

# CRANBOURNE INFORMATION & SUPPORT SERVICE Inc.



## Thirty Sixth **ANNUAL REPORT** **2014 - 2015**



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

<b>MISSION STATEMENT</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>STATEMENT OF PURPOSES</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>VOLUNTEER STAFF – 2014/2015</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>STAFF – 2014/2015</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>PRESIDENT’S REPORT</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE OFFICER’S REPORT</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>COUNSELLORS’ REPORTS</b> .....	<b>6</b>
JOAN CAVANAGH .....	6
JENNY HYLAND .....	7
KAYE JONES .....	8
NATALIE WARING .....	9
<b>COUNSELLING STATISTICS</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>SUPPORT WORKER’S REPORT</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>MANAGER OF VOLUNTEER’S REPORT</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>FINANCIAL COUNSELLOR’S REPORT</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>FINANCIAL COUNSELLING STATISTICS</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<b>CRANBOURNE ‘INFOLINK’ REPORT</b> .....	<b>17</b>
<b>NO INTEREST LOANS SCHEME (NILS)</b> .....	<b>18</b>
<b>BACK TO SCHOOL SUPPORT PROGRAM</b> .....	<b>19</b>
<b>SERVICES</b> .....	<b>20</b>
<b>FINANCIAL STATEMENTS</b> .....	<b>22</b>
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE – GENERAL ACCOUNT .....	22
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE – EMERGENCY RELIEF ACCOUNT .....	24
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION .....	25
FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS CERTIFICATION .....	26
AUDITOR’S REPORT .....	27
<b>EMERGENCY RELIEF</b> .....	<b>28</b>
<b>STATISTICS</b> .....	<b>28</b>
STATISTICS GRAPH .....	29
<b>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</b> .....	<b>30</b>

# MISSION STATEMENT

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

# STATEMENT OF PURPOSES

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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

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<b>President:</b>	Kevin Bradford			
<b>Vice-President:</b>	Debbie Dodd			
<b>Secretary:</b>	Di Mainwaring			
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Karen Peters			
<b>Ordinary Members:</b>	Ros Larke	Julie Jones	John Lewis	Margaret O'Callaghan
	Susan Hopkins	Louise Morgan	Jan Bland	

## VOLUNTEER STAFF – 2014/2015

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Anne Haylock	Susan Arlove	Victor Mason
Susan Hopkins	Dawn Wilson	Tony Dickenson
Judy Symons	Anne Manning	Barry Leeds
George Nicol	Karen Peters	Lyn Leeds
Ros Larke	Lucinda Quick	Anne McKeown
Di Mainwaring	Teena Porra	Carmen Pedrola
Gabriele Lindemann	Nicole Hampton	Julie Hutchings
Richard Nichols	Shelley McVicar	Preety Sharma
Rosemary Code	Mary Raj	Susan Adam (Data)
Julie Jones	Millie Payten	Jenny McGowan (Reception)
Sharon Mills	Charmaine Ellard	Simon Walliker (Reception)
Una McGuire	Sue Owen	Joyce Bharat (Reception)

## STAFF – 2014/2015

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<b>Executive Officer:</b>	Leanne Petrides
<b>Administration Manager:</b>	Cathy Willmott
<b>Manager of Volunteers:</b>	Michael Cooney
<b>Counsellor:</b>	Joan Cavanagh
<b>Counsellor:</b>	Jenny Hyland
<b>Counsellor:</b>	Kaye Jones
<b>Child &amp; Adolescent Counsellor:</b>	Natalie Waring
<b>Financial Counsellor:</b>	Robyn Shepherd-Murdoch
<b>Support Worker:</b>	Doug Thompson
<b>Advocacy Support Worker:</b>	Jenny McGowan
<b>CfC Outreach Information:</b>	Ann Proud
<b>CfC Outreach Information:</b>	Flora Warren

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

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## ***Kevin Bradford***



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.

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, as it has enabled CISS to be able to continue to provide excellent services to the Casey South community.

The last financial year brought many changes to the way our Emergency Relief program was both funded and delivered, with the Federal Government opening up a competitive tender process, and CISS introducing a new process to support clients. The Committee of Management engaged in much discussion about the way forward for the agency and how to approach the process with the best outcomes of the community in mind. To that end, CISS decided to relinquish the option of tendering an individual submission, and to partner with our sister agency, Casey North CISS. On behalf of the Committee, I would like to personally thank the two Executive Officers - Leanne Petrides and Susan Magee for the incredible and professional effort they put in to write the tender, and successfully secure funding to deliver emergency relief services to the entire City of Casey.

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 workers, the financial counsellor, the Manager of Volunteers, and our outreach team all work well in conjunction with the volunteers to provide a holistic service to clients in need.

I would like to thank Leanne for 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 also like to thank our Administration Manager, Cathy Willmott, who acted as Executive Officer during Leanne's three months Long Service Leave and who did a magnificent job.

I must make special mention of George Nicol who was a volunteer at CISS for thirteen years and who retired after celebrating his 80th birthday with us in 2015. George was a valued member of staff who served CISS in a number of roles including President, interviewer, and as a data entry volunteer. I would like to formally acknowledge and thank George for his wonderful contribution to CISS.

Finally, I would like to thank the members of the Committee of Management who work so hard to benefit the organisation and the entire community, and I look forward to the next year working with CISS.



***Kevin Bradford***

President

# EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

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## *Leanne Petrides*



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

I was fortunate enough to enjoy three months of Long Service Leave at the end of 2014, leaving the agency in excellent hands with Cathy Willmott acting as Executive Officer for that period, and the team working together, as always, as a well oiled machine. It was a wonderful opportunity for me to take a break and return refreshed and reinvigorated to tackle the challenges of 2015.

