South East volunteers

Annual Report

2019/2020

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Cover Photo: New Life Members, Elizabeth Bruce and Raymond Randall

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“Thank you for doing my shopping. There is no word to express my thanks”
– Kit

“I (have) used SEV transport service for 2 years. In these 2 years I have met more than 10 volunteer drivers and all of them are extremely helpful, very nice. I thank SEV for the excellent help.”
– Winnie

“I live alone, without a car. It is difficult to shop under the stage 4 restrictions and SEV comes to my rescue. I would like to thank the staff and volunteers of SEV.”
– Shuk Yee

Driver Ray Randall picking up long time Transport client Maria

01

Our Board

The Board invested additional time in the 2019/2020 year in strategic planning.

This was an important task as the 2017 to 2019 plan had been completed and the external environment was quickly changing as a result of a number of government changes such as My Aged Care. Governments were reducing funding or requiring more services to be delivered to retain funding and there were changes in population and the use of technology. Board members met in February and March in 2020 to develop a forward looking plan.

During the year, we had interest in joining the Board from two new members, Simon Beaty and Darren Lim and they were seconded in, creating a situation where Board members exceeded the traditional seven places. We welcomed our "seconded ins" as they brought a wealth of skills to the Board.

We also lost members during the year. Pin Ng retired as he had completed six years as a Board member, the maximum allowed in the Constitution. Sukesh Sukumaran returned to New Zealand, Nicola McNeil and Vijay Susarla left the Board due to ill health.

In a changing year that was also impacted by coronavirus, the Board continued to support the CEO and staff to achieve good outcomes for the residents of Monash. Thank you to the Board.

Board members	Attendance
Andrew Freeman *Chairman*	●●●●●
Nicola McNeil *Secretary*	●●●●○
Vijay Susarla *Treasurer*	●●●●○
Wina Kung *Ordinary Member*	●●●○○
Malak Sukkar *Ordinary Member*	●●●●●
Sukesh Sukumaran *Ordinary Member*	●●●●○
Darren Lim *Ordinary Member*	●●●●○
Simon Beaty *Ordinary Member*	●●●○○
Pin Ng *Previous Chairman*	●○○○○

02

Our Staff

Ann Burgess
CEO

Shirlene Standish
Volunteer Services Manager

Gerardine Gannon
Client Services Manager

Wendy Fox
Outreach Services Manager

Kerri West
Accounts

Sharon Morgan
Safety Register Coordinator

Christina Saladino
Social Support Coordinator

Mei Ip
Chinese Seniors Coordinator

Gary Shih
Chinese Seniors Coordinator

May El Abyad
Administration

Hannah Landray
Intake and Assessment Coordinator

Shane Gan
Vehicle Coordinator / Intake and Assessment

Mamta Mehta
Driver Coordinator / Reception

Diane Harris
Reception

Hover for our COVID faces

03

SEV Volunteers

Life members

Elizabeth Bruce
Norm Gibbs, OAM
Raymond Randall

20+ years

Anne Johns
Judith Wescott

15+ years

Patricia Witt
Elizabeth McDonald
Susan Trowbridge
Lois Litchfield
Jenifer Sampson
Graeme Schober
Bronwyn Lloyd

10+ years

Lisbeth Calder
John Jarvis
Simon Chan
Ken Calder
Anthony Alexander
Ross McDowall
Phillip G. King
Lesley M. Atherton
Patricia Russell

5+ years

Geoff Julian
Maureen Jeanes
Anthony Bray
Leanne Shaw
Janice Yu
Terence Long
Julie Clohesy
Ghylene (Gill) Bouchet
Ronald Clohesy
Fay Whitehead
Richard Borthwick
Rhonda Makey
David Hawkins
Gail Graczyk
Chee Pin Ng
Kathryn Holder
Siok Tin Holmes
Andrew Freeman
Winsie Au
Man Ching Tang
Wanda Filippelli
Vanessa Chan
Brian Dean
Rathi Vinay
Quang Pham
Gerald Hymas
Scott Vinnicombe
Brett Gaffney
Wina Kung
Miryana Hranilovic
Shirley Grondman
Kaye Huxtable
Winsome Bowman
Julie Myers
Stanley Goricane
Joanne Burns
Nicola McNeil
Peter Steele
Han Seow
Ian Reid

