



# Mornington Community Information and Support Centre Inc Annual Report 2022



## About Us

The Mornington Community Information and Support Centre Inc (the Centre) is a community based, incorporated association (Reg. No. A0005512Y) and registered charity (ABN 91 482 731 425). It is a Public Benevolent Institution (PBI), endorsed as a Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) and is Income Tax Exempt.

It was established at a public meeting held on the 24th November 1982. It opened for business on 31st October 1983 from premises at 320 Main St Mornington and became an incorporated association on the 28th June, 1985. The official opening of extensions to the Centre, was held on 3rd September 1999.

The Centre is governed by an independent, volunteer committee of management. It is managed and operated by 2 full-time staff, 8 part-time staff and over 130 volunteers. We are an active member of Community Information and Support Victoria (CISVic), the state peak organisation representing community information and support centres.

Over the years, the Centre has sought to develop services in response to community needs. It provides general and tourist information to residents and visitors to Mornington and support services to residents in Mornington, Mt Martha, Mt Eliza and Moorooduc.

It is able to do this as a consequence of an annual grant from the Mornington Peninsula Shire Council, which significantly contributes to our operating costs and also through the provision and maintenance of the Centre's building. The balance of our funds is generated from a range of grants, community donations and our own fund-raising.

**Motto:** Community Supporting Community

**Vision:** To meet the information and support needs of residents of the Mornington area and visitors to the Peninsula

**Mission 1:** The MCISC provides information, referral and support services to assist people experiencing personal and financial difficulties in Mornington, Mt Martha, Mt Eliza and Moorooduc.

**Mission 2:** The MCISC provides visitor information services to residents of the local area and visitors to the Mornington Peninsula.

**Values:** Respect – Integrity – Compassion – Generosity

## Committee of Management

<b>President</b>	Allan Fleer	Community Representative
<b>Vice President</b>		
<b>Secretary</b>	Fran Chambers	MCISC Volunteer
<b>Treasurer</b>	John Costello	MCISC Volunteer
<b>Committee Members</b>	Susan Clavin	Community Representative
	Sam Stidston	Community Representative
	John Riddle	MCISC Volunteer
	Pam Hall	Community Representative

## Staff

Stuart Davis-Meehan – until March 22 Ben Smith - from May 22	Manager
Yvonne Anderson	Senior Case Worker/Assistant Manager
Amanda Race-Lyons	Volunteer Coordinator
Shelley Dewerson-Bogue	Fresh Food Co-ordinator
Sabine Willert-Dettmer	Tourism Coordinator
Louise Smith	Tourism Officer
Betty Lotscher	Tourism Officer
Liz Kerslake	Case Worker
Jo Kidder	Case Worker/Ranch Motel Co-ordinator
Geordie Baker	Motel Assistant

Roberta Orton	Café Coordinator
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### Life Members

Neil Taylor	Stephen Alty	John Riddle
Brian and Margaret Goding	Margaret McArthur	Merna Brydon
Dale Lee	Helga Gross	

### President's Report 2022

Again, I would like to start my report by thanking all of those involved with the Centre for their ongoing support throughout what has been another COVID19 impacted year. Thanks for your commitment and flexibility as we responded quickly and appropriately to the changing circumstances we faced on almost a weekly basis.

I also wish to thank the Committee members for their expertise and the input they have continued to provide to the Committee and the governance of the Centre. In particular, my thanks to Monica Baber (Vice President until her resignation in February), Fran Chambers (Secretary) and John Costello (Treasurer) for their tireless work and contributions as part of the Executive. My special thanks also to Susan Clavin, John Riddle, Sam Stidston, Robin Cooper (who retired in October) and Pam Hall (who joined us at the same time) for their very valuable contributions and support. It has been a privilege to Chair the meetings with a group so competent, passionate, and involved in all areas of the Centre's activities. Robin's very significant contribution to the Centre over a 15 year period needs to be noted and his passing earlier this year was a very sad occasion for all of us.