As I discussed in last year's report, the federal government introduced an open, competitive tender process for emergency relief (ER) funding to be undertaken in July 2014. After much deliberation, the Committee of Management decided to enter into a consortium with our sister agency – Casey North Community Information & Support Service - to tender for ER funding for the entire City of Casey. Two smaller agencies joined the ER consortium, and Susan Magee and I worked almost exclusively on the submissions for a month. I am pleased to report that our tender was successful and the consortium received funding to deliver emergency relief services to the whole municipality until 30 June 2017. A smaller partnership between our two agencies, again with Casey North CISS as the lead agency, was successful in gaining Financial Counselling funding for both the City of Casey and the Shire of Cardinia. While our consortium submissions were successful, the tender process itself was particularly challenging, with some agencies being completely defunded, others losing up to fifty percent of their funding, and relationships between some agencies becoming extremely strained as they were forced into competition for reduced funding. Additionally, there was a period of significant unrest and fear, with the outcomes being announced immediately before Christmas, and the final funding amount being announced in March 2015. While it is satisfying to be recognised for our high quality submissions and history as excellent service providers, we now must contend with an overall funding decrease in one of the fastest growing municipalities in Victoria, while continuing to deliver high quality services to those in our community who are the most vulnerable.

One of the most positive outcomes of the tender process was the strengthened relationship with CNCISS, and we will 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.

CISS utilised the latter half of 2014 to review the way we deliver crisis support services, and designed a new, flexible model of service delivery. More time is now spent with each client, assessing their income and expenditure, as well as the presenting issues, in order to prioritise the support we can provide. As a result, we have seen a decrease in the number of clients coming in on a regular basis for food vouchers, and an increase in the number of clients accessing our service with more complex issues that require holistic, multifaceted solutions. This model ensures that we remain responsive, 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.

Our volunteers have enthusiastically adopted the new model, and as ever, are the mainstay and driving force of our organisation. CISS volunteers contributed over 8,400 unpaid hours to the

community over the year, to an estimated value of over \$220,000. They have adapted to a changing and challenging environment, and continue to deliver a huge range of services across our community. They respond professionally, and with empathy and respect, to individuals and families in crisis, and I would like to officially recognise their continuing hard work and support of me, the agency, and of course, our community.

As well as delivering services to the community, CISS is committed to networking locally and at a broader level, and as such a large part of my role involves representing agency and client issues in a variety of settings and to a broad cross section of stakeholders.

I would like to formally recognise and thank the many funding bodies, stakeholders and community members that support our organisation – in particular, the City of Casey - including the 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 long term financial contribution to, and support of, our Back to School and Education Assistance programs. Our newly refunded partnership with Windermere's Communities for Children program will continue to strengthen referral pathways and support options for our clients with some exciting plans in place for the next two years.

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.

As always, I would like to extend my thanks and congratulations to the Committee of Management for their constant hard work and support. I would also like to take the opportunity to recognise our counselling team – Joan, Jenny, Kaye, Natalie, and our financial counsellor, Robyn. We welcomed Sue Deland from Casey North CISS to our team, and she delivers financial counselling from CISS each Monday. In addition, I would like to acknowledge Doug and Jenny, our Support Workers; 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.

With a solid team on board, and funding assured for two more years, I look forward to a period of consolidation, as well as opportunities to create and meet new challenges within our local community.

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

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## *Joan Cavanagh*



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

This financial year I took three months Long Service Leave, and returned to work in March rejuvenated to face the challenges of my work at CISS.

I speak for the entire counselling team when I say that we continue to appreciate our work environment and the harmonious and positive team in which we work. We always appreciate how much easier this makes the task of working with vulnerable and often traumatised clients.

## **Professional Development**

This year I had the privilege of attending a three day retreat in Palm Cove, Queensland run by Dr Paul Gibney. The theme of the retreat was "On Being a Therapist". I have to say this was one of the most rewarding experiences of my professional life, and I returned feeling energised and validated.

As a counselling team, we continue to attend Relationships Australia on a bi-monthly basis for professional supervision with Mario Avice and Susie Nguyen. The peer supervision held each Tuesday with Jenny and Kaye 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**

My statistics represent only nine months of the year because of Long Service Leave taken. During the last financial year, 181(245) counselling sessions were provided to 105 (172) clients.

We no longer keep statistics on the income status of clients and this change has been welcomed due to the often intrusive nature of gathering this data.

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. These appointments are classified as "no-shows". There does appear to be a correlation between general non-attendance and school holidays.

## **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, the Volunteers and the Committee of Management for their roles in providing a supportive environment and for creating and sustaining a positive working environment. This year has also seen the welcome addition of Sue Deland from Casey North CISS to her Financial Counselling role, and Jenny McGowan to the role of Support Worker. Thanks also to SECASA and WAYSS who share our building and provide assistance and support to CISS

*Joan Cavanagh*

Counsellor



## ***Jenny Hyland***



I am pleased to present my eleventh annual report to the AGM of the Cranbourne Information and Support Service. I work on Tuesdays and Wednesdays for a total of 15 hours per week. I continue to enjoy the challenge of working with a diverse range of issues presented by clients from a variety of backgrounds. As always, I value the opportunity to learn from my clients, and to develop my knowledge, skills and abilities as a counsellor.

### **Professional Development**

I no longer receive regular private supervision, as my supervisor retired in November 2014. I received one session of private supervision from Lea Rose, a clinical psychologist specialising in work with death and dying. This was necessary and helpful in assisting my work with a long term client who was diagnosed with a terminal brain tumour in January 2015. I continue to attend group supervision with my counselling colleagues at Relationships Australia at two monthly intervals. Susie Nguyen continues to provide us with excellent opportunities for learning, discussion and reflection regarding our cases, and for self reflection and development.

