difference for many years to come"

Flowers to Noleen as a gesture of thanks for her work in the name change.

7. Treasurers Report - Margarete reported that the year has ended with a surplus. Details from the Annual Report. We have received a pleasing increase in the number of DGR non-public donations. She was also pleased to comment about what the financial figure do not reveal.

Many lives have been touched by our service, receiving help and assistance from dedicated volunteers and staff. Providing food for numerous families, advocating with utility companies etc - and then the emotional support, providing hope in desperate situations through counselling, empowering people to help themselves and making a real difference in their life. This is what it is all about.

Report accepted Margarete/Judith

8. Appointment of Auditors 2014/15 - Bruce Hyden. Marion/Margarete

9. Election of Board Members - Gary Davies (Rotary Club Dingley Village) as temporary Chairman.

We have one nomination for each of the executive positions so there is no need for a ballot.

Those nominations are:

Chairperson	Sue Anderson
Public Officer	Irene McInnes
Treasurer	Margarete Lehmann

We also have a number of nominations for general committee members.

They are:

Noleen Barczak	Alma Osborne
Margaret Irons	Marlene Nanscawen
Jacqui Nally	Maria D'Silva

I declare those people to be elected and I would like to thank the new committee for accepting the challenge of guiding the "Make A Difference Dingley Village" through the coming year.

That completes my duties and I would like to hand over to the Chairperson elect.

Sue thanked Gary and resumed the chair.

10. Comments/questions -

Marion gave an explanation of the "Crystal Ball" that is on the cover of the Annual Report. There is a page worth reading within the report, written by Catt Smitt.

11. All invited to stay for Morning tea, and the beautiful cake that displays all of our logos since our inception.

Auditors Report

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF MAKE A DIFFERENCE DINGLEY VILLAGE INC

We have audited the attached financial report, being a special purpose financial report of above entity which comprises the balance sheet as at 30 June 2015 and income and expenditure statement and statement of cash flows.

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 the said entity as at 30th June 2015 and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended.



BRUCE T. HYDON
Bruce Hydon Pty Ltd

30/07/2015

Make a Difference Dingley Village*31B Marcus Road.**Dingley Village, Vic. 3172***Income & Expenditure Statement For Year Ended June 2015**

ABN: 78684267029

	2015	2,014
Income		
Interest	\$1,602.45	2,190
Donation	\$72,024.75	48,820
DHS Grant	\$0.00	7,434
Community Grant C.O.K.	\$30,422.48	26,256
Emergency Account - Grant	\$3,196.82	4,125
Grant other		-
DGR non Public	\$65,488.00	111,326
Public Donations	\$0.00	1,000
Bob Shearers Golf Day	\$0.00	16,310
Emergency Acc. RENT	\$9,360.00	5,570
Bendigo Bank Dividend	\$45.00	63
Other Income	\$700.00	-
Total Income	\$182,839.50	223,093
Expenditure		
Bob Shearer Golf Day	\$0.00	7,414
Emergency Relief	\$42,492.91	25,890
Employment Expenses	\$89,313.34	112,961
Administration Costs	\$38,774.51	40,930
Depreciation	\$9,622.95	7,797
Total Expenses	<u>\$180,203.71</u>	<u>194,993</u>
Surplus/Deficit for the year	2,636	28,100

Make a Difference Dingley Village
31B Marcus Road.
Dingley Village, Vic. 3172
Income & Expenditure Statement For Year Ended June 2015
 ABN: 78684267029

	2015	2014
BALANCE SHEET		
Current Assets		
Cheque Account	76439.76	68458.17
BBL Future Fund	37872.46	36903.57
Bendigo Money Extra Cash Mang	58284.24	57758.36
Petty Cash	300.00	300.00
Emergency Relief Bank Acc.	4.42	1.04
	172,900.88	163,421.14
Non Current Assets		
Furniture & Fixtures at Cost	11733.34	7924.25
Furniture & Fixtures Accum Dep	-5193.76	-3591.81
	6539.58	4332.44
Office Equipment at Cost	2552.39	2552.39
Office Equipment Accum Dep	-2128.89	-1171.77
	423.50	1380.62
Motor Vehicle @ cost	28280.00	28280.00
Motor Vehicle Accum Dep	-19596.40	-12532.52
	8683.60	15747.48
Investments		
Bendigo Bank Shares	<u>450.00</u>	<u>450.00</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	188,997.56	185,331.68
Current Liabilities		
Provision for LSL	5793.72	4347.24
Provision for AI	1567.38	2531.85
GST Collected		
GST Paid	-1362.92	-75.40
PAYG Withheld	<u>1835.60</u>	
Total Liabilities	<u>7833.78</u>	<u>6803.69</u>
NET ASSETS	<u>181,163.78</u>	<u>178,527.99</u>
Equity		
Balance at beginning of year	178,527.99	150,427.90
Surplus/deficit for year	<u>2,635.79</u>	<u>28,100.09</u>
Total Equity	<u>181,163.78</u>	<u>178,527.99</u>

