

CRANBOURNE INFORMATION & SUPPORT SERVICE Inc.



Thirty Fifth **ANNUAL REPORT** **2013 - 2014**



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MISSION STATEMENT

To provide an independent, free, impartial and confidential information, referral and support service to all members of the community.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSES

To assess the needs of people who access the service seeking assistance.

To provide direct aid and assistance for the people of Cranbourne and District who are in need of relief from poverty, sickness, distress, misfortune, destitution, homelessness or helplessness.

To provide people with information about, and referral to the services they require.

To provide a volunteer program which enables personal growth and a high standard of service delivery.

To coordinate a local network of community information providers.

To facilitate the provision of counselling services.

To facilitate the activities of local people and organisations who wish to contribute their time and/or resources to community service.

To pursue donations and subscriptions from benefactors, benevolent societies, philanthropic trusts and like organisations as a means of providing relief and services to people from Cranbourne and District.

To inform Government and the Community about the need of the local community of Cranbourne and District, in order to obtain, maintain and improve services.

To pursue funding from Government, Corporate and Community sources to obtain, maintain and improve services in response to local needs.

COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT

President:	Kevin Bradford			
Vice-President:	Susan Hopkins			
Secretary:	Di Mainwaring			
Treasurer:	Karen Peters			
Ordinary Members:	Ros Larke	Julie Jones	John Lewis	Margaret O'Callaghan
	Debbie Dodd	Louise Morgan	Karthik Money	

VOLUNTEER STAFF – 2013/2014

Anne Haylock	Julie Jones	Karthik Money
Susan Hopkins	Una McGuire	Jenelle Kamande
Judy Symons	Susan Arlove	Lucinda Quick
George Nicol	Dawn Wilson	Vanessa Hobson
Ros Larke	Anne Manning	Jenny McGowan (Reception)
Di Mainwaring	Karen Peters	Samantha Beinke (Reception)
Gabriele Lindemann	Louise Morgan	Mary Raj (Reception)
Richard Nicols	Teena Porra	Simon Walliker (Reception)
Brittany Fairthorne	Yasemin Demiral	Alyce Tudball (Reception)
Mary Reilly	Dianne Bush	Marianne Reeve (Reception)

STAFF – 2013/2014

Executive Officer:	Leanne Petrides
Administration Manager:	Cathy Willmott
Manager of Volunteers:	Michael Cooney
Counsellor:	Joan Cavanagh
Counsellor:	Jenny Hyland
Counsellor:	Kaye Jones
Financial Counsellor:	Robyn Shepherd-Murdoch (nee d'Argent)
Support Worker:	Doug Thompson
CfC Outreach Information:	Ann Proud
CfC Outreach Information:	Flora Warren

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

It has been a pleasure to be involved with the Cranbourne Information & Support Service this last twelve months in my capacity as President of the Committee of Management.

This financial year has seen the demands on this organisation increase from the previous year due to numerous factors resulting in many residents finding it even more difficult to make ends meet. As you will see from the statistics presented in the report, the number of people accessing this service continues to rise.

I would like to acknowledge the support we receive from the City of Casey and the federal Department of Social Services (DSS) which, combined, currently provide the majority of funding to CISS. We are very grateful for this support, and in difficult times, we hope that this level of support continues in the years ahead. While we receive other financial support via donations and such, the Committee of Management has established a Marketing and Fundraising Sub-Committee which will explore how to diversify and expand our funding and support base further into the new financial year and beyond. In my opinion, it is imperative for the Committee and staff to investigate and cultivate new sources of income to ensure the organisation remains viable into the future.

It is appropriate that I take this time to acknowledge the tremendous effort of all involved within this organisation, including the paid staff and the many wonderful volunteers who give of themselves to assist those in need. The counselling team, the support worker, the financial counsellor, and our outreach team all work well in conjunction with the volunteers to provide a holistic service to clients in need. I would also like to acknowledge the co-located agencies – WAYSS and SECASA in particular - for adding to the one-stop-shop model of service delivery we are able to provide.

With the demand on CISS growing, comes the need for the Committee to always look at new ways to grow and support our organisation, and a lot of that falls in the lap of our Executive Officer, Leanne Petrides. On behalf of the Committee, I would like to personally thank Leanne for all the long hours and dedication she shows in managing the day to day operations and in providing support to all of the staff.

I would like to thank our Administration Manager, Cathy Willmott, and the Manager of Volunteers, Michael Cooney for all their hard work in assisting Leanne and the rest of the staff team.

I would like to especially thank fellow members of the Committee who work so hard to benefit the organisation and the entire community. This past year has seen us make some difficult decisions, and Committee members have given up extra time from their busy lives to work on strategic planning and goal setting for the organisation's short and long term future.

I look forward to continuing to work with the Committee of Management and staff in the next financial year as we support each other through potentially challenging times.

Kevin Bradford

President

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

It is with great pleasure that I present my report as Executive Officer of the Cranbourne Information and Support Service. This is my sixteenth annual report, and this year CISS marks 36 years of delivering information and crisis support services to the Casey South community.

CISS works collaboratively with many organisations to provide services to the most vulnerable individuals and families in Casey South. This collaboration includes the many funding bodies, stakeholders and community members that support our organisation in many ways. To this end, I would like to formally recognise and thank our funding bodies – in particular, the City of Casey for its funding of our operational budget, provision of our amazing building, and support from various staff including Councillors, Sophia Petrov (Director Community Services), Eva Foster, and the many hard-working staff who engage with us regularly to ensure the voices of our clients are heard. I would like to thank the federal Department of Social Services (DSS), and the Department of Justice for their continued funding and support of our emergency relief program. I would also like to thank the R.E. Ross Trust and The Salvation Army for their financial contribution to, and support of, our Back to School and Education Assistance programs.

CISS continues to be supported by a broad array of individuals, small community groups, and other agencies – a real example of “community supporting community”. As I say each year, it is never possible to mention by name everyone who supports our agency, so please take the time to read the acknowledgements on the last page of our Annual Report. All of these groups and individuals contribute in meaningful ways to keeping CISS functioning well, and we recognise them all. Just one example of this support is our “adoption” by a local business which had previously asked to remain anonymous, but has allowed me to mention them by name in this report. CEO Mark Guthrie and staff of Ray White Cranbourne have donated funds to purchase backpack beds and to support other key ER initiatives, donated coats during winter, donated vouchers for hot meals at a local cafe, and donated toys and presents for all ages at Christmas.

A primary association of course, is our sister agency – Casey North Community Information & Support Service, and we continue to work collaboratively to ensure best quality service provision is available for all residents of Casey. As always, I would like to thank the Executive Officer of Casey North CISS, Susan Magee, for her ongoing and invaluable support.