During the past financial year I have attended the following professional development sessions:

- A Practitioner's Guide to Care of the Dying – Louis Gamino, Australian Centre for Grief & Bereavement
- Buddhism and the Way to Psychological Health: The Kindness of Treating Ourselves Better, Maitripa Centre
- Mindfulness in Action, Maitripa Centre

### **Statistics**

During the last financial year, 265 counselling sessions were provided to 211 clients. Compared to 2014 the number of males attending counselling has increased. This is due to a doubling in the number of couples seeking counselling. There has also been an increase in the number of sessions not kept, including cancellations and first time clients not turning up (“no shows”). The number of consultations has almost tripled due to some very difficult cases and the need for additional input from other professionals.

### **Acknowledgements**

As always CISS is a fantastic workplace to be part of. Leanne leads by example, encouraging a dynamic where everyone is valued and treated equally with consideration and respect. It is a privilege to be part of the counselling team from which I gain an enormous amount of support, knowledge and honing of skills. I would like to thank Cathy for her help and support with issues arising during Leanne's absence, and also with my technology needs. Last but not least I would like to thank the Committee of Management for their ongoing support of the counsellors' professional development needs and for their generosity in terms of the time they give to ensuring that CISS is a happy and efficiently run organisation.

***Jenny Hyland***

Counsellor

## ***Kaye Jones***



I am pleased to present my ninth annual report to the AGM of the Cranbourne Information and Support Service. I have been working 20 hours per week over Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, and for a few months I worked 21 hours per week.

### **Professional Development**

I have attended some excellent workshops and seminars over the past year. A one-day seminar on Working with Adult Survivors of Complex Trauma was run by ASCA, two half-day seminars on Challenging Behaviour in Children and Autism Spectrum in Adolescents & Young Adults were run by ELMHS, and I spent another full day at a Generation Next seminar which was well worth attending.

We have continued group supervision at Relationships Australia and I find this to be a very positive experience.

### **Statistics**

In this past financial year, 305 counselling sessions were provided to 190 clients.

### **Acknowledgements**

While our work at times can be very difficult and emotionally draining, it is made much easier by having an excellent team of workers, both paid staff and volunteers, who provide us with support and information as required. We deal with a wide variety of clients with diverse issues and most of our clients have quite complex issues and needs. I have always worked closely with Robyn, and now Jenny (McGowan), in referring clients for support with financial problems.

I would again like to express my gratitude to Leanne, Cathy, Michael, Jenny, Joan, Doug, Robyn, Ann, Flora, Jenny Mc, all the extraordinary CISS volunteers and the Committee of Management for their ongoing support.

As always, I feel privileged to be a part of the CISS team and, in particular, the CISS counselling team.

***Kaye Jones***

Counsellor

## ***Natalie Waring***



It is with pleasure that I present my first annual report to the AGM of the Cranbourne Information and Support Service. I am employed on a part time basis, as a Child and Adolescent Counsellor, after initially working in a volunteer capacity for a year. My role has provided me with the opportunity to work with a vast array of clients ranging from the ages of seven to sixteen. Although at times I find my role to be challenging, I feel privileged to walk alongside my clients and to also observe their strength of character as they face the challenges life has dealt.

### **Professional Development**

To further enhance my knowledge base and skill set I regularly attend Professional Development Seminars and Workshops and feel this is an important part of my role as a Counsellor.

This year I have attended the following:

- Therapeutic Approaches to Assessment and Treatment in High Risk Families, where the mother has a serious Mental Illness. Presented by Early in Life Mental Health Service, (ELMS).
- Time to Reflect – Responding to the Mental Health needs of Students. Presented by Stepping Stones/ Monash Health.
- Psychosis in Adolescents and Youth. Presented by Early in Life Mental Health Service, (ELMS).
- Effects of Trauma on Children and Adolescents. Presented by Eastern Health.
- STORM –Suicide Risk Assessment, Short Term Safety Planning and Postvention. Presented by Headspace.

In addition to the above, I regularly attend Clinical Supervision in both an individual and group capacity at Relationships Australia. I find attending Clinical Supervision to be an integral part of my professional growth and development as a Counsellor.

### **Statistics**

During the last financial year, 71 counselling sessions were provided to 17 clients, 13 of whom were new clients. The majority of clients are internal referrals made by the other Counsellors and members of staff. The number of clients attending counselling sessions presented with varying issues, with the majority requiring long term support.

### **Acknowledgements**

I would like to express my gratitude to Leanne for providing me with the opportunity to begin at CISS as a volunteer Counsellor and for her continued efforts to obtain the necessary funding to have me come on board as an official employee.

Thank you to the Counselling Team: Jenny, Joan, Kaye and Doug for welcoming me onboard and providing a supportive and enriching working environment. Thank you also goes to Cathy for her administrative support, and to the amazing team of Staff and Volunteers.

## ***Natalie Waring***

Child and Adolescent Counsellor

# COUNSELLING STATISTICS

(Statistics in parentheses provide a comparison to the 2013/14 financial year)

Sessions by location	Number	Percentage %
Cranbourne	535 (650)	72 (75)
Within catchment	123 (98)	16 (11)
Outside catchment	91 (120)	12 (14)
TOTAL	749 (868)	100 (100)

Client Contacts by Type	Number	Percentage %
Males	120 (114)	24 (20)
Females	386 (454)	76 (80)
Couple/Family sessions	114 (93)	
Total number of clients	506 (568)	100 (100)

## Issues raised: -

1. Addictions: Drug, Alcohol, Gambling
2. Personal, Inc. Anxiety & Depression
3. Relationship Issues
4. Separation / Divorce
5. Family Issues
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

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## *Doug Thompson*



This year has been a challenging and rewarding year for me at CISS. During the year, I reduced my hours from three days to two days per week, and my statistics reflect that decrease in hours, rather than a reduction in demand for services. I welcome our new Advocacy Support worker, Jenny McGowan, who has picked up some of the case management support role over the two days per week that she works.

This year has seen an increase in the number of clients seeking assistance with medical procedures that are not covered, or are only partly covered, by Medicare, and I welcome the introduction of our “Flexible Support Options” approach that enables us to respond more holistically to these, and other needs.