< 5 years

Linda George
Peter Halliday
Vijay Susarla
Brenda Twigg
Salih (Charlie) Muratovic
Rodney Florence
Victoria Vijayan Peter
Jo Anne Howell
Julia Matheson
Weiwei Li
Sandra Riley
Tieu Hue Luu
Carlos Varsavsky
Brian Preece
Despina Djumas
Kenneth Smith
Colin Rodrigues
Vivian Sonnet
Xin Wang
Anne Happ
Stephen Poole
Elisabeth Wilson
Malak Sukkar
Moira Teichert
Gregory Brown
Gillian Diamond
Zhen Zhang
Shuhong Zhou
Richard Nelson
Raymond Standish
Marianne Francis
Maria Bertone
Pamela Smith
Darren Lim
Huong Chee Young
Sukesh Sukumaran
Smita Gupta
Alister Wilkie
Margaretha La Lau
Simon Lao
Narelle Walker
Christopher Lodewyke
Simon Beaty
Tharini Sivakumaran
Rosanna Seibold

04

A Volunteer's Story

Terry Long
Volunteer Driver

Volunteering During COVID-19 Lockdown

I have been volunteering as a driver for SEV for 9 years. When I was asked if I felt comfortable returning to driving at beginning of second lockdown, my immediate reaction was safety - to myself, family, the staff I may come in contact with at SEV, and most importantly, our clients.

Upon reviewing the extensive safety protocols, processes and procedures that the SEV team had put together to enable the continuity for the transport service, I felt that the safety of all concerned was very well covered. I have a large extended family, so I had a COVID test which was negative, and of course, as required by SEV, I had a flu vaccine.

So the practical health and safety side of things were well. However, there was a much more personal aspect I thought about.

I vividly remember, when we came back after the first lockdown, the appreciation clients expressed for SEV. I was told on numerous occasions how our service had been sorely missed.

It was clear that the transport service allowed clients to get out and be independent, which was even more important during this time.

Like everyone, I already knew about this particular virus and the havoc it was unleashing on the community. Being relatively healthy myself, I was in the fortunate position to be able to drive during this period. As volunteer drivers, we all come into contact with individuals and their varying situations in life.

For some out there, loneliness is harder than the virus, they do not have any family and potentially no contact, i.e. someone to talk to.

Anxiety about their condition (health/financial) is very real and many of our clients do not have smartphones, zoom etc., with no technical savvy, so face to face medical appointments are necessary.

I have questioned myself at times about the risks, the "what ifs". However, I have always come back to the same answers. SEV has all foreseeable risks covered.

Let me give you just two examples of what really motivates me to be a volunteer driver at this time:

> Early September I picked a client up for an eye specialist appointment for quarterly injections. She informed me it was the first time she had left her house since March 28th. The only other member of her family was suffering a terminal illness and could not risk taking her to her appointment. The gratitude this client displayed was heartfelt.

> For a number of weeks, I have been transporting a client who is a stroke victim to rehab. I commented, after about 4-5 weeks of dropping the client back home, on his improvement in getting in and out of the car since I first started transporting him. The client told me directly how, in no small part, the SEV transport program had assisted him greatly in achieving his improvement by allowing him to get to and from rehab.

So what do I get out of it personally? Well, like all SEV volunteers and staff, helping others feels good. Making a difference in someone's life feels good.

05

CEO & Chairperson's Report

Ann Burgess
CEO

Andrew Freeman
Chairperson

South East Volunteers commenced the 2019/2020 year with great enthusiasm and a number of project plans top of mind after a challenging year of restructure in the 2018/2019 year.

With support from the Board, a Life Membership recognition program was set up to acknowledge the wonderful volunteers that had given years to South East Volunteers.

Life Member, Norm Gibbs, worked with Volunteer Manager, Shirlene Standish, on this task so that two new Life Members could be recognised at the AGM in October. Congratulations to Ray Randall and Liz Bruce.

In September, we welcomed a new staff member, Wendy Fox, and the Greater Dandenong Council confirmed funding for another two years to enable South East Volunteers to continue to provide a volunteering program in Greater Dandenong, as did Casey Council, who confirmed funding for another year in the City of Casey.

South East Volunteers was invited to join the Inner East Primary Care Partnership to develop a program to encourage people from culturally diverse communities to be aware of, and join in volunteering for their communities.

We continued being a part of the Victoria Alive Working Group to develop volunteering systems for people with a disability as many people with a disability wish to volunteer but are often unable to do so because of physical barriers and lack of understanding by the local community organisations.