Our partnerships with Windermere’s Communities for Children program, and the Cranbourne office of the Department of Human Services (Centrelink) have continued to strengthen referral pathways and support options for our clients.

As well as delivering services to the community, CISS is committed to networking locally and at a broader level – indeed, we believe that advocacy at the macro level is the only way to initiate change. Our clients and community continue to benefit from CISS being represented on and involved in many consultative committees, projects, and groups. A large part of my role is representing CISS staff and client issues in a variety of settings and to a broad cross section of stakeholders. One important outcome of this representation and advocacy is that CISS remains front and centre as an agency that understands, achieves and continues to move forward, as well as attempting to ensure the often silent voice of the vulnerable is heard. This year, CISS extended its presence into social media, and now has a Facebook page.

The other week, I overheard a client say to one of the volunteers, “thank you SO much”. When I mentioned this to the volunteer, they replied, “but I didn’t do anything”. My belief is that the

value of what we do is more often in the relationships and connections we build with our clients, and not so much the material assistance we provide. While we can measure the dollar value of what we provide, and count the numbers of people who access our various services, it is impossible to measure the value people place on simply being listened to, and supported.

What we do know, is that our volunteers contributed over 8,200 unpaid hours to the community over the year, to an approximate value of almost \$190,000. They continue to deliver a huge range of services, and respond professionally, and with empathy and respect, to individuals and families in crisis across our community. I would like to officially recognise their continuing hard work and support of me, the agency, and of course, our community. Winston Churchill once said, "We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give", and if that is true, then our volunteers will have very rich lives indeed.

As an organisation, CISS has probably faced (and will continue to face) some of our most challenging times, both financially, and in terms of the client issues we attempt to address every day. The end of the financial year has brought some uncertainty with regard to future funding from the federal government and at this point, all we know for certain is that we have continued funding to the end of 2014 and that an open, competitive tender process will be undertaken early in the 2014/15 financial year. The positive outcome of this situation is that the sector as a whole (with CISVic as a lead agency) rallied strongly to lobby and to advocate for the needs of the most vulnerable, and to push for ongoing funding for emergency relief and financial counselling. The hope is that once the dust settles following the tender process, agencies can once more work collaboratively to deliver high quality services to those in our community who are most in need.

CISS will also be grasping this potential change in funding to undertake a review of our service delivery model in order to ensure that we remain viable, and deliver meaningful, effective services that have the capacity to impact positively on the lives of our clients, and not simply act as a bandaid.

As always, I would like to extend my thanks and congratulations to the Committee of Management for their constant hard work and support. This year has been one in which some difficult decisions have had to be made, and they have done so compassionately and only after thorough exploration of all options. I would also like to take the opportunity to recognise our counselling team – Joan, Jenny, Kaye, Natalie (our volunteer children's counsellor), and our financial counsellor, Robyn. I would also like to acknowledge Doug, our Support Worker; Michael, our Manager of Volunteers; and Ann and Flora, the Infolink team. Cathy, our Administration Manager, always deserves a special mention for her commitment and dedication. All of them continue to work extraordinarily hard, and their contribution to the agency and their support of the volunteers and me has been invaluable.

Finally, after sixteen years at CISS, the end of 2014 will see me take three months Long Service Leave. CISS operates as a well oiled machine, and I know that the agency will be in great hands while I am away. One of the greatest things about CISS is that every single person who works here – paid and unpaid – plays a crucial role in our past and ongoing success.

I encourage everyone to take the time to read our Annual Report and I look forward to another year of working with CISS for the residents of Casey South.

Leanne Petrides

Executive Officer

COUNSELLORS' REPORTS

Joan Cavanagh

It is with pleasure that I present my fourteenth Annual Report to the AGM of the Cranbourne Information and Support Service.

I continue to enjoy my work at CISS and to appreciate the positive work environment we are fortunate to enjoy.

This year we welcome the addition of Natalie- volunteer children's counsellor- to our team. Natalie has been an invaluable addition, and has filled the gap for referring children of clients which we have previously been unable to accommodate.

Professional Development

This year I attended the seminar conducted by Dr Robert Nymyer entitled Techniques of Grief Therapy: Processing the Event Story of the Death. I also attended some of the seminars run by ELMHS on Adolescent mental health issues.

This year has also seen a change in supervision arrangements for some of the counsellors with the team attending Supervision with Relationships Australia's senior clinicians – Mario and Susie. Our peer supervision held on a Tuesday with all counsellors continues to be an important way of maintaining our team as well as providing the opportunity for information and resources sharing. It also provides the opportunity to share individual learning experiences from outside professional development activities.

Statistics

During the last financial year 245 counselling sessions were provided to 172 clients.

As with last year, a significant figure of concern is the number of appointments not kept by clients (usually first time clients) particularly where the appointment is not cancelled. It is unclear why this phenomenon occurs but we assume that often appointments are made in a time of crisis which then passes. If these appointments were kept, our volume of service would increase dramatically. We are currently examining referral methods (especially self-referrals) in order to try and address this matter.

Acknowledgements

Thanks as always goes to Leanne for her wonderful leadership, Cathy (also a special thanks for technical and administrative support), Jenny, Kaye, Doug, Robyn, Michael, Ann, Flora, Volunteers and the Committee of Management for their roles in providing a supportive environment and for creating and sustaining a positive working environment. Thanks also go to Natalie (volunteer children's counsellor) who has enriched both our team and supervision experiences. Thanks also to SECASA and WAYSS who share our working building and provide assistance and support to CISS.

Joan Cavanagh

Counsellor

Jenny Hyland

I am pleased to present my tenth annual report to the AGM of the Cranbourne Information and Support Service. I work on Tuesdays and Wednesdays for a total of 17 hours per week. I continue to enjoy the challenge of working with a diverse range of issues presented by clients from a diverse range of backgrounds. I have had more clients from Culturally & Linguistically diverse backgrounds than previously, which brings new and interesting challenges to the work. I value the opportunity to learn from my clients, and to develop my knowledge, skills and abilities as a counsellor.

Professional Development

I continue to receive supervision from psychologist Leni Foster at her private practice in Emerald at six weekly intervals. In addition to one-on-one supervision, the counsellors have been attending group supervision at Relationships Australia, Cranbourne, facilitated by manager Mario Avice and Susie Nguyen. The CISS counsellors continue to meet weekly for peer supervision which provides a valuable opportunity for sharing and support with complex cases.