To the best of my knowledge and belief, this financial statement is an accurate account of the financial affairs of Make a Difference Dingley Village inc. for the financial year ended 30th June 2015. Leeanne O'Connor - Finance Officer

Make A Difference Dingley Village Inc

Statement of cashflows for the year ended 30 June 2015

\$

Cash Flows from operating activities

Donations 137,513

Grants 33,619

Sale of Stove 700

Payments to employment, emergency relief and administration -168,427

Net cash generated from operating activities 3,405

Cashflows from investing activities

Rent 9,360

Interest 1,602

Dividend Received 45

Capital Expenditure and GST -4,931

Net cash used in investing activities 6,076

Net increase in cash held 9,481

Cash on hand at beginning of year 163,420

Cash on hand at end of year 172,901

Represented by

Extra Cash Management 58,284

Cheque Account 76,440

Future Fund 37,873

Other 300

Emergency Relief account 4

172,901



31b Marcus Rd
Dingley Village 3172
ABN: 78 684 267 029
Inc: A0014674G

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 30TH JUNE 2015

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 2014 to June 2015 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'.



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

We, Jacqui Nally and Marlene Nanscowen, being members of the Committee of the Make A Difference Dingley Village Inc., certify that—

The statements attached to this certificate give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Make A Difference Dingley Village Inc. during and at the end of the financial year of the association ending on 30th June 2015.

Signed:

Dated: 26/8/15

Signed:

Dated: 26/8/15

Community | Family | Support | Counselling | Mediation | Advocacy

31B Marcus Rd,
Dingley Village VIC 3172

☎ 03 9551 1799

☎ 0429 857 509

✉ admin@maddv.com.au

🌐 www.maddv.com.au

Our Pillars of Service



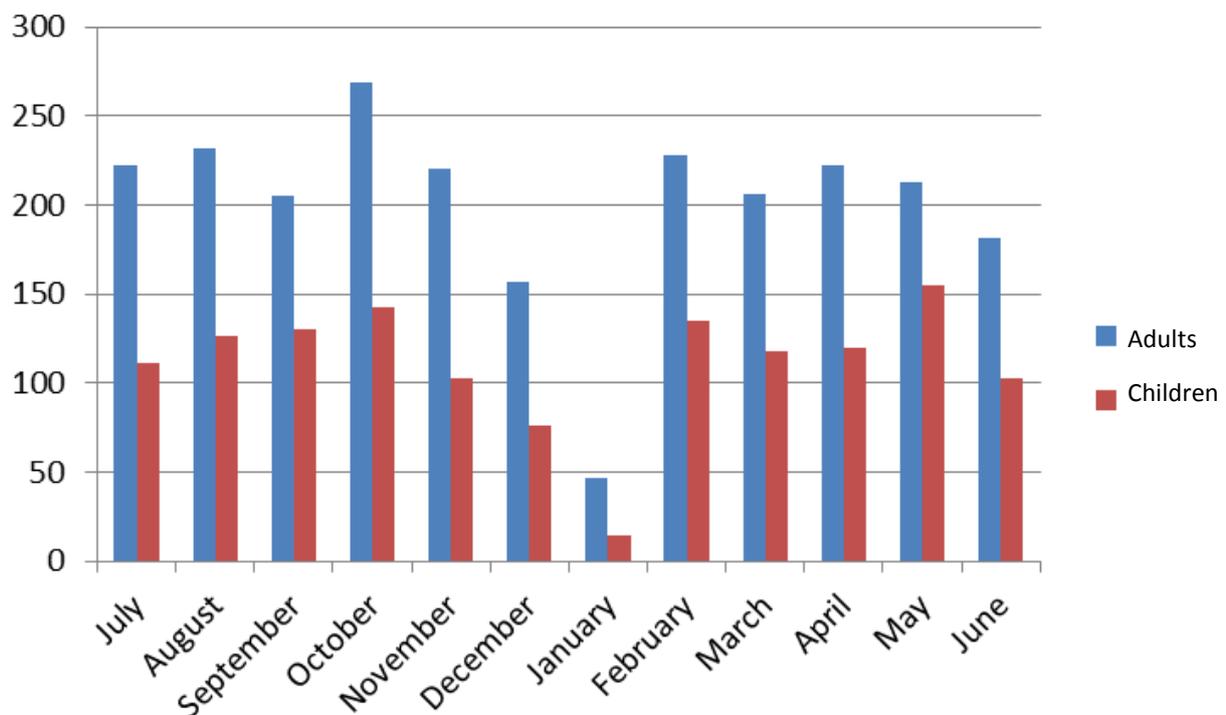
Client Statistics

During the period July 2014 - June 2015 we saw a decrease in the amount of clients we saw. This is factored to us having to close our borders to the Cities of Kingston and Greater Dandenong due to loss of DHS Funding. We reasoned instead of giving clients less in their food parcels we would cater to those closer to our office.