We have always been supportive of the sector and during the year continued to be a representative on Volunteering Victoria's Support Network and the VicTas Community Transport Association peak body. Advocacy for volunteers and clients to improve service delivery is an important part of the work undertaken at South East Volunteers.

At the Annual General Meeting led by the Chairman, Andrew Freeman, two new Board members were introduced - Sukesh Sukumaran and Darren Lim. Simon Beaty was also seconded to the Board in December.

The annual Safety Register concert was, once again, a great success, thanks to the Novotel for hosting the event and to the Australian Navy Band for their wonderful music.

As always, South East Volunteers celebrated the end of year with client and volunteer Christmas events. Thank you, once more to Novotel, who provide a great barbecue dinner each year cooked by their chefs and served by their talented hospitality team.

In early 2020, Board members and staff completed two strategic planning sessions that will guide the direction of South East Volunteers in the near future. Then in March we were alerted to COVID 19 virus and our world changed rapidly. While Board members were able to meet via Zoom the staff were unable to offer existing services to clients face to face. To meet this challenge, the staff teams developed a Virtual Support Plan to ensure that clients and volunteers were supported by email, regular telephone calls, newsletters and on line meetings.

A COVID safe plan was also developed so that volunteers could continue to support clients with regular telephone calls, shopping for groceries, the delivery of toilet paper and rice, and picking up clients scripts from the pharmacies.

The continued support of clients during COVID 19 was possible due to the commitment and dedication of the staff and volunteer team and each client was wrapped in care. Volunteers were not forgotten and those that remained at home were also supported via email, telephone, Microsoft Teams meetings and care packages.

Sadly, a much loved volunteer, Gerald Hymas, passed away during this time due to ill health. He will be missed.

At the end of a year punctuated by a global pandemic, South East Volunteers Board and staff members maintained their direction and delivered their services with heart. Thank you to everyone who is part of the community that is South East Volunteers.

Gerald Hymas

We remember the passing of a happy and generous man who gave so much of his time to our clients.

Gerald volunteered for South East Volunteers for 5 years and will be remembered for his friendly nature and his commitment to helping our vulnerable clients.

We are so grateful to have known him.

06

Client Services

Gerardine Gannon
Client Services Manager

What a year! The very first case of COVD-19 to hit Melbourne occurred right here within 2km of our office!

Who could have predicted how a pandemic could force us to reinvent our services – to adapt overnight to finding ways to support our aged and isolated clients?

As it became clear that the elderly were the most vulnerable to this aggressive, highly infectious virus, our services were right in the frontline.

Prior to COVID-19, we were considering ways of expanding our services to meet the ever increasing demand. We were receiving more My Aged Care referrals than we could register. We gave our Vehicle Coordinator, Shane, an extra day's work to support Hannah in Intake and Assessment to keep the process flowing. Several months later, Hannah Landray, who had a great rapport with clients, retired to a more COVID free life in Tasmania. We have since welcomed Sarah Hudson, who has a strong social work background, to take on the Intake and Assessment position.

Our local State Member of Parliament, Matt Fregon, visited our office in June and was very happy to see our Elderly Chinese Group involved in various activities and he accepted more invitations to visit and speak with them.

