

43rd ANNUAL REPORT 2021 – 2022



Western Port Community Support Inc.

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Western Port Community Support acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we live, work, and help others. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and those emerging of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nations.



Chairperson's Report

It has been my privilege to be the Chair of the Board of Western Port Community Support for the past year and I am pleased to present my report to this Annual General Meeting. The year has been a busy and successful one despite the ongoing COVID issues. However, it is probably fair to say that it has also been a challenging year for both staff and volunteers. There is no doubt that the ongoing pandemic continues to exacerbate the difficulties faced by many of those who come to WPCS for help. Both staff and volunteers have worked professionally and well together to support those who have sought help over the past year.

On behalf of us all I would like to thank both staff and volunteers for their ongoing work.

There has needed to be some flexibility in the staff team over the past 12 months, but Executive Officer Georgia Hourn has enabled this to be done with the minimum of disruption. Laura Sutton has had a challenging year as case manager for the Housing and Homelessness Program and Laura Baxter continues to work in the vital area of family support. Both these programs are vital parts of WPCS's outreach to the local community and both case workers are doing a wonderful job.

The work done by Liz Maher and Byron Croft as Volunteer/Office Support staff is also vital. The Board of Western Port Community Support would not be able to offer many of the things that are core parts of their vision without the work of many volunteers. It is a priority of the Board to make sure these volunteers are offered appropriate training and are supported in the work they do. Byron has also coordinated the Fresh Food Program that has seen increasing numbers of people coming for food assistance.

None of this work would be possible without the generous support of many benefactors. The sponsors provide both financial and practical support such as food for the pantry. Some are substantial gifts, and some are smaller donations. We acknowledge the support that we have received from all our sponsors and thank them very much for both past and ongoing support.

The Board has continued to work well together over the last year. We are very aware of our obligations as a Board of Management. We have met our statutory reporting requirements and our accounts are appropriately audited as is required for any incorporated body. I would like to especially thank the Financial Administrative Officer, John Fraser and Secretary, Alison Smyrk for the essential work they do.

Last but not least, I would like to acknowledge and thank Wendy and Peter Gamble for the work they have done over many years co-ordinating the community Christmas Lunch program. This year they will have a well-earned day off on Christmas Day!

Thank you all for attending the AGM today.

Christine Barren

Executive Officer's Report

What a year we have had! Another twelve months of COVID, lockdowns, mandates, vaccinations, isolation, masks, and rapid tests, but the most prevailing reflection would be the generous spirit of our community and agency supporters at a time of extreme adversity. There is no doubt we have witnessed one of the most demanding years in our agency's history, yet we have remained steadfast in the comprehensive support we have provided to our community, only made possible due to the solidarity of our wonderful team of volunteers and staff.

The uncertainty and chaos of 2021 unfortunately has continued on into 2022 and our working lives here at WPCS have been filled with ongoing challenges and variations as we navigated the intricacies of lockdowns and restrictions. Our agency continued to remain open to anyone in need throughout the lockdowns and consequently we were one of the only support agencies providing immediate, face to face Emergency Relief, home delivery and outreach. I wish to thank the volunteers and staff who continued to work in the agency every day, adhering to all the safety precautions we had put in place, and above all committed to supporting our vulnerable community when all other services had retreated.

The Mornington Peninsula Shire continues to provide an annual grant to our agency, and I want to acknowledge their ongoing support and contribution, without which our doors would not be open. The grant received covers the organisation's recurrent operational expenses and is instrumental to the continued sustainability of the agency. The additional COVID funding the Shire provided to our agency must also be recognised and was instrumental in funding the additional staff and crisis support essential during this difficult period. Throughout the past financial year, we continued to work collaboratively with the Shire to provide much needed food support to those in COVID isolation. With the Shire staff referring community members through to us for support, we were able to swiftly and immediately deliver food and meals to individuals and families who were confined to their homes due to COVID.