My role has seen a continuation of assistance being provided to asylum seekers living in the community, mainly from the Hampton Park area. In fact, the number of asylum seekers attending our agency increased fourfold when compared to the previous year.

I again assisted Julie with the CISS Back to School (BTS) Support Program, and when that program was finished for the season, I continued to see clients through our Educational Assistance Program (EAP).

Again, part of my role has been providing support, assistance and guidance to our volunteers in the Emergency Relief area. This year there has been an increase in the number of new volunteers and it has been my pleasure to assist their integration.

## Statistics (July 2014 – June 2015)

### Clients

	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	TOTAL
CLIENTS	26	-	24	24	17	14	12	13	12	13	10	9	174
SESSIONS	33	-	26	25	18	14	13	14	14	13	11	9	190
NEW	12	-	14	17	7	6	6	4	6	5	6	5	88

### Location

	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	TOTAL
3977	18	-	20	21	14	9	10	11	5	10	5	2	125
3976	7	-	4	1	2	4	1	1	6	1	3	4	34
OTHER	1	-	0	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	3	15

### Gender

	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	TOTAL
MALE	16	-	13	11	6	7	4	7	6	6	7	7	90
FEMALE	10	-	11	13	11	7	8	6	6	7	3	2	84

## Issues Presented

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

- Medical expenses (not covered by Medicare)
- Utility Bills
- Housing - Rental arrears / Moving costs
- Centrelink issues
- Fines
- Education expenses
- Transport / Petrol

## Counselling

This year has seen a continuation of the provision of counselling to our clients. The main issues presented during counselling sessions were grief and bereavement, and men's anger management. I also provided couples relationship counselling and single sessions for men, in conjunction with the other CISS counsellors.

I continue to provide counselling at the Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement on a volunteer basis.

## Professional Development

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

- CISVic case worker's meetings
- The Salvation Army
- Professional supervision
- Group supervision
- Australian Centre for Grief & Bereavement
- TATRA - Ronald Potter-Efron - "Healing the Angry Brain"
- TATRA - David Kessler - "Complicated Grief, Divorce, and Break Up"
- Uniting Care Mental Health Community Support Services
- EACH - Narre Warren

## Counselling Statistics (July 2014 - June 2015)

	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	TOTAL
CLIENTS	13	-	5	5	4	2	2	4	10	2	7	5	59
SESSIONS	16	-	5	5	5	5	2	9	12	3	8	7	77

I look forward to another year of providing counselling and casework services to the Casey South community.

***Doug Thompson***

Support Worker/Counsellor

# MANAGER OF VOLUNTEER'S REPORT

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## *Michael Cooney*



It is with great pleasure that I present my report for inclusion in the 2015 AGM Cranbourne Information and Support Service (CISS) Report.

I continue to enjoy being an active part of an amazing team of committed staff and volunteers. It is through their commitment and dedication that CISS continues to deliver an exceptional service and support to its clients.

## **Workplace Activities and Initiatives**

The main focus of my activities continues to be on recruitment, training and retention of volunteers. In my last Annual Report, I stated that we had encountered many challenges throughout the year, not least an increased level of attrition. As a consequence of the decline in the number of volunteers, it generated an intensive recruitment campaign involving media releases in the local Leader Newspaper, local radio announcements and presentations at a variety of Cranbourne based organisations and retirement centres.

Following the recruitment campaign, CISS enjoyed a healthy response from people interested in becoming a volunteer. We managed to recruit eight volunteers who have since attended the mandatory six week volunteer training course. I am pleased to advise that these volunteers have successfully completed the volunteer training program, and are now actively working within the agency.

To further enhance our services to the community and the agency, I have expanded our volunteer base to include additional support in the main reception area and in the data input room. This has been achieved by increasing my volunteer network to include Max Employment Agency, Dandenong Valley Job Support, and Max Solutions. Through this network, I am able to source additional suitable volunteers who can provide back-up support to a range of activities located within CISS.

I continue to update the Committee of Management on the current status of the health and well being of our volunteers both in terms of current numbers and of any identified training initiatives.

Along with managing the day to day volunteer matters, I continue to provide support by inputting data into the data collection program. From a coordinators perspective, 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 identifying any perceived training issues.

In very exciting news - during National Volunteer Week in May, CISS was awarded the Casey 2015 Volunteer Organisation Award. There was a large number of excellent nominees in this category, and it is a wonderful recognition of the incredible work that the CISS volunteers and staff undertake within our community.

## **Professional Development**

Since the last AGM Report, I have completed a mandatory Vocational Education Training Unit necessary to maintain my role as a Trainer and Assessor. This unit is known as Language, Literacy and Numeracy and forms part of the overall Training and Assessment Qualification. This qualification is necessary for me to train potential volunteers attracted to this industry.

I am pleased to confirm that following my success in forming a South East Coordinator of Volunteers group, the group has continued to meet on a quarterly basis. The group comprises Coordinators/Managers across the South East Region including Dandenong, Frankston, Narre Warren, Hastings, Springvale, Rosebud, Chelsea, and Cranbourne. The purpose of this group is to exchange working knowledge and initiatives in all matters encompassing volunteers.

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 three in-house training sessions involving staff and volunteers. These meetings focused on the revised CISS Assessment Process and associated paperwork and, more recently, the introduction of the DSS data collection program.

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 Centre.

On Monday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2015, I organised a CISS Management and Volunteer meeting to update the volunteers on the overall performance and future developments of our services. The meeting took place at the Cranbourne Salvation Army Centre and was well attended by staff and volunteers alike. A range of activities took place during the meeting which were well received and enjoyed by all participants.

## **Future Development**

I will continue to explore a variety of initiatives in ensuring on-going recruitment of suitable volunteers to the agency, and focus my energies on improved service delivery and associated quality control of the DSS data collection program. I look forward to continuing to work with the CISS team to explore innovative ways to provide relevant ongoing services to our community.