During the past financial year I attended the following professional development sessions: Understanding and Supporting Perinatal Loss with The Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement, Changes to the DSM-IV with Early in Life Mental Health Service (ELMHS), Psychiatric Sexual Health Co Morbidity and CALD Youth Response (ELMHS), and Trauma Informed Training for Workers with Adults Surviving Child Abuse (ASCA).

Statistics

During the last financial year 296 counselling sessions were provided to 194 clients. Compared to 2013, the number of clients earning over \$50,000 per annum has increased while other financial categories remain much the same.

It is pleasing to see that the total number of cancellations by clients have approximately halved compared to 2013. The large majority of “no shows” are new/ prospective clients. Referrals are steady at present with the needs of new clients met in a timely fashion.

Acknowledgements

At CISS we are very fortunate to have a great team of volunteer and paid staff. There have been many new faces this past year amongst the volunteer staff and these new people, along with long term staff, have contributed to the ongoing culture of respect, commitment and support at CISS. A fantastic addition to the counselling team is Natalie Waring as there is a definite need amongst several of our clients for counselling support for their children. I am very grateful to my fellow counsellors for their support and friendship throughout the year.

A very big thank you goes to Leanne and the Committee of Management for their trust in the management of my role and case load, and also for supporting my professional development needs. Leanne continues to excel as a manager as she calmly and skilfully steers CISS through some very turbulent times politically, while managing to keep the staff happy and motivated.

Jenny Hyland

Counsellor

Kaye Jones

I am pleased to present my eighth annual report to the AGM of the Cranbourne Information and Support Service. I am now working 21 hours per week over Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays.

In addition to counselling, many of our clients require a measure of case management and we often need to refer them to other professionals, including GPs, Legal Aid, Mediation, and SECASA. There are many clients with severe financial difficulties and it is invaluable being able to refer them to Robyn for financial counselling. Likewise, I have often called on Doug Thompson (our CISS Support Worker) for assistance with a client's issues.

Some of my clients have been referred by Ann and Flora through the ADHD Support Group. These clients are all mothers of children (mainly boys) with ADHD and also, in many cases, with co-existing conditions such as Oppositional Defiant Disorder and Asperger's Syndrome.

Many of our clients have commented on how grateful they are for the support, care, and compassion that they feel here at CISS.

Professional Development

In July 2013 I attended a one day grief seminar by Robert Neimeyer, who is acknowledged as a world expert in grief and bereavement. I also attended two one-day workshops at the Australian Centre for Grief & Bereavement, the first in August 2013 on Living with the Grief of Dementia and the second in June 2014 on Grief Counselling in the Digital Age.

Statistics

In this past financial year 327 counselling sessions were provided to 202 different clients.

It is rare to find a client who has only one issue of concern. In most cases our clients have several, often complex, counselling requirements which are quite challenging and we can have ongoing counselling relationships for several months, if not years. The number of clients presenting with drug, alcohol and gambling addictions continues to increase.

Acknowledgements

It is important to acknowledge that the culture at CISS of care, support, tolerance and patience in dealing with our clients and with each other is often a large component of any successful outcome for clients. We have an amazing band of volunteers who deal with some very stressful and distressing situations and I am always impressed by their professionalism and their strength.

To my fellow counsellors – Jenny, Joan, Doug and Robyn - I express my gratitude for their ongoing support, understanding and good humour. Leanne is, as always, an inspirational leader who is always calm, compassionate, supportive, and caring to all of us while maintaining her professionalism in so many trying circumstances.

I feel privileged to be a part of the CISS team.

Kaye Jones

Counsellor

COUNSELLING STATISTICS

(Statistics in parentheses provide a comparison to the 2012/13 financial year)

Sessions by location	Number	Percentage %
Cranbourne	650 (624)	75 (78)
Within catchment	98 (86)	11 (11)
Outside catchment	120 (85)	14 (11)
TOTAL	868 (795)	100 (100)

Sessions by income	Number	Percentage %
Pension or benefit up to \$20,000	435 (409)	50 (51)
Between \$20,000 and \$30,000	126 (136)	15 (17)
Between \$30,000 and \$40,000	75 (75)	9 (9)
Between \$40,000 and \$50,000	70 (42)	8 (5)
Over \$50,000	159 (133)	18 (17)
TOTAL	865 (795)	100 (100)

Client Contacts by Type	Number	Percentage %
Males	114 (108)	20 (22)
Females	454 (385)	80 (78)
Couple sessions	93 (77)	
Total number of clients	568 (493)	100 (100)

Issues raised: -

1. Addictions: Drug, Alcohol, Gambling
2. Personal, Inc. Anxiety & Depression
3. Relationship
4. Separation / Divorce
5. Family
6. Family Violence
7. Anger Management
8. Sexual Abuse
9. Parents of children with ADHD / Asperger's Syndrome
10. Chronic Illness / Injury / PTSD
11. Grief & Loss
12. Other

SUPPORT WORKER'S REPORT

I am pleased to present my Annual Report for the 2013/14 financial year. This year has seen an increase compared to last year in terms of emergency relief sessions I have conducted (257 compared to 228).

Assistance provided included vouchers, medical/health discretionary funds, support to refugees/asylum seekers and, increasingly, advocacy in applying for Utility Relief Grants (URGs) and completing Centrelink forms. There have been an increasing number of people experiencing difficulties paying their utilities bills, which led to many URG applications to the myriad of providers of utility services.

I assisted Julie with our Back to School and Education Assistance Programs and I assessed fifty two families between March and August, assisting them with \$6,260. Even with the School Kids Bonus, families are struggling to make ends meet, as some of that payment was often utilised for other necessities such as rent, car registration, utilities and food.

I had established a good working relationship with DHS Centrelink through their 'Case Co-ordination Program' but, like many good programs, it has been discontinued.

There continues to be a number of asylum seekers living in our area (particularly in Hampton Park) who have significant needs and often come to us for assistance as a result.

Statistics (July 2013 – June 2014)

Clients

	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	TOTAL
CLIENTS	16	17	25	16	17	12	14	19	23	34	26	18	237
SESSIONS	16	18	29	17	17	12	15	22	28	34	29	20	257
NEW	12	10	10	8	11	9	11	14	13	16	17	7	138

Location

	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	TOTAL
3977	9	13	13	11	11	9	13	17	20	26	20	14	176
3976	5	4	8	5	4	2	0	1	2	8	5	4	48
OTHER	2	0	4	0	2	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	13

Gender

	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	TOTAL
MALE	8	12	12	8	6	5	6	8	12	20	12	11	120
FEMALE	8	5	13	8	11	7	8	11	11	14	14	7	117

Counselling

This year has seen a continuance of the provision of counselling to our clients. These have included referrals from Support Link (Victoria Police), Emergency Relief volunteers, and the other CISS counsellors. Areas of support in this area have included grief and bereavement counselling, relationship issues, couples counselling and men's support.