Our Housing and Homelessness Program again proved to be an extremely busy program as we witnessed a further increase in the demand for support. The program seeks to address the rising issue of housing insecurity and homelessness by way of providing intensive case management to clients, aiming to increase their housing security and overall stability. This form of flexible individualised housing support was previously unavailable across the Westernport region before the program began in 2019 and in the past 3 years the program has case managed over 560 clients. In the past twelve months the program case worker has case managed 172 new clients, equating to 3 new clients each week presenting as homeless or at high risk of homelessness, and who require this critical intensive support. These high numbers of clients in housing crisis exemplify the real need for this imperative housing support in the Westernport region, without which hundreds in our local community would have nowhere to turn for help. I want to thank our Housing Support Case Worker, Laura Sutton, for her passion, dedication, expertise, and commitment to finding suitable, affordable housing solutions for those clients who have all but given up hope in ever securing stable accommodation. As the housing crisis worsens Laura's role has only become more complex and challenging, yet her calm and determined nature has ensured so many have someone they can rely on for personalised, comprehensive housing support.

Our thanks must be extended to both the MP Foundation for their ongoing financial support towards our Housing Program, and our new community partners Community Bank Balnarring and District, Bendigo Bank. Bendigo Bank Balnarring have been wonderfully supportive community partners and both donor's financial contributions have ensured our housing program can deliver support 4 days per week for the next 12 months.

Our gratitude also goes to the MP Foundation for providing the connection with the Learning Guarantee Program which has facilitated the link for our Family Support Program to work collaboratively with our local schools. Laura Baxter delivers this crucial support to the families and children who have been identified as more vulnerable and needing ongoing case managed care.

The Family Support Program is one of our most essential programs and whilst it has been running for a number of years the program has been expanded in more recent years in response to community need. Gratitude must be extended to the Ross Trust for the financial support they have committed to the program for the next three years, demonstrating their support for the need of a specialist caseworker who is providing the critical outreach interventions in the local Primary and Secondary schools. Laura Baxter is our Family Support Case Worker and has been instrumental in the success and expansion of this integral program. Laura brings unwavering commitment and compassion, often going above and beyond for her clients, and for this dedication we are immensely grateful.

Over the past 6 months the Fresh Food Program, as part of our regular Emergency Relief Program, has been expanded significantly. Food relief agencies Secondbite and Oz Harvest have increased their provision to our agency and consequently we have become the receiving hub where external agencies are able to collect food to supplement their own welfare programs. As a response to this increase in available fresh food we now have "Fresh Food Tuesday" where over 70 to 80 clients attend each Tuesday afternoon to pick up an abundance of fruit, vegetables, meat, bread, and various grocery items. This program has been a wonderful means to further connect with our community and offers support to anyone experiencing food insecurity. The program also facilitates opportunity for social interaction and a relaxed forum where additional personal supports can be accessed. The volunteers who work on the program must be applauded and thanked as they work tirelessly each Tuesday to unpack the truck and sort the produce ready for collection. Each week I hear roars of laughter and friendly banter coming from the volunteers as they work together to serve our most vulnerable.

Our peak body CISVic have again been a fantastic support throughout the past financial year, and particularly throughout the COVID 19 period. As inaugural members of the CISVic Consortium we have been fortunate to utilise their support and up to date information as we navigated the intricacies of the pandemic. The advocacy and promotion undertaken by CISVic has increased the profile of all CISVic agencies within the Emergency Relief/welfare sector and helped to ensure long term sustainability and permanence. We thank CISVic for their focus in this area and appreciate the Federal Government's recognition financially of the fantastic work all CISVic agencies undertake in the welfare sector.

The generosity of our agency partners and philanthropic funders has again been overwhelming and without this financial support the service delivery of our Emergency Relief Program, and all additional programs, would most certainly have been compromised.

Whilst we are extremely fortunate to be supported by the previously mentioned trusts and larger funding bodies, I want to also recognise and thank the many benefactors who generously donate, either financially or in kind, to our various agency programs. A comprehensive list of those individuals, church groups, trusts, and businesses has been included in this annual report and we wish to extend a heartfelt thank you to each and every one. We also have many wonderful new donors who have cooked meals, knitted rugs and beanies, donated funds for various programs, conducted weekly grocery and toiletry drives, and overall helped us enormously to maintain the high level of support needed in these increasingly trying times. This year has again exposed an amazing level of compassion and generosity in our community and for this we are ever grateful.