Total figures for the year 2014/15 were:

Adults 2402

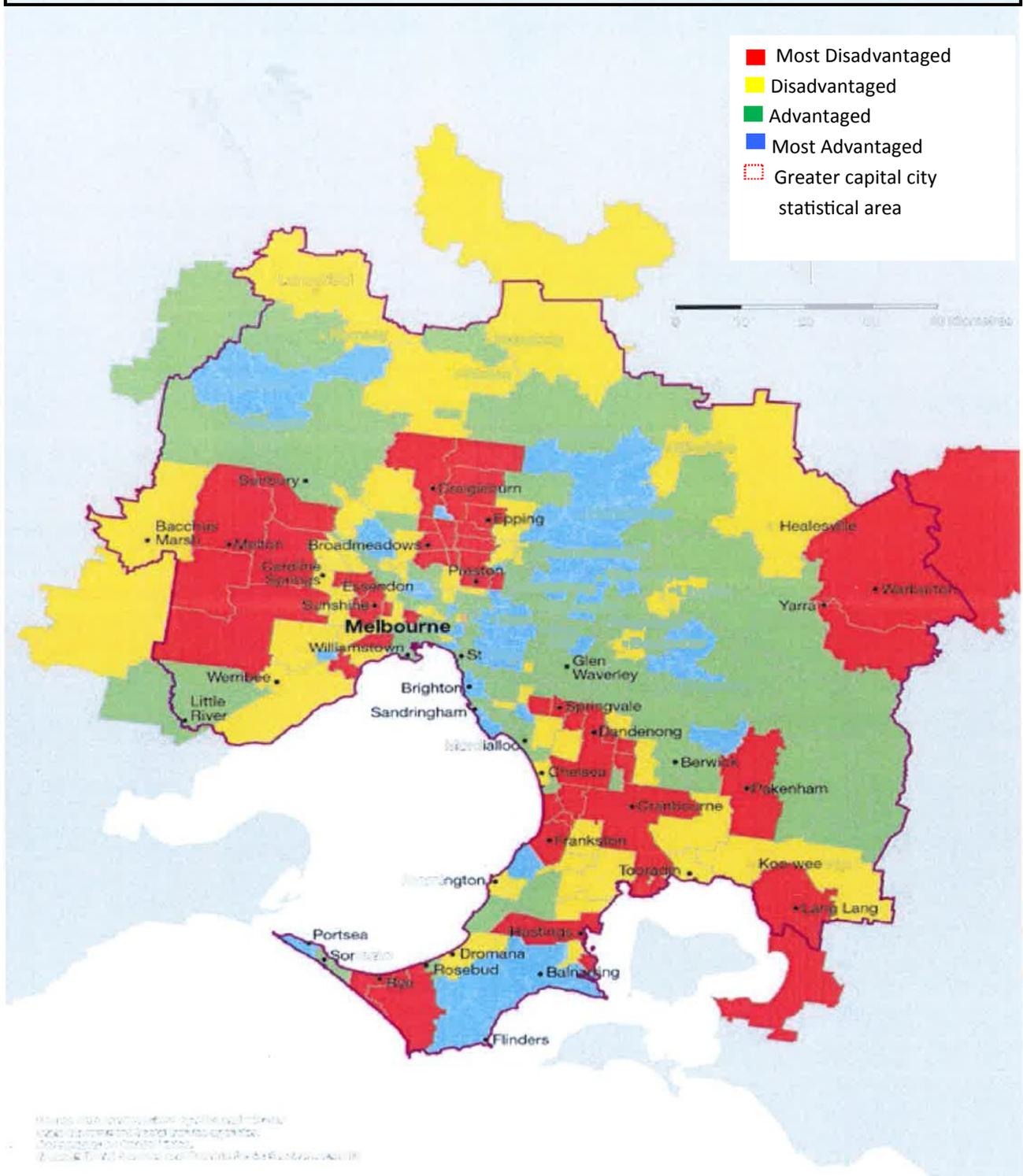
Children 1334



Map showing areas of Disadvantage in Melbourne .