***Michael Cooney***

Manager of Volunteers



# FINANCIAL COUNSELLOR'S REPORT

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## ***Robyn Shepherd-Murdoch***



I am pleased to present my 2014-2015 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 the Casey South area. In particular, there has been an increase in the number of clients seeking support with applications for Temporary or Permanent Disability (TPD) through their superannuation funds. We have successfully achieved positive outcomes for many clients, to a value of approximately 1.5 million dollars.

In addition to internal CISS referrals, I continue to receive referrals from a range of other agencies in our area, including WAYSS, DHS Centrelink, Windermere, Oz Child, Department of Human Services, Office of Housing, SECASA, Monash Health (formerly the Cranbourne Integrated Care Centre), New Hope, Connections, Good Shepherd, Money Help, and the Southern Migrant and Refugee Centre.

## **Professional Development**

All Financial Counsellors in Victoria must be members of the Financial & Consumer Rights Council (FCRC), and I have maintained my membership as per requirements. In addition, FCRC requires all Financial Counsellors to complete 15 points of Professional Development each year.

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

- “Jump the Hoops” - Case Management Issues
- Defective cars
- Consumer Action Law
- Fines
- New legal codes (Telecommunications, FOS, Ombudsman, etc)
- ASIC
- Bankruptcy
- Working with clients dealing with gambling issues

## **Supervision**

Financial Counsellors are required to participate in a minimum of ten hours per year of professional supervision with another Financial Counsellor. I have been undertaking supervision 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

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## New Clients

	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	TOTAL
NEW CLIENTS	11	10	15	17	10	14	9	11	3	5	13	11	129
MULTIPLE SESSIONS	8	10	18	7	19	15	0	10	20	10	9	6	132
WALK-IN	0	1	2	0	2	1	0	3	3	1	4	0	17

## Location

	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	TOTAL
CRANBOURNE	13	13	31	16	26	21	7	20	15	12	20	12	206
HAMPTON PARK	3	6	3	6	5	4	0	0	4	3	3	3	40
OTHER	3	2	1	2	0	5	2	4	7	1	3	2	31

## Issues

	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	TOTAL
DEBT MANAGEMENT	6	7	4	17	14	10	4	20	20	12	22	11	147
CREDIT CARD	16	14	18	19	17	21	8	16	23	15	18	14	199
ADVOCACY	15	13	29	14	21	26	7	7	21	11	12	9	185
BANKRUPTCY	3	4	9	4	6	8	3	5	5	4	8	7	66
MORTGAGE	4	6	7	6	7	10	4	7	4	5	6	6	72
CAR LOAN	2	1	4	11	11	11	2	6	11	2	9	3	73
PHONE	2	17	30	22	16	21	0	14	16	8	15	9	170
UTILITIES	12	17	29	16	17	21	4	15	15	6	17	9	178
U.R.G.	6	5	8	8	8	15	1	4	7	3	8	4	77
CENTRELINK	8	1	5	6	14	17	1	6	13	4	6	2	83
FINES	4	6	12	7	8	8	0	3	7	5	12	5	77
TAX DEBT	0	0	5	1	2	4	0	1	2	1	3	1	20
RATES	4	2	4	6	4	10	0	3	3	2	5	3	46
SUPER TPD	0	0	3	2	1	6	1	3	5	3	3	3	30
ACCESS SUPER	2	2	4	4	3	7	1	8	1	2	1	4	39
FAMILY ISSUES	8	7	17	11	8	13	1	9	9	9	4	7	103
MENTAL HEALTH	5	6	8	9	7	14	0	5	6	4	9	6	79

# CRANBOURNE 'INFOLINK' REPORT

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## ***Ann Proud & Flora Warren***



We are pleased to present our ninth Communities for Children “Infolink” report since the inception of this program in 2006. Our weekly outreach visits to various locations in the community have continued to ensure immediate access to information, support, and referral services by Cranbourne residents in places they already go. The major renovations to the Cranbourne Park Shopping Centre meant we were restricted from visiting for a large portion of the year, however, we began an

outreach service to Monash Health (formerly the Cranbourne Integrated Care Centre) which has proved fruitful.

The first half of the financial year saw the Infolink Team attend several invaluable Professional Development Series which will enable us to provide extra assistance to our outreach client base and to the Cranbourne community in general. The training we attended included: “Early in Life Mental Health Services”, presented by Monash Health, “Growing Diverse Communities - Refugee Children’s Health & Wellbeing Forum” at the City of Greater Dandenong, and “Mental Health & Wellbeing of Young People” held at the Melbourne Town Hall.

After some uncertainty for a few months, the closing of the financial year saw the Infolink team receive confirmation that the project would be refunded for a further two years. With this welcome news, Infolink intends to continue to deliver the current outreach programs which include - Monash Health, the ADHD Support Group, Department of Human Services (Centrelink) Cranbourne, Cranbourne Park Shopping Centre (formerly Centro), as well as visits to local Childcare Centres and Kindergartens. The team also maintains a presence at the Koorie Play Group at the Cranbourne Library.

Prior to the funding announcement, and in anticipation of the funding being extended, we negotiated with Cranbourne Bunnings, and with Cranbourne Park Shopping Centre to provide ongoing outreach from both of those sites, as well as continuing with our regular outreach services. The team will also be looking to partner with key agencies and workers to engage with culturally and linguistically diverse communities in the Cranbourne area, to examine what other support services can be offered.

The year ahead will bring many new challenges which are most exciting. We wish to express our gratitude to Leanne Petrides, Executive Officer and all the staff at CISS for their continual support. We would also like to acknowledge Therese Mulcahy and the rest of the team from Windermere for their support during the year, and we look forward to once again providing assistance to the Cranbourne community through the CISS office.

***Ann Proud & Flora Warren***

# No Interest Loans Scheme (NILS)

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## *Sharon Mills & Julie Jones*



The Cranbourne and District No Interest Loans Scheme (NILS) continues to be a very successful and much needed program for our area. The program has seen increased loan numbers over the financial year, and approved twenty-nine loans to the value of \$21,187.