In closing I want to thank my amazing colleagues, both staff and volunteers, for their support and dedication over the past twelve months. The year has been nothing but challenging in many ways but as a team we have done an almighty job to support our community and make a positive influence on those experiencing disadvantage or in crisis. The camaraderie, team spirit, laughter and support make it a pleasure for me to lead such an amazing team of people.

Thank you must go to the Board of Management for their continued support and trust in the management team. We have introduced many new changes over the past year and having the backing of the Board throughout these demanding times has ensured smooth operation and implementation.

I continue to be blessed to work for such a fantastic organisation and am thankful to be able to lead the agency into the next year with optimism and the opportunity to make positive change.

Georgia Hourn

Executive Officer

Aims and Principles

Western Port Community Support aims to provide comprehensive Emergency Relief and personal support to people experiencing crisis as the result of disadvantage, poverty, unemployment, low income, sickness, poor mental health, misfortune, or disability. The agency aims to assist clients to work towards the achievement of stability and security through the provision of its services and programs. These programs include short term Emergency relief and material aid, Family Support Program, Housing and Homelessness Program, Education Assistance Program, Fresh Food Program, essential medication, transport assistance, NILS, Tax Help program, annual Christmas Giving program, together with links and referrals to other local community services.

Statement of Purpose

Western Port Community Support was established for the purpose to provide Emergency Relief to the disadvantaged, homeless, frail, and vulnerable within the community for the direct relief of poverty, sickness, suffering, distress, misfortune, destitution, and helplessness.

- ▶ This Emergency Relief includes food parcels, food vouchers, pharmacy assistance, fuel vouchers, housing support, various material goods and assistance with utility, rental, and medical expenses.
- ▶ To provide a comprehensive support, information, and advocacy service.
- ▶ To co-operate closely with social and community welfare organisations with a view to collaborate where appropriate and utilize available services most effectively.

Western Port Community Support Values

Respect – Show respect for other people’s privacy, belongings, competency, different viewpoints, philosophies, religion, gender, lifestyle, ethnic origin, physical ability, and beliefs

Integrity – Showing respect to both co-workers and clients with appropriate conversation and empathy

Loyalty – To maintain an attitude and commitment to the agency and the WPCS Team

Harmony – Help create a pleasing atmosphere and interaction between the volunteers and clients by encouraging positive and effective communication

Teamwork – Working towards a common goal or set of objectives with the understanding of the importance of assisting in developing agency policies geared towards encouraging team growth at the agency

Improvement – Help create a pleasing atmosphere and interaction between the volunteers and clients by encouraging positive and effective communication

The Organisation as of June 2022

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Chairperson: Rev. Christine Barren

Vice Chairperson: Colin Duggan

Secretary: Alison Smyrk

Financial Administrative Officer: John Fraser

GENERAL BOARD MEMBERS

Rachel Cook

Peter Gamble

Wendy Gamble

Mairi Stewart

Mollie Warren

STAFF

Executive Officer: Georgia Hourn

**Admin Assistant/ Volunteer Support:
Elizabeth Maher**

Family Support Case Worker: Laura Baxter

Housing Support Case Worker: Laura Sutton

**Food Program Coordinator/Volunteer Support:
Byron Croft**

The Organisation as of June 2022

VOLUNTEERS

Reception

Pauline Allen	Angela Francis	Abi Standing	Kim Trigg (student)
Denise Copeland	Lloyd Majors	Ruth Weitering	Meriem Khabazi
Robyn Elks	Jan D'Amicis	Katharine Goschnick	(student)

Support Workers

Alison Smyrk	Wendy Gamble	Rachel Cook	Caroline Matheson
Mollie Warren	Mairi Stewart	Janet Round	Ruth Weitering
Rhonda MacDonald	Rozanne Baptist	Katharine Goschnick	

Other Volunteer Support Roles

Alison Smyrk – NILS/Wills/Fresh food program	Lorna Angier – Pantry/Fresh food program
Wendy Gamble - Tax Help/NILS	June King – Pantry/Fresh food program
Mairi Stewart – Education program	Dorothy Paxton – Second Bite/Fresh food program
Rhonda MacDonald- Counselling	Lucian D'Amicis – Fresh food program
John Copeland – Second Bite/Fresh food program	Jan D'Amicis – Fresh food program
Denise Copeland – Fresh food program	Therese Howard – Fresh food program
Hank Weitering – Second Bite/Fresh food program	Ross Smyrk – Fresh food program
Ruth Weitering – Second Bite/Fresh food program	Michael Round – Fresh food program
	Luigi Gaiardo – Fresh food program
	Peter Gamble – Fresh food program