Source data used provided by ABS and relevant State Government Social Services agencies. Cartography by Spatial Vision.

Taken from Dropping of the Edge 2015 Victorian Fact Sheet



VOLUNTEERS WORTH MORE TO AUSTRALIA THAN MINING

A University of Adelaide study has found that volunteering in Australia is now worth more than the mining industry, declaring the true extent of its monetary value to be more than \$200 billion a year.

Its economic contribution to Australian society outstrips revenue sources from mining, agriculture and the retail sector, according to Dr Lisel O'Dwyer, a Senior Research Associate in the University's School of Social Sciences.

"More than 6.4 million people volunteer their time in Australia, which is double the number in 1995 and with the looming retirement of the first wave of baby boomers, these figures are likely to increase at an even more rapid rate" Dr O'Dwyer says.

"There are many ways to measure the value of volunteering and the benefits flow both ways."

"Volunteers get a lot of satisfaction from helping others, enhancing the quality of their life and their health. The benefits to the recipients are obvious and there are also positive spin-offs for governments and workplaces".

"The value of volunteering is difficult to measure. Volunteers gain a broad range of new skills that are transferable to their workplace for example. They are healthier, fitter, more mentally alert and more socially connected than people who do not volunteer. These benefits may even act as a pathway to employment" Dr.O'Dwyer says.

She says current estimates relating to the economic value of volunteering are likely to be "gross under representations" but warns that focusing on the monetary value may even be damaging if it reinforces the notion that volunteering is all about saving money.

The research conservatively calculated the hourly rate for volunteers at around \$7 per hour or 25 per cent of the equivalent paid job".

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To use the full dollar value would be just mind-boggling.” Dr O’Dwyer told Pro Bono Australia News.

While the economic value of volunteering to Australia is huge. Dr O’Dwyer says the true value of volunteering goes far beyond a dollar figure.

“One hour of a volunteer’s time needs to be valued not just once but up to 9 times – and at different rates – from the society, the employer, the organisation, the government program and the volunteer themselves. Dr O’Dwyer said a previous study in 2003 by Dr Peter Mayer (www.adelaide.edu.au/directory.peter/mayer) from the University of Adelaide revealed one of the less tangible potential effects of volunteering is a reduced crime rate.

Dr Mayer’s study suggested that even a one per cent increase in social capital (including volunteering) was likely to lead to falls in homicides, sexual assaults, burglaries and vehicle thefts.

“If a volunteer fire fighter saves the life of a child, what is that worth? If environmental degradation is slowed because of millions of trees planted by volunteer conservationists, what is the worth? And if an elderly person receives a hot meal five days a week what is that worth?

According to Volunteering Australia (www.volunteeringaustralia.org/html/s01home/home.asp) people aged between 40-54 comprise the highest bracket of volunteers, with slightly more women (40 per cent) than men (37 per cent) giving their time to voluntary work.

Employed people are more likely to volunteer, as are couples with dependent children aged five to 17 years.

The 2005 Giving Australia Research on Philanthropy in Australia report revealed the number of hours donated by volunteers had risen 16 per cent since 2000 with 41 per cent of adult Australians volunteering 836 million hours with an average of 132 hours per year per volunteer.

Dr O’Dyer’s research findings form a chapter in a forthcoming book. Positive Ageing. Think Volunteering which will be published by Volunteering SA & NT later this year.

\$1 Billion in Federal cuts to community services (Australian Council of Social Service)

The Federal Government's \$1 billion national funding cuts to community services are devastating the critical support provided to Australia's most vulnerable people and communities. Supports including emergency relief, community mental health, legal advice, and prevention and early intervention have all been hit by funding cuts. The development of policy and reforms to address pressing needs of people facing poverty and inequality and to advocate for them have also been cut. This sector contributes five per cent to national GDP and employs more than eight per cent of Australia's workforce—three times the number employed by the resources sector – yet these cuts are also causing extensive job losses during a time of economic downturn and rising unemployment.

As news reaches Ministers about the devastation caused by these cuts, they are steadily taking action. Social Services Minister Scott Morrison recently provided short-term relief for some organisations that lost DSS funding through transitional arrangements; and Attorney General George Brandis has reversed some of the cuts to the community legal sector. These steps are welcome, but they are only the beginning of repairing the damage caused by the Government's cuts.

ACOSS is calling on the Federal Government to:

- *Stop these funding cuts, many of which are one year in to a four-year plan of implementation. It's not too late!
- *Determine, in partnership with the community sector, adequate funding levels to meet community need and maximize social and economic participation for all
- *Extend current funding for organisations that have not yet been able to finalise new Government funding offers
- *Adopt the recommendations of the Productivity Commission to improve government contracting with community organisations.