Our staff and volunteers have again displayed their ability to initiate and implement the directional shifts required to meet the increasingly complex needs of the community we serve. While the number of clients did drop in the early stages of the pandemic, they have increased dramatically in the past year. It is a real credit to our staff and all of our volunteers that they have coped with the pressures under which they have had to operate. A huge thanks to our staff: Stuart/Ben, Yvonne, Amanda, Shelley, Jo, Liz, Geordie, Roberta, Sabine, Louise, and Betty. As you would all know, our Manager, Stuart, resigned during the year and was very ably replaced by our new Chief Executive Officer, Ben, in May. I would also like to recognise our voluntary Op Shop Coordinator, Pauline, and her deputy, Kay, for the amazing contribution they make to the smooth running of the shop. The introduction of the Meeting Room café during the year has also been a huge success and is a great credit to Roberta and her team of volunteers.

A special thank you to the Mornington Peninsula Shire Council, which provides the funding that largely covers our wage and salary costs, as well as providing and maintaining the physical facility from which



we operate. Other ongoing government assistance comes from the Federal Department of Social Services and the Victorian Department of Families, Fairness and Housing. I would also like to give our special and heartfelt thanks to the many other very valued supporters who provide ongoing or intermittent contributions by way of financial or 'in kind' donations.

With the continued assistance of all of our supporters we have managed to maintain a strong financial position. Accordingly, in the Committee's opinion, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Association will continue to be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

The committee held regular monthly management meetings throughout the year, many of them utilising Zoom. This has enabled us to continue to concentrate on our governance responsibilities, which is of course, our primary reason for existing.

As always, my thanks to all our supporters, staff, and volunteers for having made this another very successful year of service to our local community in spite of the continuing very difficult circumstances within which we have had to operate!

**Allan Fleer – President**

## **CEO's Report**

The privilege of leading this organisation brings with it the legacy of humble leaders who have gone before me. Given I was appointed to this role in the second last month of the financial year, much of this report precedes me, and is the result of the wonderful leadership of both Stuart and Yvonne, and credit of our success is theirs to bear. Stuart departed the organisation in March after nearly 5 years at the helm. His compassionate, visionary leadership is on display in the positive culture resident here, and I thank him for leaving MCISC in a wonderful position for the beginning of my custodianship. Yvonne took the wheel for several months in which there was a large increase in support need and change. She stepped up and is to be congratulated for her leadership.

I give thanks to the Committee of Management for their support and active participation in providing good governance to the organisation. In a short period of time, I have gathered that this organisation is supported by a vast array of highly skilled and dedicated people, which is an enormous asset not to be taken for granted.

During 2021-22, our programs continued to be affected by COVID19, and yet so much was achieved. I thank all our staff and volunteers for their understanding and for adapting to the various conditions we operated within.

## **Programs**

It gives me great pleasure to provide the following reports on each of our programs:

- [Community Information Services](#)

A mainstay of our programs is the provision of free, unbiased, confidential and comprehensive community information and referral services which assist people to be aware of their rights and responsibilities and the services available to them.

While the Centre building was closed to the public throughout all the lockdowns and beyond, we continued to provide services to our clients either by phone or outside the building. During FY22 the community experienced three different periods of Covid lockdown, totaling 90 days.

In 2021/22 we responded to 26,580 enquiries from local residents and visitors to the Centre.

- Visitor Information Services

MCISC normally provides visitor information services from our Centre at 320 Main St Mornington from 9am – 5pm Monday to Friday and 10am – 4pm on Saturdays and 10am – 2pm on Sundays.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic had a serious impact on our ability to provide these services. As part of Metropolitan Melbourne, we were subject to 2 lockdowns for a total of 90 days during the year and regularly changing restrictions. During all lockdowns our Visitor Information Services were closed at weekends. Of course, COVID-19 restrictions also seriously impacted the tourism industry and the resulting decrease in the number of visitors seeking assistance. On the remaining days that we were open, we assisted 897 visitors, an average of 4 people per day.

As a result of the impact of COVID-19 in 2021, we waived our membership fees for the second year running.

Our dedicated and professional team consisted of Sabine Willert-Dettmer, our Tourism Co-ordinator and Louise Smith and Betty Lotscher, our Tourism Officers and a group of equally committed tourism volunteers. I thank them for their commitment during what was a very stop/start, difficult year.

Thanks also to the Mornington Peninsula Shire for their ongoing financial support.