Retired Volunteers

Mollie Warren	Ros Robertson	Ken Hart
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Mollie's retirement cake



Janet hanging out in reception



Alison trying out a donated knitted hat



The Organisation as of June 2022

Volunteers Hours

	<u>Total Hours</u>		<u>Total Hours</u>
Reception	1700	Administration	400
Community Support Worker	3500	Covid Response Food Program & Delivery	2100
Fresh food program/ Oz Harvest/Second Bite	1800	NILS	200
Board	500	Tax	70
Pantry	100	Professional Development	60
Education Program	260	Christmas Program	1200
TOTAL VOLUNTEER HOURS = 11,890			

Recognition of Service

Active Volunteers over 10 years of service

Mollie Warren	43 years - 1979	Lorna Angier	15 years - 2007
Janet Round	18 years - 2004	Rhonda MacDonald	14 years - 2008
Caroline Mathieson	17 years - 2005	Alison Smyrk	13 years - 2009
June King	15 years - 2007	Angela Francis	12 years - 2010

Life Members

Mollie Warren	Awarded in 2007	Margaret Mildern	Awarded in 2015
Jean Hodgson	Awarded in 2007	Babs Peters	Awarded in 2019

Western Port Community Support Funding Partnerships

Western Port Community Support would like to extend its appreciation and gratitude to all the generous benefactors that have donated food, material items, money, and In-Kind support over the past year. All donations assist in funding our Emergency Relief program and other various programs within Western Port Community Support.

Emergency Relief is one of the core activities - we also have several other forms of assistance such as Telstra Vouchers (CISVic), and Op Shop Vouchers which are kindly donated by Holy Trinity Anglican Church Hastings and St Marks Op Shops, Balnarring. We also have many individuals and community groups within our local area who generously donate food and material aid.

For the 2021/2022 Financial year we have distributed food, material aid and emergency relief to our clients to the value of approx. \$240,321.00. We would like to say thank you to all our friends for supporting our work with generous regular donations. These valuable gifts help us provide the long-term support to our clients in the Westernport locality.

Major Funding Providers



Mornington Peninsula Shire



Australian Government

Emergency Relief Program



R.E. Ross Trust



Mornington Peninsula Foundation

2021 – 2022 Financial Donor Acknowledgements

Community Bank Balnarring & District Bendigo Bank

BlueScope Steel

Charles Wright Trust

Crib Point Uniting Church Op Shop

Equity Trustees

Esso Australia

Flinders Art Show

Flinders Lions Club

Hastings Rotary

Holy Trinity Anglican Church & Op Shop

Magistrates Court (Court Fund)

R.E. Ross Trust

Red Hill Lions Club

Sentinel Foundation

Soroptimist International Mornington Peninsula

St John's Anglican Church Flinders

St Mark's Anglican Church & Op Shop Balnarring

StreetSmart

Telstra

Toni Kaye Foundation

Emergency Relief Programs

Western Port Community Support would like to thank the local community organisations, businesses, churches, schools, and individuals for their ongoing support throughout the year. Emergency relief services are the core of Western Port Community Support. Without these contributions we would find it challenging to meet the ever-increasing demand on our food resources. We appreciate the ongoing support that allows us to continue to assist us in the work that we do with the most marginalized members of the Westernport Community.

Businesses

Bakers Delight, Hastings
Busy Bees Honey
Pearcedale Eggs
Port Phillip Estate
U Pharmacy, Langwarrin
Westpac Bank Beaumaris
Woolworths Hastings

Community Organisations

CWA Balnarring & Pearcedale
Hastings Cove Village
Rotary Club of Hastings Western Port
Mornington Peninsula Shire Staff
MSFIN
Pets of The Homeless
Share the Dignity
Somers Camp
Somerville Community House Knitting Group
Soroptimist International Mornington Peninsula
St John's Retirement Village Knitting Group
View Club Hastings