In addition, the program had 29 loans that were repaid during the year, with a number of clients being approved for their second or third loans. The program has an excellent repayment rate, with only one client listed as

“Currently Not Paying”, and that client currently renegotiating payment arrangements.

The Cranbourne and District NILS was recognised by Good Shepherd Microfinance, at the Victorian NILS Forum in October 2014, with an award for the “Fastest Growing New Program”. This came as a complete surprise, and both CISS staff and the staff from our NILS program feel incredibly honoured by this award.

Enquiries continue to be made for basic and essential household items, and there has been an increased number of enquiries for Laptops and iPads for students educational needs. Enquiries for car repairs and registrations have also increased, but with stricter criteria and requirements we have not been able to proceed with many of these applications.

Sharon Mills joined NILS early in the financial year, which has strengthened and enhanced the team, and we hope to be able to extend the days of operation during the next financial year.

The NILS team would like to thank the CISS staff and volunteers for all the hard work they put in to supporting our program, and we look forward to another productive year ahead with our colleagues, and the community.

## *Julie Jones & Sharon Mills*

Cranbourne and District NILS



*Cathy Willmott*

# Back to School Support Program

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The Cranbourne Information & Support Service Inc (CISS) delivered its tenth Back to School (BTS) Support program between the months of November 2014 and March 2015, in conjunction with The Salvation Army Cranbourne Community Support Services.

The Salvation Army Cranbourne Community Support Services contributed \$17,000 towards this program, \$10,000 was received from Zagames in Berwick, and \$27,000 was received from The R.E. Ross Trust. Some funds were also provisioned for use towards educational needs that present throughout the year and which are distributed through our Education Assistance Program (EAP).

The money was used to assist families in the Casey South community and the suburb of Doveton with the cost of sending children to school. Items covered included non-voluntary fees, textbooks, stationery, shoes, uniforms, and sundry items like lunch-boxes and bags, etc.

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

A total of 220 families were assisted during this financial year, consisting of 439 children (110 being VCE students), attending 70 schools.

Many of the families assisted were very confused as to what allowances were still being provided, and our role in helping to make families aware that the Federal Government's "School Kids Bonus" was still being paid, was a great relief for a number of our clients.

When we started this program ten years ago, the majority of our funds for uniforms were provided as vouchers for stores such as Kmart, Big W, and Best & Less. In more recent years, those funds and more go to PSW as the main supplier of uniforms, with more public Primary and Secondary Schools introducing the "Logo" high end uniforms.

Families in our area continue to struggle and are totally overwhelmed with the increasing costs of our "free" education. Often added to the cost of books, stationery and fees now are Laptops, Tablets or iPads, depending on the school and year level. Unfortunately some parents do not have the facility or income to plan ahead and often leave it until just before, or even after the children go back to school before planning to purchase the necessary items. Many parents are unable to purchase these items outright and are forced to access other programs we deliver such as the No Interest Loans Scheme (NILS).

Another new trend presenting to our agency is the increased number of people requesting assistance with tertiary education costs including TAFE and university.

I look forward to working with Doug Thompson, as well as the rest of the staff and volunteers, to deliver this much-needed program in the next financial year.

***Julie Jones***

Back to School Program Coordinator

# SERVICES

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## 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.

An outreach information and referral service is provided by our Infolink team (funded through Windermere's Communities for Children) at key sites in Cranbourne including the Department of Human Services (Centrelink), Monash Health, and the Cranbourne Park Shopping Centre.

## 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 support services. 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 & Financial Counselling

A generalist crisis intervention and counselling program is provided, with individual, couple, and family counselling offered. We also have a child and adolescent counsellor who works at CISS on a fortnightly basis. A financial counselling service is provided from Wednesday to Friday, and an outreach financial counselling service is provided by Casey North CISS each Monday. The CISS counselling services are 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, hardship grant applications, 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 continue to work collaboratively to ensure that this flexible and effective form of micro-finance is available across the entire municipality of Casey.

## **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.

## **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.



*Leanne Petrides, Mayor Cr Mick Morland, Susan Arlove & Ros Larke*

## **CITY OF CASEY VOLUNTEER AWARDS 2015**

# FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

For the Year Ended 30 June 2015

### GENERAL ACCOUNT

	<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>
<b><u>INCOME</u></b>		
Grants		
- City of Casey	408,609	397,307
- City of Casey ER Network	3,068	2,908
- FaHCSIA/DSS Mark II Grant	-	4,317
- Bendigo Bank Community Grant	455	455
- VG Funding Administration	450	100
- Vulnerable Groups	11,977	12,654
- Minor Capital Works	909	-
- Windermere Cfc Infolink	67,806	72,697
Donations	-	10,000
COC – Cfc Public Forum	-	2,500
Interest Received	8,957	2,374
Miscellaneous Income	7,000	1,548
Training Fees Received	-	1,922
Other Reimbursements	152	-
NILS Sustainability Vic Admin	90	-
Services Provided	1,070	350
Room Hire	23,420	24,053
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>543,962</b>	<b>533,184</b>
<b><u>EXPENDITURE</u></b>		
AGM Expenses	240	260
Audit Fees	730	720
Bank Charges & F I D etc	136	235
Computer Software/Hardware	3,043	55
Computer/Printer Supplies and Maintenance	15,741	1,348
Depreciation Expenses	2,075	2,566
Electricity	12,040	13,975
Employment Expenses	310,766	322,143
EOFY Expense Provisions	12,000	-
Equipment and Furniture	355	335
FaHCSIA/DSS Mark II Grant	-	4,317
Insurance	1,812	3,369
Making Ends Meet Guide	-	1,880