I have now completed my internship at the Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement and am a fully qualified Grief and Bereavement Counsellor.

Issues Presented

The following are some of the primary issues presented where support was provided: -

- Housing/Rental arrears
- Bills – including utilities, and transport costs
- Medical expenses where they were not covered by Medicare
- Education expenses
- Centrelink clients being moved from Parenting Payment Single to Newstart

Professional Development

During the year I attended a number of courses, and represented CISS at information sessions including:

- Keeping it Together program at CNCISS
- CISVic case worker's meetings
- NILS training
- The Salvation Army
- ERMHA
- Frankston Regional Men's Wellbeing Alliance
- Refugee & Asylum Seeker Experience Workshop
- Professional supervision
- Group supervision
- Australian Centre for Grief & Bereavement

Counselling Statistics (July 2013 – June 2014)

	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	TOTAL
CLIENTS	4	6	5	4	1	4	3	3	2	5	5	9	51
SESSIONS	6	7	5	4	1	5	5	4	2	8	5	15	67

Doug Thompson

Support Worker

MANAGER OF VOLUNTEER'S REPORT

It is with great pleasure that I present my report for inclusion in the Cranbourne Information and Support Service (CISS) Annual Report for 2014.

Last year I reported that, whilst new to the organisation, I enjoyed being an active part of what I considered to be an effective and productive team. This consideration continues to be a major driver towards my efforts in supporting CISS in all its endeavours. The volunteers and employed staff are nothing more than magnificent in their continuing support and dedication in ensuring the delivery of an exceptional service not only to myself but also, more importantly, to our clients.

Workplace Activities and Initiatives

The main focus of my activities continues to be on recruitment, training and retention. Since my last report we have encountered many challenges, not least an increased level of attrition. Some forty percent of volunteers have since gained employment, moved away from the Cranbourne area, cut back their hours or treated themselves to well earned relaxation time. Whatever the reason, a more intensified recruitment assessment process has been adopted with emphasis on raising the numbers of volunteers and increasing retention levels. At this point in time, I am pleased to report that we have a satisfactory team of trained volunteers whom we hope will remain with us for a significant period of time.

The revised Induction Manual introduced last year continues to evolve and still forms an important part of the overall training package for newly recruited volunteers. Mentors are also provided with a 'Mentors Manual' which guides them through the process of mentoring their assigned volunteers.

I continue to have a positive working relationship with Max Employment Agency located in Cranbourne. This connection has enabled CISS to provide clients with the services of several receptionists who cover most of the working week. Generally, the calibre of receptionists assigned to CISS has been exceptional, if only short lived at times.

My reports to the Committee of Management aim to reflect on and advise the committee of the current status of the health and well being of our volunteer team both in terms of current numbers and of identified training initiatives.

Along with managing volunteer matters, I continue to provide support for inputting data into the CISS record management data program. This activity is vital in that it enables me to monitor the quality and standard of information being recorded by volunteers, and at the same time identifies any training issues.

As a result of last year's Individual Performance Appraisals, several suggestions by volunteers were acted upon, including the running of a self-defence workshop.

Professional Development

To further enhance my professional development, I have attended numerous Legal Training Sessions conducted through the City of Casey. These sessions have proved to be invaluable in ensuring that my knowledge and legal requirements remain uppermost when managing volunteers.

In addition, at the beginning of this year I was successful in forming a Coordinator of Volunteers group. This group comprises Coordinators/Managers across the South East Region including Dandenong, Frankston, Narre Warren, Hastings, Springvale, Rosebud, Knox and Cranbourne. The purpose of this group is to exchange working knowledge and initiatives in all matters encompassing volunteers. To date, the group has held three meetings resulting in positive feedback by its members on the value of these meetings.

I still form part of the CISVic Training Sub-Committee, which is responsible for reviewing and developing accredited training for volunteers.

Training and Work Socialisation Initiatives

During the last financial year I facilitated two training sessions involving staff and volunteers. These meetings mainly focused on general house-keeping matters and policy related issues.

During the course of the last financial year, I conducted three six-week training sessions for participants enrolled in the accredited Vocational Education and Training course 'Assess and Provide Services for Clients with Complex Needs'. These courses were conducted at The Cranbourne Salvation Army.

On Friday 11 October 2013 I organised a CISS BBQ. The BBQ was both well represented and well received by attendees.

Future Development

Whilst the demand for our services continues to grow, it is imperative that my main focus and commitment is to source, recruit and retain suitably qualified volunteers. To this end, the next financial year will see a targeted recruitment campaign designed to attract potential volunteers who are time abundant and willing to support CISS on a regular basis.

A review of the current rostering process will be conducted during the next financial year in an effort to design a more efficient and effective rostering management process which aims to ensure stability.

Michael Cooney

Coordinator of Volunteers

FINANCIAL COUNSELLOR'S REPORT

I am pleased to present my 2013-2014 report to the AGM of the Cranbourne Information and Support Service.

It has been another very busy year working with vulnerable people and families in Cranbourne and surrounding suburbs.

Referrals from other services in our area have all increased, and agencies including WAYSS, Windermere, Oz Child, Department of Human Services - Centrelink, Office of Housing, SECASA, Cardinia Casey Community Health Service, New Hope, Connections, Good Shepherd, Money Help, Migrant Resource Centre, and local Churches all phone for financial counselling appointments for their vulnerable clients.

Professional Development

All Financial Counsellors in Victoria must be members of the Financial & Consumer Rights Council (FCRC), which also requires Financial Counsellors to complete 15 points of Professional Development each year.

During this financial year, I have attended the following training topics: -

- Personal Insolvency and Trustee issues
- TAC, Workcover and Superannuation
- FOS – Responsible Lending
- Motor Car Contracts
- Social Security Rights
- Credit Repairs
- Casework
- Public Transport Ombudsman
- Bankruptcy
- Maladministration
- Gambling Problems

Supervision

Financial Counsellors are also required to undertake 10 hours of supervision with another Financial Counsellor and I have been undertaking this with a colleague for the past twelve months as per these requirements.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to all the staff and volunteers for contributing to such an enjoyable place to work, and thank you also to the Committee of Management for all the support they provide.