Food Rescue Charities

Foodbank
Oz Harvest
Second Bite

Churches

Balnarring Uniting Church
Crib Point Uniting Church
Hastings Uniting Church
Holy Trinity Church, Hastings
St Johns Anglican Church, Flinders
St Mark's Anglican Church, Balnarring
Westernport Uniting Church Parish



Pantry items donated by Community Organisations

Western Port Community Support

Value of Assistance Given

Overall Assistance Provided ER Program/Material Aid

\$240,321

TOP 4 ASSISTANCE TYPES



1. Food Parcels/Vouchers	\$176,475
2. Housing & Homelessness Program Brokerage	\$21,030
3. Christmas Hamper Program	\$20,300
4. Education Assistance Program	\$13,089

Client Statistics

Unique Clients	975	Clients with identified disability	297
New clients	309	Clients presenting as homeless	189
No. of dependents (non-unique)	5414	Total number of students supported through the Education Program	148
No. of emergency relief visits/phone calls	3575	ATSI clients	60
Total number of Case Managed Sessions	3007	Asylum Seeker	11

Working Together

Fresh Food Tuesday Program Shannagains

Byron and Alison for sale



Dot showing available produce



Volunteers and Byron in action



Working Together

St Vincents/Peninsula Health Vaccination van and a Community BBQ was provided, cooked by volunteers from Rotary Club of Hastings Westernport



Promoting WPCS at Hastings Primary 100th birthday celebration



Georgia and Laura helping to promote Rainbow Tick accreditation at Peninsula Health



Housing and Homelessness Program Report

It has now been a full twelve months since I started in the role as housing support case worker with Western Port Community Support. Starting throughout Melbourne's lock down period was a real challenge. There were barely any private rental housing options available, building the networks needed for the job was slow and nearly all other services were operating by phone contact only.

Despite these challenges the program here has never slowed down. The people we have worked with have achieved some amazing housing outcomes considering the circumstances. Since starting in late July 2021, I have case managed 167 new clients in addition to numerous existing clients. This has been a huge undertaking and I have really enjoyed the challenge.

What I love about this role is the hub of resources we have within this building that we can connect people with and work together collaboratively. Homelessness and housing stress rarely happen as an isolated issue. The people we have contact with often have a range of complex issues they are trying to deal with and being able to seek help from different specialized supports in one place cuts down so many barriers.

Being here, on the front line of the homelessness issue in Westernport, has really built on my knowledge and I am looking forward to the 12 months ahead. I am also hoping the housing crisis does not worsen, and the people in our community can continue to access safe and affordable housing.

Laura Sutton

Housing Support Case Worker



Family Support Case Worker Report

I am now in my third year at WPCS, and I still love the privilege of working with some of the most vulnerable in our community. Many of the issues people struggle with remain the same; AOD, Mental Health, Family Violence, Financial Hardship but being able to stand alongside someone who feels they have no hope and to sow a seed is wonderful.

The Family Support Program continues to take referrals from local schools. Wellbeing and teaching professionals concerned with a student and their family refer clients to me to discuss the best supports on offer for the circumstances. Trusting relationships and good rapport continue to be the key to enabling change and going into the schools on a regular basis and meeting with the wellbeing teams and teachers, initiates collaboration with appropriate services to provide the best care for the clients.

There has been a prevalence for Mental Health and AOD support this year and liaising with individuals and services such as FAMDAS has been common.

Attending court to provide advocacy and emotional support continues to be a theme, the support of PCLC has been paramount. Having them and other services such as Living Free, Campbell Page and financial counselling in the building, makes services easily accessible for clients.

Throughout the course of the year, I worked intensively with 46 families and individuals and have summarised below three examples of support.

1. John presented to the agency suffering from chronic alcoholism and requesting help to address this long-term issue. John had been drinking alcohol continuously since the age of 13 and had become isolated and extremely unwell. John was residing in a rooming house and had lived a very transient life due to his addictions and various other personal traumas. We were able to provide an immediate response so John was linked in quickly with relevant drug and alcohol services and mental health supports. I was able to accompany him to his appointments and aid him through the arduous intake process, providing the emotional support and encouragement he so desperately needed. As a result of me being able to respond rapidly and with the necessary personal encouragement, he began to trust the team of professionals, trust the process, and gain a belief that he can attain sobriety and move forward in his life with greater stability. John was a lost soul when he first walked through our doors and following the period of intensive support he became a man with conviction, self-belief, and direction in his life.