Miscellaneous	1,491	1,704
Other Training	1,991	3,121
Postage	961	681
Photocopying, Printing and Stationery	5,932	7,143
Provision for Annual Leave	31,145	29,307
Provision for Long Service Leave	9,012	23,126
Provision for Financial Counsellor	-	10,000
Repairs and Maintenance	3,412	463
Resources	647	350
Security	831	680
Social Committee Expenses	9	26
Staff Amenities	1,709	1,654
Stay on Track Guide	-	1,113
Subscriptions & Memberships	3,736	3,533
Telephone, email and Webpage	10,721	11,343
Term Deposit Interest	6,452	-
Vulnerable Groups	11,977	12,654
Water Charges	219	-
Windermere CfC Infolink Expenses	62,050	62,959
Windermere General Expenses	7,000	-
Workcover	7,084	6,458
Windermere CfC Family Fun Day	-	2,499
TOTAL EXPENSES	<u>525,316</u>	<u>533,363</u>
OPERATING SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	<u>18,647</u>	<u>(179)</u>

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE**

**For the Year Ended 30 June 2015**

**EMERGENCY RELIEF FUNDING ACCOUNT**

	<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>
<b><u>INCOME</u></b>		
Back to School Program		
R.E. Ross Trust	27,000	26,400
Salvation Army Funding	17,000	17,000
Zagames	10,000	-
Other BTS Donations	1,000	-
Donations	26,275	26,877
Grant - City of Casey	10,000	10,000
CNCISS Emergency Relief Grant	64,462	-
Grant - DSS		
Emergency Relief	98,404	129,839
Vulnerable Groups	4,501	5,000
Interest Received	8,462	8,354
Voided Stale Cheques	-	1,046
Adjustment for prior years	1,763	-
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>268,866</b>	<b>224,515</b>
<b><u>EXPENDITURE</u></b>		
Back to School Program		
R.E. Ross Trust	27,000	26,400
Salvation Army Funding	17,000	17,000
Zagames Berwick	10,000	-
Other BTS Donations	1,000	-
Bank Fees	113	20
Christmas/Holiday Expenses	1,136	3,209
CISS Vouchers	8,001	10,500
CNCISS Emergency Relief Grant	64,463	-
Client Relief – Chemist	7,514	7,278
Client Relief - Supplies	12,972	13,362
Client Relief - Day Pass	1,989	1,989
Discretionary Fund Expenses	3,000	5,000
Discretionary Fund Expenses - Medical	3,000	3,000
Hunt Club Community Grant	990	-
Miscellaneous	274	576
Nappies	370	487
Relief Food Vouchers	98,408	129,840
Swags for Homeless	-	1,928
Vulnerable Groups Vouchers	4,497	5,000
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>261,726</b>	<b>225,590</b>
<b>OPERATING SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)</b>	<b>7,140</b>	<b>(1,075)</b>

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION****For the Year Ended 30 June 2015**

<b><u>CURRENT ASSETS</u></b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>
Bendigo General Operating	15,351	9,380
Bendigo General Investment	82,295	70,124
Bendigo Debit Card	167	391
Bendigo Term Deposit	200,000	200,000
Bendigo ER Operating	7,181	2,076
Bendigo ER Investment	70,839	50,101
CBA General Account	-	2,554
Online Account	-	218
Petty Cash	100	100
Undeposited Funds	2,806	90
Trade Debtors	(2,121)	914
Cranbourne & District NILS	13,999	13,212
Furniture & Fixtures at Cost	26,471	26,471
Computers – Cost	10,135	10,135
Furniture & Equipment/Computers	14,148	14,148
Less Accumulated Depreciation	(39,629)	(37,554)
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>401,741</b>	<b>362,359</b>
<b><u>CURRENT LIABILITIES</u></b>		
Clearing Account	(861)	(90)
Cheques Paid Exceeding Cash	-	325
Education Assistance Program	13,334	8,776
FaHCSIA/DSS Mark II Grant	1,038	1,038
Flexible Support Options	26,268	-
Key Deposits	150	150
Minor Capital Works	-	1,000
NAB – NILS Overdraft Account	13,999	13,212
Office Refurbishment	5,000	-
Provision for Annual Leave	45,832	41,118
Provision for Database Development	10,000	-
Provision for Defibrillator	1,500	-
Provision for Discretionary Fund	-	5,107
Provision for Equipment Replacement	5,005	8,305
Provision for Financial Counselling	10,000	10,000
Provision for Long Service Leave	73,720	88,013
Provision for Medical Discretionary	-	3,204
Provision for Public Computer	1,000	-
Provision for Security	2,000	-
Provision for Signage	2,000	-
Provision for Staff Backfill	1,135	12,544
Provision for Staff Training	1,493	2,002
PAYG Tax Payable	4,142	3,987
GST Payable Control	14,612	18,473
Superannuation Payable	1,143	375
Trade Creditors	6,172	3,417
Windermere CfC Infolink Grant	5,779	2,267
Windermere CfC Provision for ER Support	551	5,000
Windermere CfC Provision for Resources	1,407	4,600
Windermere Well Suited Program	4,865	4,865
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>251,282</b>	<b>237,687</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>150,459</b>	<b>124,672</b>
<b><u>MEMBERS' FUNDS</u></b>		
Accumulated Surplus/(Deficit)	154,403	128,616
Historical Balancing	(3,944)	(3,944)
<b>TOTAL MEMBERS' FUNDS</b>	<b>150,459</b>	<b>124,672</b>

## 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.**

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

We, Sue Hopkins and ROSALIND LARKE,

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: Sue Hopkins

Dated: 21.9.15

Signed: R Larke

Dated: 21/9/15

**CRANBOURNE INFORMATION & SUPPORT SERVICE INC.**

(CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU)

**AUDITOR'S REPORT**  
**For the Year Ended 30th June 2015**

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 2015. 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 2015. 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 2015.

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 2015 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 2015. 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.