Robyn Shepherd-Murdoch (nee d'Argent)

Financial Counsellor

FINANCIAL COUNSELLING STATISTICS

New Clients

	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	TOTAL
NEW CLIENTS	26	13	16	18	13	5	15	23	14	12	20	16	191
MULTIPLE SESSIONS	17	18	12	14	16	21	13	18	24	20	15	9	197
WALK-IN	3	0	0	3	1	1	3	1	0	0	2	2	16

Location

	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	TOTAL
CRANBOURNE	37	25	22	26	23	22	21	32	29	25	22	17	301
HAMPTON PARK	4	6	5	3	4	4	7	6	8	5	6	7	65
OTHER	4	0	2	6	3	1	3	4	1	2	9	3	38

Issues

	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	TOTAL
DEBT MANAGEMENT	8	29	37	29	12	12	38	18	22	18	16	20	259
CREDIT CARD	20	18	30	29	26	20	46	42	25	25	22	20	323
ADVOCACY	30	40	42	25	35	19	50	41	33	19	28	33	395
BANKRUPTCY	9	8	12	11	11	15	10	14	7	15	11	7	130
MORTGAGE	11	16	23	21	9	13	23	13	11	13	10	8	171
CAR LOAN	9	12	18	15	12	4	26	24	8	4	13	13	158
PHONE	23	29	33	26	26	16	40	38	27	16	18	19	311
UTILITIES	20	32	38	20	30	16	43	38	31	16	21	26	331
RENT ARREARS	3	3	4	2	9	4	2	9	9	4	4	3	56
U.R.G.	6	9	12	11	11	8	18	16	7	8	10	12	128
CENTRELINK	8	15	4	3	18	16	33	32	24	16	14	20	203
FINES	10	11	7	4	11	8	20	15	6	8	8	8	116
RATES	10	7	25	22	8	9	15	9	4	9	5	2	125
ACCESS SUPER	7	5	7	4	3	4	15	6	6	4	9	8	78
FAMILY ISSUES	13	22	18	16	18	14	27	24	18	14	15	23	222
MENTAL HEALTH	8	17	16	13	22	13	27	19	15	13	13	18	194

CRANBOURNE 'INFOLINK' REPORT

Another year has successfully passed for the Cranbourne Communities for Children Infolink team which has been based at CISS since 2006. The twice monthly outreach visits to Cranbourne Park Shopping Centre have once again proven that you can never provide enough information to the general community. Our visits to the shopping centre attract between 15 – 20 enquiries each fortnight. The same applies to our weekly outreach sessions to the Cranbourne Department of Human Services (Centrelink) office. This service ensures immediate access for assistance or referral, and means that the Centrelink client can be assured of prompt service from CISS. A phone call made by the Infolink worker to the office accommodates the needs of the client, who then know that they are expected and that assistance will be at hand as soon as they enter the office.

During this reporting period, we initiated a program called “Well Suited” with Dandenong Valley Employment Solutions (DVJS) in Cranbourne. As a non profit, employment support service, DVJS is able to refer eligible clients to the Infolink Team for assistance to purchase clothing items to assist with their return to work. This program supports parents in Cranbourne who are being transitioned from Parenting Payment to Newstart, and must seek employment. The program has only been running since April 2014 and has already assisted some clients to purchase appropriate clothing for job interviews, or for their first week in a new job.

The monthly ADHD Support Group meetings are still averaging 8 – 10 in attendance with several new members commencing.

The Infolink Team plans to attend training through the Early in Mental Health Service Professional Development Series early in the next financial year in order to begin providing targeted information, support and referrals to Cranbourne schools. This future planning is in response to feedback from school staff indicating that many of them are finding it difficult to locate current and appropriate local information to support the increasing numbers of their students who display signs of mental illness. The Infolink Team intend to contact the local schools to offer and provide non medical information via presentations to assist and better educate the teaching staff.

Flora continues to engage in ongoing and regular contact with local Childcare Centres and Kindergartens.

The year ahead will bring many new challenges which are most exciting. We would like to acknowledge Therese Mulcahy and Bronwyn Owen from Windermere for their support during the previous year, and we look forward to once again providing assistance to the Cranbourne community through the CISS office.

Ann Proud & Flora Warren

'Infolink' Team

No Interest Loans Scheme (NILS)

CISS began our stand-alone NILS Program in June 2013 and it has proven to be very successful. In this reporting period we had 236 enquiries, which translated to 110 interviews and 30 loans approved to a total value of \$22,069.

Enquiries are generally made for basic and essential household items, but the number of enquiries we receive for items we cannot assist with has increased. Good Shepherd has facilitated a partnership with The Good Guys, known as “Good To Go”, which enables us to offer clients an even better discount on essential electrical items for the home.

A number of enquiries have come from previous borrowers through the Casey NILS program, and thanks to a great working relationship continuing with Casey North CISS, communication is excellent, and the transition has been smooth.

We have had three loans repaid in the reporting period, with one recipient now enquiring about a second loan, and no loans have been classified as “Currently Not Paying” during the twelve months.

Back to School Support Program

The Cranbourne Information & Support Service Inc (CISS) delivered its eighth Back to School (BTS) Support program between the months of November 2013 and March 2014, in conjunction with The Salvation Army Cranbourne Community Support Services.

The Salvation Army Cranbourne Community Support Services contributed \$17,000 towards this program, and \$26,400 was received from The R.E. Ross Trust. Further funds from The R.E. Ross Trust are being provisioned for use towards educational needs that will present throughout the year.

Once again this year we have focused the funds distribution towards the more senior years of schooling, Year 10, 11 and 12 (VCE, VCAL and VET years). Assisting these parents with educational expenses will hopefully encourage students to stay at school after turning 16.

A total of \$43,542 was used to assist families in the Casey South community and the suburb of Doveton with the cost of sending children to school, and covered items such as non-voluntary fees, textbooks, stationery, shoes, uniforms, and sundry items like lunch-boxes and bags, etc.

A total of 223 families were assisted, which consisted of 505 children (87 being VCE students), attending 60 schools.

We anticipate there may be more requests for assistance in 2014 – 2015, with the abolition of the “Education Maintenance Allowance”.

I would like to thank Doug for his invaluable work co-delivering this program, Cathy for updating the database annually, and all of the staff and volunteers for the support they provide in monitoring referrals and appointments.

Julie Jones

Back to School Program Coordinator

SERVICES

Information and Referral

Information and referral services are the core activity of the agency, and are available on a wide range of subjects including:

- * Accommodation
- * Community Affairs
- * Education
- * Employment
- * Health
- * Legal
- * Support Services
- * Counselling
- * Consumer Affairs
- * Emergency Relief
- * Environment
- * Income
- * Recreation
- * Transport

Trained volunteers provide information in person or over the phone. A current, comprehensive community information database, pamphlets, booklets, and manuals enable access to thousands of agencies, services and procedures. Data is maintained on National, State, regional and local agencies, and provides people with improved access to resources and services, and knowledge of their rights and responsibilities.