2. Margaret, aged 80, presented for help after suffering physical and mental abuse for many years by her husband. Whilst being an emotional support for her, we were able to access Elder Abuse Services and connect her with the right people to care for her going forward. During our period of support Margaret's husband passed away and she needed support around managing finances and her day to day living affairs as her husband had always been the controller of such things. I was able to work through these issues with Margaret and also assist her with general home support by arranging an interim house cleaner for her until aged care supports were established. Margaret was exceptionally vulnerable and traumatised by her past experiences and needed intensive support to get through this difficult period.
3. Ben and Matt are two young teenage boys whom I had worked with this year following an illegal driving incident. Both boys rode unlicensed on an unregistered dirt bike without helmets and crashed into an unsuspecting lady as she drove out of her driveway. Although no one was seriously hurt the ramifications of this event extended to the boys having to attend court and face potential formal legal charges. Part of my supporting role in this incident included assisting the boys when they had to make statements before the police as well as liaising with the lawyer, parents, and schools. I was also required to accompany the boys in court as their parents were unable to attend. Being able to instigate some restorative justice conversations between the boys and the victim, which involved the police, ensured they had some idea of the impact this event had on her and acknowledge the seriousness of the matter.

None of what happens in the Family Support Program could be done without the very supportive team here at WPCS. The incredible commitment of our manager, Georgia, along with the staff, volunteers, and philanthropists we see changes in the lives of 'those doing it tough'. The Family Support Program aims to assist with complex needs in our local community and move men, women, and children to a place where they may begin to flourish.

Laura Baxter

Family Support Case Worker

Volunteer Support Report

Well, it's that time again to reminisce on the year that has passed!

So much happens in a year here at Western Port it can be difficult to remember but I will give it a go.

The impact of Covid was significantly different for our clients and volunteers to the previous year. The various Centrelink payments were either reduced or stopped depending on your situation. This meant that the extra finances that clients had come to rely on were phased out which in turn increased client visits. Volunteers were able to continue coming in for their shifts, even when we were in lockdown due to us being an essential service agency. Our volunteers that usually travel had many a plan change and if they had been lucky enough to get away, they then had to navigate how to come back into Victoria. Masks continued to be worn, sanitizing and Perspex screens remained, and vaccine mandates were introduced for workers and volunteers to assist in protecting the spread of Covid.

Over the last 12 months we have been supported by 7 receptionists, 9 community support workers, 2 volunteers that are both receptionists & support workers and 15 pantry/ Fresh Food Program volunteers. We have seen 3 volunteers retire. It is always sad when people leave but we know that they have enjoyed their time here at Western Port Community Support and we want to extend our gratitude and thanks to those who have so kindly dedicated their time to the agency.

We are fortunate to have a great team of volunteers who work diligently during their shift and are always more than happy to fill in if needed.

We have only been able to have two training sessions due to many varied reasons associated with COVID, but they were highly informative, and we always seem to learn something new. I appreciate the number of volunteers who give up more of their time to attend training.

For our 2021 Christmas party it was lovely to get together socially after so many lockdowns and restrictions. It is always great to hear the chatter and laughter of volunteers and staff getting together outside of the agency walls.

I would like to thank my work colleagues, the Board of Management and our wonderful group of volunteers who have all been a great support to me, and our agency throughout the past year.

Kind regards

Liz Maher

Admin/Volunteer Support

Fresh Food Program Report

The Western Port Community Support (WPCS) Fresh Food Program is supported by Secondbite, Oz Harvest, and a multitude of wonderfully generous local community groups and Churches. We receive fruit, vegetables, and a large array of non-perishable pantry items (flour, sugar, tinned products, etc) and meat/dairy products.

The past year has seen many changes to the food program post COVID. In January 2022 Oz Harvest began delivering directly to WPCS each Tuesday and so began Fresh Food Tuesday. This additional food program offers fresh produce to anyone experiencing food insecurity with over 70 clients attending from 2.30pm every Tuesday afternoon. A new team of eager volunteers readily came on board to assist in sorting, bagging fruit and vegetables, setting up tables for pantry items and stocking fridges. Their work continues on long into the afternoon as they assist and serve the clients attending for food support.