At the end of the financial year, the decision was made to cease operating tourism information services at the end of the 2022 calendar year. For a number of reasons, including budget impact, tourism numbers, and the growing support needs of the community, the future of tourism information here at MCISC was considered better placed elsewhere. We thank the volunteers for 40 years of service to the community in this regard.

- Emergency Relief

Emergency Relief is the program that we provide to those people in our community who are in need of short-term financial or material assistance. This often manifests itself as food insecurity and financial stress.

The main forms of assistance provided included:

- Food from our pantry
- Food vouchers
- Telstra vouchers

- Myki cards
- Pharmacy assistance
- Clothing from our Op Shop
- Financial assistance

This year we were able to assist 635 families and individuals on 3,165 occasions through our emergency relief program. Over a 5-day week, throughout the year, this equates to 12 occasions of service per day – double the previous year. The value of the assistance provided to clients through this program was \$185,726, again, double last year.

Our main source of funding from this program is from the Federal Department of Social Services, through a consortium arrangement we have with CISVic.

This program is largely provided by trained Community Support Worker volunteers and I would like to thank them all for their compassion and respect.

- Case Work

Our Emergency Relief and some other programs are overseen and supported by our full time Community Support Worker and senior case worker, Yvonne Anderson. Yvonne offers one-on-one client support to those clients with more complex needs and who may require more intensive longer-term assistance and support. Yvonne also provides an enormous amount of operational support across all our programs. Having worked with the organisation now for some 10 years, Yvonne is often our go-to person for information about the Centre's operations and also provides support to the Manager, in the role of Assistant Manager. Her commitment to the Centre was exemplified by her amazing contribution throughout the pandemic.

In July 2021 we employed 2 part time Case Workers, Jo Kidder and Liz Kerlake, to increase our capacity to provide case work support to our clients with more complex needs. This addition enabled us to increase our service levels, and manage the dramatic increase in need in the community. Our thanks go to all these case workers for their care and diligence throughout the year.

- Fresh Food

Our Fresh Food Program is part of our commitment to address food insecurity in the local area and we have been successfully providing this program since 2013.

The program consists of distributing rescued fresh food from a variety of sources:

- SecondBite – SecondBite exists to provide access to fresh, nutritious food for people in need across Australia. It does this by stopping good food from going to waste and giving it to people in need, free of charge, through 841 food programs across the country, including the MCISC Fresh Food Program.

Every Thursday morning, they delivered several pallets of rescued food from Coles stores. Normally this program was run from St Mark's Uniting Church and people were able to choose the food they wanted. However, during lockdowns the service was run from our Centre and

people received food parcels packed by a small but committed team of volunteers. We averaged over 60 people per week during this year.

- **SecondBite** – we started collecting food through the SecondBite Community Connect program in March 2021. Our volunteers were able to collect rescued food from the Coles stores at Mornington Central and Mornington Tyabb Rd, every Tuesday and Thursday. Thanks to our small group of volunteers who collect this food.
- **Oz Harvest** – Oz Harvest rescues food from Woolworths stores. We get a delivery every Friday afternoon and distribute it from the Centre to a range of local families in need. This is also part of our emergency relief program. On average we provide food parcels to 29 families per week, equating to 98 individuals within those families. Having provided this service over 49 weeks of the year, that equates to 4802 mouths fed during the year.

A huge thanks to Shelley for her management of the Fresh Food Program throughout the year and for her never-ending ability to pivot when needed.

- **The Meeting Room Café**

In March 2021 the café opened its doors, with the purpose of reducing isolation and increasing community support for those in the surrounding area. This vision has delivered huge success, with 5,266 services (coffees, teas, toasties, and cakes!) to the end of June. The atmosphere in the Centre has been transformed by this unique program, and it's a credit to Roberta and Stuart for their foresight and commitment to providing a place of safety and community for people. Thanks also to the Mornington Peninsula Shire for its contribution in getting the café up and running. Also a big thanks to Gail for stepping into the breach for many months during Roberta's absence.

- **Bread Program**

Thanks to Baker's Delight at Mornington Central for continuing to support our bread program. Thanks also to our team of volunteers who, rain, hail or shine, collected left over bread from Baker's Delights every Monday night and bagged it up ready for distribution.