Crisis Support

An intervention service is provided for people in crisis. This can include a 'listening ear', support, practical assistance (such as filling in forms or writing letters), information, and referrals to appropriate specialist supports. Demand for our crisis support service grows each year as increasing numbers of people present with complex needs and numerous issues.

Emergency relief is provided for people experiencing financial hardship, and includes food, food vouchers, gas and petrol, Myki Day Passes, Telstra vouchers, nappies, baby food/formula, and pharmaceutical needs. Guidelines and eligibility criteria apply, and a 'holistic' rather than 'bandaid' model of service delivery is used.

Counselling

A generalist crisis intervention and counselling program is provided, with individual, couple, and family counselling offered; with financial counselling also available. The service is free and available to individuals, couples and families who live or work in the Casey South area.

Advocacy and Negotiation

This is provided on behalf of clients with Government departments, service providers, utility companies, landlords, businesses, and neighbours, etc, with regard to issues including debts, services, complaints, and procedures. Emphasis is placed on the client developing these skills for future use.

No Interest Loans Scheme (NILS)

The No Interest Loans Scheme (NILS) offers low-income earners an accessible source of credit for the purchase of essential household goods with an achievable repayment plan that does not compromise the household budget. Loans can be provided to approved applicants for goods such as fridges, washing machines, furniture, and even health aids and educational expenses.

The Cranbourne & District NILS commenced in June 2013 with a \$50,000 grant from the National Australia Bank. This follows the successful delivery of the Casey NILS in conjunction with Casey North CISS since April 2001.

The two agencies will continue to work collaboratively to ensure that this flexible and effective form of micro-finance is available across the entire municipality of Casey.

Share Accommodation Register

A register for people looking, or offering to share accommodation is available on site. Sharers are resourced with a "Sharing Kit", and staff can act as mediators in establishing share arrangements. Sharing can be an economical and practical way of finding accommodation in the local area, and this free service has enabled many people find suitable, affordable housing, and is a useful community resource.

Tax Help

Volunteers are trained by the Australian Taxation Office to assist people fill in simple tax returns. This service is offered to people on low incomes, the aged, people with disabilities, people whose primary language is not English, Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders, young people, pensioners, unemployed, and people with literacy or numeracy difficulties. CISS is the only agency providing Tax Help in the Casey South area, and the demand is such that many people cannot be assisted.

Volunteer Register

A register of service providers and community groups who offer opportunities for people interested in volunteer work is available on site.

Volunteer Program

CISS volunteers undertake an extensive training program, including a nationally accredited course – "Assess and Provide Services to Clients with Complex Needs", orientation, and a probationary period before becoming accredited community information workers. A focus on personal development enables volunteers to further develop particular skills or interests in fields such as public relations, information management, research, administration and computers, amongst many more.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

For the Year Ended 30 June 2014

GENERAL ACCOUNT

	2014	2013
<u>INCOME</u>		
Grants		
- City of Casey	397,307	368,864
- City of Casey ER Network	2,908	2,769
- FaHCSIA/DSS Mark II Grant	4,317	214
- Bendigo Bank Community Grant	455	-
- VG Funding Administration	100	-
- Vulnerable Groups	12,654	11,755
- Windermere Volunteer Training	-	1,150
- Windermere Cfc Infolink	72,697	79,129
Donations	10,000	-
COC – Cfc Public Forum	2,500	-
Interest Received	2,374	206
Miscellaneous Income	1,548	50
Training Fees Received	1,922	570
Other Reimbursements	-	220
Prior Year Expense Adjustments	-	7,367
Services Provided	350	136
Room Hire	24,053	20,523
TOTAL INCOME	533,184	492,953
<u>EXPENDITURE</u>		
Advertising	-	931
AGM Expenses	260	311
Audit Fees	720	680
Bank Charges & F I D etc	235	77
Computer Software/Hardware	55	656
Computer/Printer Supplies and Maintenance	1,348	1,050
Depreciation Expenses	2,566	3,327
Electricity	13,975	15,438
Employment Expenses	322,143	307,651
Equipment and Furniture	335	88
FaHCSIA/DSS Mark II Grant	4,317	508
Insurance	3,369	1,720
Making Ends Meet Guide	1,880	1,857

Miscellaneous	1,704	1,153
Other Training	3,121	1,076
Postage	681	852
Policy and Planning	-	121
Photocopying, Printing and Stationery	7,143	6,725
Provision for Annual Leave	29,307	25,462
Provision for Equipment Replacement	-	2,000
Provision for Long Service Leave	23,126	8,225
Provision for Financial Counsellor	10,000	-
Repairs and Maintenance	463	77
Resources	350	303
Security	680	761
Social Committee Expenses	26	219
Staff Amenities	1,654	1,693
Stay on Track Guide	1,113	1,113
Subscriptions & Memberships	3,533	2,084
Telephone, email and Webpage	11,343	10,966
Vulnerable Groups	12,654	11,755
Water Charges	-	44
Windermere CfC Infolink Expenses	62,959	69,247
Windermere Volunteer Expenses	-	1,150
Workcover	6,458	5,620
Windermere CfC Family Fun Day	2,499	-
Working with Children Checks	-	465
TOTAL EXPENSES	<u>533,363</u>	<u>484,472</u>
OPERATING SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	<u>(179)</u>	<u>8,481</u>

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

For the Year Ended 30 June 2014

EMERGENCY RELIEF FUNDING ACCOUNT

	2014	2013
<u>INCOME</u>		
Back to School Program		
Hunt Club Community Grant	-	990
Inner Wheel Club	-	1,000
Bruce Greenland	-	1,000
R.E. Ross Trust	26,400	26,400
Salvation Army Funding	17,000	19,000
Donations	26,877	26,006
Grant - City of Casey	10,000	10,000
Grant - DSS		
Emergency Relief	129,839	137,039
Vulnerable Groups	5,000	5,000
Interest Received	8,354	9,357
Voided Stale Cheques	1,046	-
Miscellaneous	-	1,566
TOTAL INCOME	<u>224,515</u>	<u>237,358</u>
<u>EXPENDITURE</u>		
Back to School Program		
Hunt Club Community Grant	-	990
Other BTS Donations	-	2,000
R.E. Ross Trust	26,400	26,400
Salvation Army Funding	17,000	19,000
Bank Fees	20	-
Christmas Support Expenses	3,209	3,196
CISS Vouchers	10,500	10,303
Client Relief – Chemist	7,278	7,046
Client Relief - Supplies	13,362	11,573
Client Relief - Day Pass	1,989	1,500
Discretionary Fund Expenses	5,000	3,000
Discretionary Fund Expenses - Medical	3,000	5,000
Miscellaneous	576	231
Nappies	487	247
Vulnerable Groups Vouchers	5,000	5,000
Relief Food Vouchers	129,840	137,039
Swags for Homeless	1,928	1,293
TOTAL EXPENSES	<u>225,590</u>	<u>233,818</u>
OPERATING SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	<u>(1,075)</u>	<u>3,540</u>