At the start of 2022 Secondbite also began a direct delivery to WPCS. This necessitated the further sorting of fruit and vegetables and again volunteers were quick to step into the space and help. WPCS became the receiving hub whereby external agencies such as Willam Warrain and Bunjilwarra, visit each Monday to pick up fresh food to support their own welfare/ER programs.

Fresh Food Tuesday has also served as a great opportunity for collaboration with other community partners and services. On two occasions we have hosted the St Vincents/Peninsula Health Vaccination Van, providing covid and flu vaccinations, PCLC Street law Coffee Van, for legal advice; and Orange Sky, who offered washing and drying of clothes for those living rough or without clothes washing facilities.

At the conclusion of each Tuesday's Fresh Food Program, our volunteers pack up the leftover fruit and vegetables and Bayside Community Collective pick up the produce to support the homeless and families in crisis in the Frankston area. WPCS have connected with the children's farm 'Rain, Hayne and Shine' to pick up the spoilt and inedible fruit and vegetables to minimise our contribution to landfill.

Finally, and probably most importantly, it is with a huge thank you to Western Port Community Support volunteers who have put in so much work and commitment to ensure this program has flourished. It can never be emphasised enough that programs do not function without the amazing contribution of our volunteers.

Byron Croft

Food Program Coordinator/Volunteer Support

Training and Agency Highlights

Training

May 20th, 2022, Living Free/Taskforce

June 23rd, 2022, In House, Portal and Program Updates,

Agency Highlights

Dinner out for Volunteer Week 2022, at The Westernport Hotel



Agency Highlights

Community Bank Balnarring and District/Bendigo Bank and Mornington Peninsula Foundation



Orange Sky – Laundry Service



Peninsula Community Legal Centre Coffee Van



Volunteer Profile

Volunteer Profile – Alison Smyrk

Alison is one of our wonderful, dedicated volunteers who is willing to fill shifts at any time, we are very grateful for her contributions. Alison wears many hats here at Western Port, Secretary on our Board, Community Support Worker, NILS worker, and more recently, supporting the Fresh Food Program on Tuesday afternoons.

Ross and I have lived in Somers for 14 years, I have worked in different areas in the disability sector for 25 years, firstly teaching people with high needs, then in disability employment services and my last job was teaching people with a disability to live independently in the community.

During my working career I took a total of 4 years leave to accompany Ross on his overseas postings with the Immigration department. Two years in India and two years in the Philippines.

India was the most amazing country I have ever been to and after exploring over 45 countries since then it stands out as the most exciting place I have ever been. Sharing the roadway with cows and elephants and driving with no road rules is very liberating.

The posting in the Philippines was not nearly as exciting but interesting, nevertheless. I worked there in the Australian Commissary (a supermarket on the Embassy compound) as the manager. My most challenging day in that role was when a \$6,000 shipment of Australian wine was delayed, sitting on the Manila docks for days in 35-degree heat because I had not bribed the right people. I found a middleman who greased enough palms to get the wine delivered at 6.00am to the embassy. Breakfast for me that morning was opening a bottle of wine for a drink to make sure it had not been spoilt in the heat, someone had to do it, it was fine, and I was happy.

Since those overseas postings travel has been my passion and I have dragged Ross all over the world with my mantra being 'never go back to the same place twice', too many places to explore and not enough time.

I have been working as a volunteer at WPCS for the past 10 plus years and I love it. I enjoy working with a group of volunteers from diverse employment backgrounds, all with an interesting story to tell. I feel respected and appreciated by the staff which makes working at WPCS rewarding. When I listen to the clients tell their story I have admiration for how strong they are in dealing with often difficult challenges.

I joined the Board a year after I started, it was good to get an understanding of how the organisation operated behind the scenes, where the funding came from and meeting people in the community who supported us to assist those in need.

Alison Smyrk

Western Port Community Support Services

Tax Help

The Tax Help program is supported each year by the Australian Taxation Office but due to Covid we were unable to run this program. Each individual agency manages their own Volunteer Tax Helpers to ensure that the day-to-day resources are in line with the ATO requirements. Wendy Gamble who generously offers her time is our regular Tax Helper. This program is on offer to low-income residents of the Western Port area for the period July through until October each year.