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How the Community is affected

Impact on vital services

Community organisations are deeply concerned about the impact of cuts on the people and communities they serve, many of whom have no alternative services to meet their needs.

These cuts have targeted people on the lowest incomes, people experiencing financial crisis or family breakdown, children at risk, vulnerable young people, new mothers and babies, people facing eviction and homelessness, carers in need of respite, those struggling with drug and alcohol addictions and those with mental health issues or other serious health concerns in the community. The cuts are destroying the fabric of local communities, and years of hard and committed effort by community leaders, many of whom are volunteers. Community organisations are facing extensive job losses, with highly skilled people on modest incomes now facing the grim prospect of unemployment.

In a sector where relationships are key, this loss is significant. Services cannot be sourced easily from other providers and existing partnerships that are central to the effectiveness of community organisations are breaking under the strain of inadequate funding.

Ongoing funding uncertainty

In 2014, more than 5,500 applications totaling \$3.9 billion were applied for, when only \$800 million in Government funds were available from the DSS.

The lack of information from the Government about funding allocation, cuts and changes is causing significant problems for community organisations. The lack of clarity is impeding their ability to provide ongoing services or implement transitional arrangements to minimise the impact on clients, and to meet existing commitments to staff and partner organisations.

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Lack of transparency

The removal of funding and the lack of clarity over ongoing funding has increased the risk for families developing even greater needs.

Organisations that have received funding have been explicitly told their offers are confidential, making it impossible to negotiate with other providers or respond to community needs. Confidentiality requirements are undermining collaborative partnerships and relationships. Community organisations need to be well-informed about service funding in their area so they can identify service gaps, and opportunities for partnership and collaboration to address those gaps.



ACSS - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Australian Community Sector Survey is the **only** annual, national survey **of the** community sector, **by the** community sector.

WHAT IS THE ACSS?

The Australian Community Sector Survey (ACSS) was conducted at a time when changes to social policy were expected to significantly impact the lives of people experiencing poverty in Australia. The release of the Federal Budget 2014-15 included a range of proposed changes to social security payments and social welfare and health services and supports. Prior to the Budget, the Government initiated a National Commission of Audit to recommend ways to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of government expenditure in the face of ongoing fiscal challenges; and had instigated a review of the welfare system.

The implementation of some welfare measures as part of the 2014 Budget and before the welfare review had reported its findings created the impression that these reforms were driven by budgetary rather than policy imperatives; and had not adequately noted the concerns of the community sector. Australian Counsel of Social Services (ACOSS') 2014-15 Budget Analysis of savings and revenue measures estimated that 52% of the major savings proposed in the Budget would adversely affect low and middle income earners, compared with only 15% that would impact high income earners. In addition, the Federal Budget introduced reforms to the manner by which community services were funded by the Commonwealth and reduced the amount of funding available to those services. The cumulative effect of these policy and funding changes was a climate of uncertainty and concern about the integrity and future of essential social and welfare supports and services for people experiencing poverty and inequality in Australia.

Australia's community sector contributes 5% to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 8% to employment annually, employing 919,000 staff and facilitating the participation of 2 million volunteers. The ACSS is the only annual, national survey of the community sector, by the community sector.

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For over 15 years, it has functioned as a gauge of how the sector and the people it serves are faring. This year the ACSS has been redesigned to focus on the perspectives of sector staff about the experience of the people who use their services. Sector staff involved in the day to day delivery of services have a unique and valuable contribution to make to the community's knowledge and understanding of people's experience of poverty and what services and policy measures are needed to alleviate it. This survey captures the perspectives of almost 1,000 sector staff to show what life is like for people most at risk of poverty and disadvantage in our communities.

In the wake of recent proposed and enacted changes to a range of social policies in Australia, and in line with ACOSS' strategic focus on income support and employment policy and housing and homelessness, three groups of service users were chosen as the focus of the survey, young unemployed people, sole parents and older unemployed people. Their particular experiences are drawn out in this report.

ACOSS recognises that these groups are only a few of the many sections of the community that have been and will be affected by proposed social policy changes.



Projected Priorities for **2015/16**

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 corporate sponsorship program
7. To ensure that our funding model is sustainable with recurrent funding from Governments, and include donations from the world of philanthropy, and our fundraising efforts.
8. To use our data base of emergency relief clients, to identify issues and bring to the attention of decision makers
9. To constantly relate to our seven pillars of service - housing, education, health and wellbeing, employment, emergency relief, life skills and community connection.