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION**For the Year Ended 30 June 2014**

<u>CURRENT ASSETS</u>	2014	2013
Bendigo General Operating	9,380	-
Bendigo General Investment	70,124	-
Bendigo Debit Card	391	-
Bendigo Term Deposit	200,000	-
Bendigo ER Operating	2,076	-
Bendigo ER Investment	50,101	-
CBA General Account	2,554	7,191
Online Account	218	35,061
Petty Cash	100	100
Undeposited Funds	90	-
Term Deposit	-	200,000
Trade Debtors	914	1,683
CBA Emergency Relief Account	-	58,676
Cranbourne & District NILS	13,212	1,744
Furniture & Fixtures at Cost	26,471	26,471
Computers – Cost	10,135	10,135
Furniture & Equipment/Computers	14,148	14,148
Less Accumulated Depreciation	(37,554)	(34,988)
Input Tax Credit Control	-	2,072
VG Discretionary Fund	-	69
TOTAL ASSETS	362,359	322,361
<u>CURRENT LIABILITIES</u>		
Clearing Account	(90)	-
Cheques Paid Exceeding Cash	325	-
Education Assistance Program	8,776	14,159
FaHCSIA/DSS Mark II Grant	1,038	5,286
Healthy Families Project	-	1,500
Key Deposits	150	150
Minor Capital Works	1,000	1,000
NAB – NILS Overdraft Account	13,212	1,744
Provision for Annual Leave	41,118	38,087
Provision for Discretionary Fund	5,107	484
Provision for Holiday Program	-	1,000
Provision for Long Service Leave	88,013	64,886
Provision for Medical Discretionary	3,204	4,287
Provision for Staff Backfill	12,544	12,710
Provision for Equipment Replacement	8,305	10,264
Provision for Financial Counselling	10,000	-
Provision for Staff Training	2,002	534
Provision for Webpage	-	1,636
PAYG Tax Payable	3,987	3,564
GST Payable Control	18,473	16,360
Salary Sacrifice Payable	-	2,192
Superannuation Payable	375	375
Trade Creditors	3,417	3,946
Windermere CfC Infolink Grant	2,267	2,270
Windermere CfC Provision for ER Support	5,000	-
Windermere CfC Provision for Resources	4,600	-
Windermere CfC Provision for Future Programs	-	10,000
Windermere Well Suited Program	4,865	-
TOTAL LIABILITIES	237,687	196,436
NET ASSETS	124,672	125,926
<u>MEMBERS' FUNDS</u>		
Accumulated Surplus/(Deficit)	128,616	129,870
Historical Balancing	(3,944)	(3,944)
TOTAL MEMBERS' FUNDS	124,672	125,926

Schedule 1

Regulation 15

Form 1

Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012

Sections 94(2)(b), 97(2)(b) and 100(2)(b)

This form is required to be provided to the members at the AGM with the association's accounts.

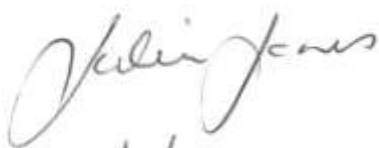
Annual statements give true and fair view of financial position of incorporated association

We, JUWE JONES and Sue HOPKINS,

being members of the Committee of the Cranbourne Information & Support Service Inc., certify that—

The statements attached to this certificate give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Cranbourne Information & Support Service Inc. during and at the end of the financial year of the association ending on 30 June 2014.

Signed:



Dated:

23/9/2014

Signed:



Dated:

23/9/2014

CRANBOURNE INFORMATION & SUPPORT SERVICE INC.

(CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU)

AUDITOR'S REPORT
For the Year Ended 30th June 2014

This audit has been conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. I have examined the financial statements for Cranbourne Information & Support Service Inc. for the year ended 30th June 2014. The records examined are free from any material misstatement and in my opinion the accounts show a true and fair view of the financial position of the incorporated association during and at the end of its last audit year.

On the basis of that examination we advise that we are satisfied that the accompanying financial statements accurately reflect the transactions of the Cranbourne Information & Support Service Inc. as recorded in those books of accounts, and that of the bank reconciliations for the year ended 30th June 2014. Noting only that; due to the infrequency of statements - Some of the bank reconciliations were completed to the end of the available statements rather than to the end of month. The related transactions have been included in the provided reports and outstanding reconciliations amounts have since been cleared. We have also not verified the 'Petty Cash' nor 'Undeposited Funds' account balance as at the 30th June 2014.

Furthermore, the 'Historical Balancing' figure in the equity section of CISS' statement of financial position includes a depreciation entry journalled in the 13th period of the 2009 audit year. It must be noted that the omission doesn't affect the 2014 figures presented in the provided reports.

Our audit is limited to an examination of those books of accounts, and is not a verification of the day to day activities of the Cranbourne Information & Support Service Inc. for the year ended 30th June 2014. It is not practical for the agency to establish control over income for certain fund raising activities prior to its initial entry in the accounting records, nor is it practical for me to perform audit procedures to satisfy myself that all such income has been received and recorded.



Matthew Studham FIPA
Insight Accounting Pty Ltd
Shop 5, Corner High & Sladen Streets
CRANBOURNE, VIC 3977
September 19, 2014

EMERGENCY RELIEF

Many of our clients are dealing with complex personal and financial issues that dominate their lives. Just under twenty percent of clients attending our agency for assistance with emergency relief are approaching us for the very first time, reflecting both the growth in population, and the number of families in our region living below the poverty line, and therefore increasingly dependent on the welfare system to survive.

It is important to note that all people accessing our service receive a comprehensive and holistic service, often receiving a range of support services in addition to material aid. Some people requesting emergency relief may only require assistance once, but generally, families in this area need further support during times of crisis or prolonged hardship. Requests for assistance in all but two categories increased substantially, with marked increases in requests for support with accommodation, transport costs (both petrol, and public transport expenses), medical and pharmaceutical costs, emergency relief, and support with income and employment issues.