No Interest Loan Scheme

In 2018 Western Port Community Support joined the Victorian No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS). NILS loans are offered with support from Good Shepherd Microfinance, the Australian Government and NAB. WPCS is now able to offer client support in applying for a no interest loan. Loans for amounts of up to \$1,500 are available for essential goods and services. These may include white goods, furniture, medical and dental services, educational expenses, or car related expenses. The loan application is very detailed, the prime objective being to assess if the applicant can afford to pay back the loan without undue hardship being placed on them. Loan repayments start as low as \$20 per fortnight for a 12–18-month period. We have two trained Client Support workers in Wendy Gamble and Alison Smyrk.

Education Assistance Program

Western Port Community Support offer an annual Education Assistance program to provide support to disadvantaged families with the cost of items such as textbooks, stationary, uniforms, shoes, and technology.

As an organisation WPCS places great value on the education of the young people in our community as we know education is the key to future success, financial freedom, and self-reliance.

WPCS is a not-for-profit agency, and we work tirelessly throughout the year to raise the funds to ensure we can provide the school essentials many families simply cannot afford. The program commences in October and concludes in early February.

Western Port Community Support Inc. Co-Located Services

Peninsula Community Legal Centre



Peninsula Community Legal Centre (PCLC) provides a visiting service to Westernport Community Support on alternate Fridays.

PCLC is an independent, not-for-profit organisation that has been providing free legal services to Melbourne's south-eastern communities for over 40 years. The Centre helps people use the law to protect and advance their rights, offering legal information, advice, ongoing legal assistance, and representation. Ongoing assistance is targeted to assist clients who are experiencing disadvantage.

In addition to its general legal services, the Centre operates programs and services in family law, family violence, fines, private tenancy, rooming house outreach, civil and criminal law, with a social worker and a visiting financial counsellor to support the legal programs.

PCLC also conducts community legal education, community development and public advocacy activities.

This free service is available to Westernport residents, by appointment. PCLC can be contacted on 9783 3600 or for 059 callers on 1800 064 784

Campbell Page



Campbell Page is a not-for-profit employment provider dedicated to making a difference in our communities. We believe that everyone deserves a chance to be seen, a chance to be heard and a chance to thrive. The people we work with are from all different backgrounds and walks of life – our vision is to support them into great jobs and a brighter future. We know that finding and starting a job can make a positive difference in someone's life and their wellbeing for the long term. Everyone deserves an opportunity, and we help people overcome challenges so they can be the best they can be. For over thirty years, community has been at the heart of what we do. We partner with others who want to make a difference, so that we can help people in bigger and better ways. We provide disability employment support and employment services in our communities, as well as community development, youth, Indigenous and family programs.

Talk to us today. 1300 139 920 or hello@campbellpage.org.au

Christmas Giving Program

Another successful Westernport Christmas Giving Program was conducted once again. This year 350 food hampers were distributed to local needy families and individuals. This program not only benefits those that receive but gives the opportunity and much satisfaction to those that are looking for a means of providing some Christmas cheer into the Westernport area.

Many thanks to those organisations & individuals who donated food, toys and money that made the program this year another great success. Without this generosity this program would not be possible.

Thanks, must also be extended to all the volunteers who worked to make this event a reality. The large contingency of volunteers gave of their time and effort in attending planning meetings, transporting food to the Hastings Hall, packing hampers, and distributing the hampers from the Hastings Hall. This is a great community effort involving not only organisations but also individuals.

2021 Christmas Giving Donor Acknowledgments

Community

Balnarring Lions Club
 Flinders Lions Club
 Flinders Kindergarten
 Foodbank
 Hastings Rotary
 Individuals from our local community
 Lifestyle Hastings/Craft group
 Mornington Racehorse Trainers Assoc
 MRC Foundation Trust
 Mt Eliza Lions Club
 Red Hill Lions Club
 Somers Combined Probus
 Soroptimist Mornington Peninsula
 Southern Peninsula Food for All
 St Vincent De Paul Society – Hastings Conference

Businesses

BlueScope Steel Employees
 Hastings Chiropractic
 Woolworths Somerville
 Toni Kaye Foundation

Churches

Balnarring United Church
 Crib Point Uniting Church Op Shop
 St Mark's Anglican Church – Balnarring
 Western Port Uniting Church