Thanks also to the Village Bakery who started providing us with left over bread products and to Bridgette for collecting it and delivering it to us each weekday afternoon.

You realise how much of a staple bread is for so many in our community when you see how much bread we give away each week. Throughout the year, our estimates are that approximately 100 loaves were distributed each day.

- **Needle and Syringe Program**

We continued to operate a fixed site needle and syringe program, as part of the harm minimization programs for the Victorian State Government.

Throughout the year we installed an external bin for the return of containers. As a result, no used needles need to be brought into the Centre building. We increased the bin collection from fortnightly to weekly in November 2021, and now we are seeing collections twice a week.



A big thanks to Merna for keeping supplies up to date throughout the year.

- NILS (No Interest Loan Scheme)

Our partnership with The Good Shepherd Microfinance No Interest Loan Scheme, provides safe, fair and affordable loans for people on low incomes. We operate as the Client Service Provider, promoting the scheme and conducting the initial loan interviews, gathering the necessary information and authorities and submitting the application to our partners at The Cockatoo and Hills NILS, as Loan Providers, for assessment and hopefully, approval.

In 2021/22, we were able to secure a total of 51 loans –up 100% from last year, with a total amount loaned of over \$33,000. A big thank you to Liz for her sterling efforts here!

- Ranch Motel

The Ranch has continued to provide affordable, short to medium term motel accommodation for people experiencing homelessness on the Peninsula, with low care needs. We were offered the Motel for free (with us covering all on-costs) for an indeterminate time until a development occurs. The Motel includes 8 single ensuite rooms (\$150/wk), 3 double ensuite rooms (\$200/wk) and 2 self-contained units (\$250/wk). We developed a model of service from scratch, which included employing a part time Co-ordinator (Jo Kidder) and a part time Assistant (Geordie Baker) and working closely with housing workers from Salvo Care in Rosebud, Southern Peninsula Community Support and Western Port Community Support. To date The Ranch housed 97 guests, 38 single men, 24 single women, 5 families, 4 single mums, 11 children, and 5 couples. The majority of these clients have moved to other forms of more secure accommodation.

Whilst we rely mostly on room fees for income, we would like to acknowledge funds received from the following donors: Mornington Peninsula Shire and a small number of generous individual donors. Significant repair and maintenance costs continue to be a burden on the service. A huge thanks to Jo and Kara for their management and coordination of the Ranch.

- Christmas Lunch

Thanks again to Paula Creek from Functioning Together, who once again organised our Christmas Lunch for local residents who would otherwise have been alone on Christmas Day. Thanks also to our band of volunteers for stepping up at the last minute.

We held the event at The Studio, adjacent to the Peninsula Community Theatre for the first time and we had a total of 76 attendees, including 40 guests and 36 volunteers. 83% of guests were from Mornington, 12% from Mt Martha and 5% from Mt Eliza.

Thanks go to the Mornington Peninsula Shire, Mt Martha Community Bank and Functioning Together for their continued sponsorship of the event and to the following donors: Bakers Delight Bentons Square, BoatShed Cheese, Coles – Mornington and Mornington Tyabb Rd, Foxeys Hangout, Jetty Rd Brewery, Lions Club Mornington, Moorooduc Estate, Mt Martha Primary School, Peninsula Cookie House, Terry White Chemist Bentons Square, The Chocolate Kettle, The Party Place, Trofeo Estate, Woolworths Mornington and Zonta Mornington.