Once again, we are proud to acknowledge the support of many local organisations and individuals who donated to our Emergency Relief program throughout the year. We received donations from the Ray White Cranbourne, Inner Wheel Club of Cranbourne, Rotary Club of Cranbourne, Cranbourne Arthritis Support Group, Cranbourne Country Women's Association, Hampton Park Uniting Church, Mr Bruce Greenland, and various anonymous donors.

During the last financial year, almost \$200,000 was distributed in emergency relief on almost 6,600 occasions, and a further \$43,500 was distributed through the Back to School/Education Assistance Programs. This would not have been possible without funding from the federal Department of Social Services, The R.E.Ross Trust, The Salvation Army Cranbourne Support Services and the Dandenong Magistrates Court, as well as additional support from local churches, donations from the Ritchie's Stores Community Benefit Card, and the afore-mentioned groups and individuals. We also received and distributed \$7,000 of Telstra vouchers.

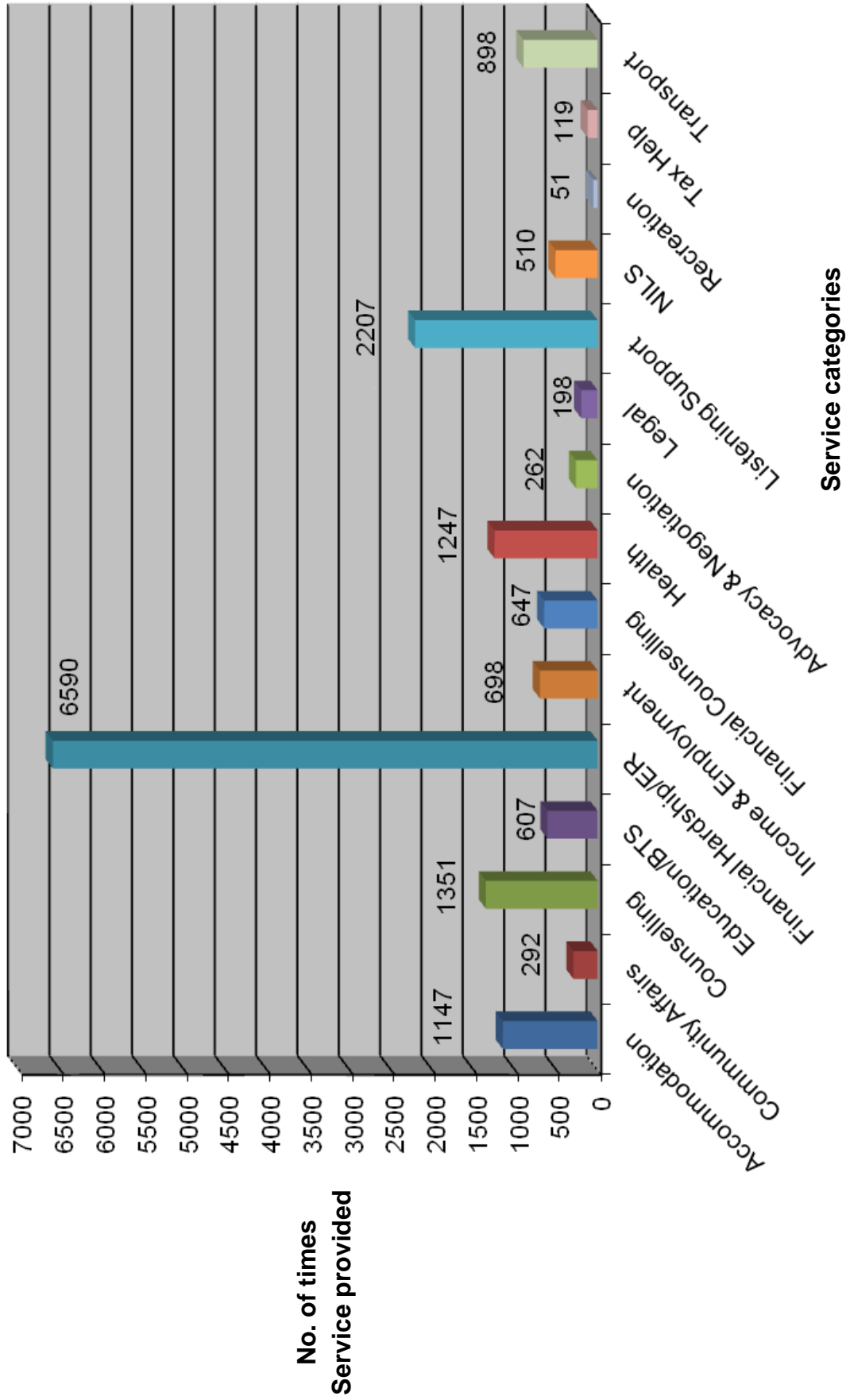
STATISTICS

Please see the following graph for a breakdown of service provision.

We provided some type of assistance on just over 17,000 occasions to over 8,100 households. As usual, emergency relief was our most utilised service, with almost 6,600 requests for assistance. This was an increase from the previous year, and translated to a total of 8,263 adults and 7,587 children who benefited in some way from our emergency relief service. The majority (42%) of people attending our agency were aged between 40-59 years, with a further 39% aged between 25-39 years. Ten percent of clients were under 24 years of age, and nine percent were aged 60 or over.

The vast majority of our clients are in receipt of DSS Centrelink benefits, with a small proportion receiving low wages for work undertaken.

CISS Statistics 2013 / 2014



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We extend our thanks to the following individuals and agencies for their support, donations or assistance to clients and staff of the Cranbourne Information & Support Service:

City of Casey Councillors and Staff
Department of Social Services (DSS)
Magistrates' Court of Victoria
Community Information & Support Victoria
Woolworths Limited
Ritchies Stores Ltd – Cranbourne
Windermere Child & Family Services
The Salvation Army Cranbourne Support Services
The R.E. Ross Trust
St Vincent's de Paul Society
Techdeck Computer Service
Pharmore Pharmacy
Centrelink - Cranbourne
Australian Taxation Office – Tax Help Program

For donations to CISS Emergency Relief Fund –

- Rotary Club of Cranbourne
- Mark Guthrie and Staff - Ray White Cranbourne
- Cranbourne Arthritis Support Group
- Inner Wheel Club of Cranbourne Inc
- Balla Balla Community Centre
- Bruce Greenland
- Cranbourne Probus Club
- Lucky 7 Tattoos
- Turning Point Church
- Ulysses Club Shearwaters Branch
- Robin and Arnis Dzedins
- Casey Cardinia Library Corporation
- Winepress Berwick AOG
- Anonymous donations