Anthony Karadeas FIPA  
Insight Accounting Pty Ltd  
Shop 5, Corner High & Sladen Streets  
CRANBOURNE, VIC 3977  
September 8, 2015

# EMERGENCY RELIEF

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Many of our clients are dealing with complex personal and financial issues that dominate their lives. Approximately 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. CISS introduced a Flexible Support Options (FSO) program from 1 January 2015, and interviewers now undertake a more thorough interview and assessment process with clients. This ensures that time is taken to engage with the person, and prioritise the issue/s that are most negatively impacting on their lives. Workers can then respond more flexibly with support that may not have previously been offered (e.g., bill payments, or vouchers for clothing, phones, and household goods). This has led to fewer clients attending for a “band-aid”, small, regular voucher, and more clients being supported in a more meaningful way. Our expenditure has not reduced, but is more targeted, and it is hoped that the new approach results in long-term change rather than temporary solutions.

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, Hampton Park Baptist Church, Blue Hills Retirement Village, and various other donors listed on the final page of the report.

During the last financial year, over \$200,000 was distributed in emergency relief on almost 6,000 occasions, and a further \$43,655 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, and many other groups and individuals. We also received and distributed over \$7,000 of Telstra vouchers.

## STATISTICS

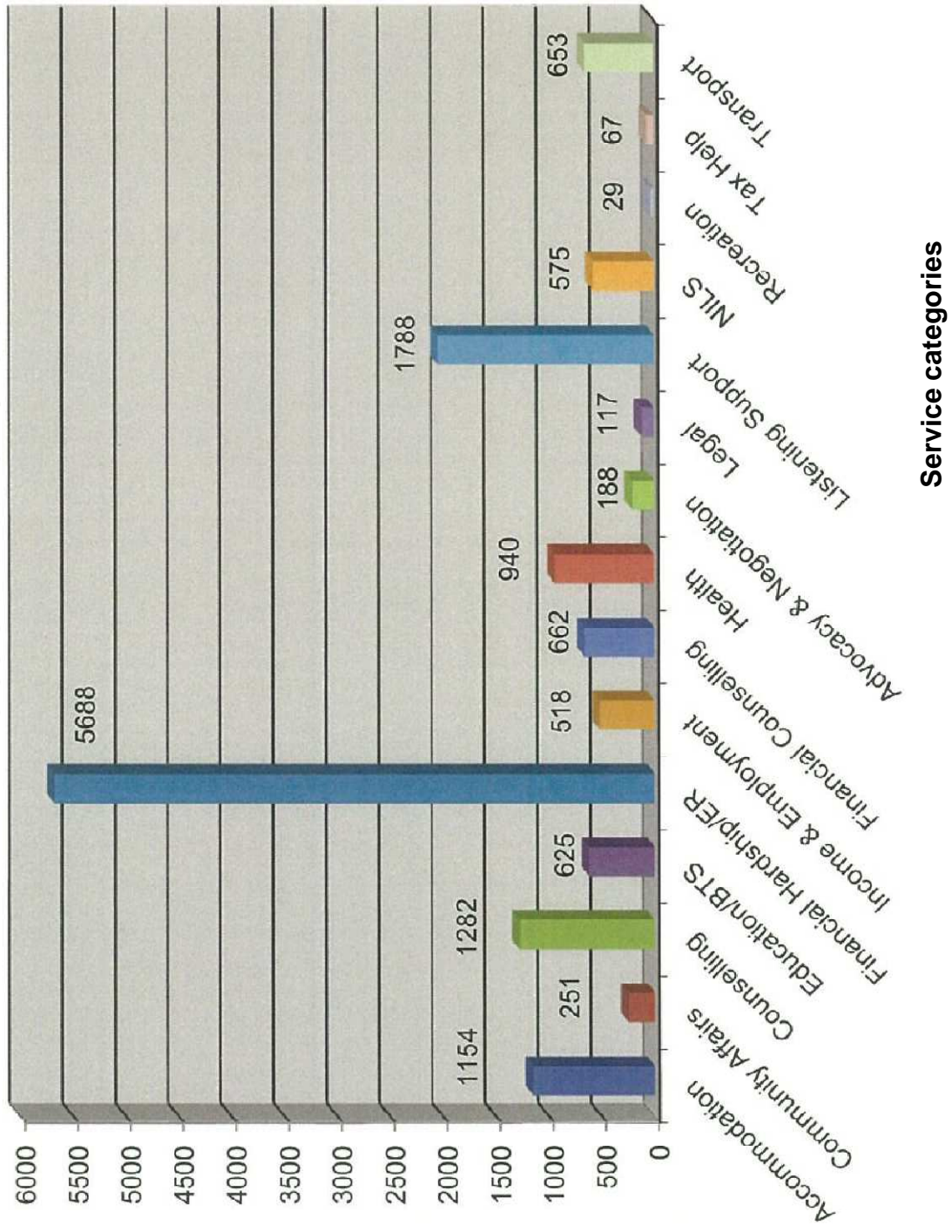
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Please see the following graph for a breakdown of service provision.

We provided some type of assistance on nearly 15,000 occasions to over 7,200 households. As usual, emergency relief was our most utilised service, with almost 5,700 requests for assistance. This translated to a total of 7,115 adults and 6,534 children who benefited in some way from our services. The majority (66%) of people attending our agency were aged between 25-59 years of age.

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 2014 / 2015



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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**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)  
Casey North Community Information & Support Service Inc  
Community Information & Support Victoria  
Windermere Child & Family Services  
The Salvation Army Cranbourne Support Services  
The R.E. Ross Trust  
Zagames Berwick  
Magistrates' Court of Victoria  
Turning Point Church  
Techdeck Computer Service  
Cranbourne Top Shop Chemmart 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
- Blue Hills Retirement Village
- Bruce Greenland
- Cranbourne West Primary School
- Hampton Park Baptist Church
- Ulysses Club Shearwaters Branch
- Robin and Arnis Dzedins
- Blue Sky Real Estate
- Winepress Berwick AOG
- Anonymous donations