- Christmas Hampers  
This was the fourth year we ran the Mornington Christmas Hamper Program, with the support of Mornington St Vincent de Paul. Our hampers consist of Woolworths Vouchers - single (\$50), couple (\$70) and family (\$90) and a small Christmas treat. We gifted a total of \$17,200 worth of vouchers to 280 households – a huge effort!
- Christmas Present Program  
This year we ran the Christmas Present Room program from The Mornington Park Pavilion. We were able to provide gifts for over 250 children. Thanks to the Mornington Peninsula Shire Youth Services, Nicholas Lynch and Mornington Rotary for their support.
- Christmas Train Ride  
A huge shout out to Mornington Rotary for organising a ride for families on the Mornington Railway from Mornington to Moorooduc and return. This year 50 adults and 30 children attended.
- Tax Help  
Only 20 clients this year compared to 24 last year and 76 the year before. A huge thanks to our Tax Help volunteers John Riddle, Dale Lee and Mark Duque.
- Meals Program  
The Meals Program transitioned last financial year to the provision of frozen, precooked meals. We are grateful to Toorak College for their continued support in this area, now having cooked well over 1000 meals for the community.
- Beach End Op Shop  
We continued to operate our own social enterprise in the form of the Beach End Op Shop. Unfortunately, the operation of the Op Shop was significantly impacted by the lockdown restrictions associated with COVID-19. The shop is run by volunteers and supports our local community in a number of very significant ways.

Firstly, it provides a service to those people living in our community who cannot afford to buy new clothes. Secondly, it provides an opportunity for people to recycle their unwanted clothes. In an era, internationally, when we have such a problem with clothing waste going to landfill, this is important work. You can usually drop off unwanted clothes and bric-a-brac to the Op Shop, during opening hours. Thirdly, it provides much needed financial support for the MCISC. In 2021/22, it raised some \$5,925 towards the operation of the Centre, slightly up from last year but a great effort considering the retail market.

Lastly, it provides an opportunity for local people to contribute to the local community through volunteering and how lucky we are to have such a wonderful group of volunteers, who give of their time and talents on a weekly basis, to staff the Op Shop and support the work of the MCISC. A huge thank you to Pauline Farnsworth, our voluntary Op Shop Manager and her offsider, Kay Crellin, for steering the Op Shop ship throughout the year. They had to manage introducing procedures to address COVID-19 and regular opening and closing due to lockdowns.

## Non-Program Activities

- Volunteers

We ended the year with 136 official volunteers, although not all were active at the end of the year due to COVID. We enlisted 47 new volunteers during the year and lost 20 for various reasons from active service. At the time of writing this report, we are experiencing a significant resurgence of volunteers, and we are processing approximately 10 enquires a week for new volunteers. Thanks to Amanda for her work coordinating this enormous team, one of the largest in the CISVIC family.

- EAP and Counselling

Barbara Barber has provided our case workers and support staff with counselling and EAP services voluntarily for many years, for which we are so grateful. Her support and care for our people to ensure they have a safe and confidential place to debrief, along with supporting our clients at no cost is a credit to her.

- Power Bonus

Our advocacy of this program continues to make an impact in the community, and our estimates are that well over 500 households were assisted in applying for the \$250 bonus.

- Community Development

A major aim of our organisation is to actively contribute to and advocate on behalf of our local community. We did this through membership of the following groups:

- Peninsula Voice
- Community and Church Leaders Network
- Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee
- Mornington Peninsula Triple A Housing Committee
- Mornington Peninsula Housing Network
- Mornington Peninsula Health and Wellbeing Committee

## Gratitude and Acknowledgement

We would like to acknowledge some of the individuals, groups and businesses who supported MCISC throughout the year. We thank you on behalf of the Centre and our community.

Amcal Chemist, Mornington	Telstra	Mornington and Mount Martha Rotary Clubs
Toni Kaye Foundation	Knit One Give One (KOGO)	Salvation Army, Mornington
Bakers Delight, Mornington	Neil Taylor	Second Bite
Brian and Margaret Goding	Mornington Library – Food for Fines	Share the Dignity

Bunnings, Mornington	Mornington Peninsula Shire Council	Home Ground
Volpinos Restaurant	Mornington Village Shopping Centre	St Mark's Uniting Church, Mornington
Community Information & Support Victoria (CISVic)	Mount Martha Community Bank	George Makool
Martin Scanlon	R.M. Ansett Trust	St Vincent de Paul, Mornington
Department of Families Fairness and Housing	Village Bakery	Mornington Community House
DSS	Mums Supporting Families in Need	Morven Manor Knitters
Functioning Together	Mornington Lions Club	Individual donors
Peninsula Voice	All our Volunteers	Stidston Warren Lawyers
Good Shepherd Microfinance	Oz Harvest	Woolworths, Bentons Square
Toorak College	Pets of the Homeless	Back Pack Beds