Click to view post

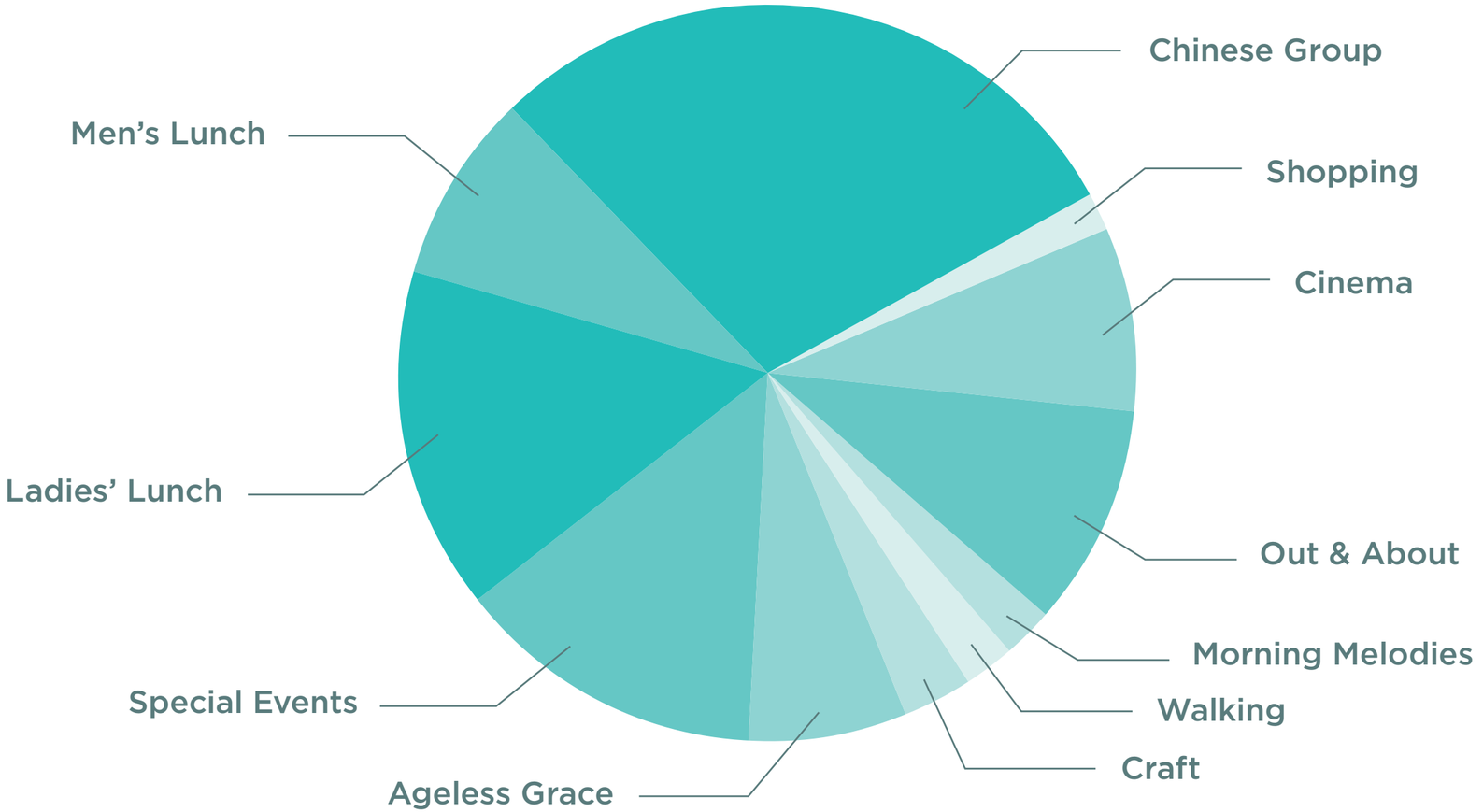
Activity Attendance
(Pre COVID-19)

4,340

Total Social Support Activities pre-COVID

14,271

Total Transport & Social Support Services



COVID-19

When the very first case of COVID-19 hit Melbourne right here in Glen Waverley, it caused alarm and the fear of the unknown spread immediately throughout the local area.

Some clients began cancelling bookings, and so with little guidance, I had to immediately research COVID infection control procedures to quickly put together effective disinfection and delivery procedures. We needed to be able to continue our Transport Service in a way that was safe for both our vulnerable clients and the volunteers.

As the pandemic progressed, more information came to light and the Department of Health and Human Services began distributing guidelines. I seemed to be constantly revising and upgrading procedures, especially as the wearing of face masks and eye protection became mandatory for face- to- face services with clients.
I also put together our comprehensive COVID Safe Plan.

Most of our clients, volunteers and staff told us that they felt reassured that our infection control procedures were quite stringent and, as a result, many clients continued with our services even through the highest COVID case numbers during Stage 4 restrictions.

Shirlene had a mammoth task of sourcing laptops and organising the loading of software so that all staff could work from home with remote network access.

We have become accustomed to forehead temperature checks, sanitising hands constantly, disinfecting phones, computers and desk areas, spraying Glen20, issuing Work Permits and of course, wearing face masks. It has now become almost automatic.

During the first Home Isolation, we literally went from working in the office to working from home, overnight.

The Safety Register has been under particular pressure. This has been exactly the time when isolated and vulnerable clients have needed us the most. We have kept the volunteers away from the office to reduce risk and so the Safety Register team has been severely depleted. This has meant an ‘all hands on deck’ approach, switching staff from one area to another as the priority arises.

I would like to thank our dedicated staff, who have kept the wheels rolling, regardless of where they are and how we have asked them to adapt. Christina Saladino, Mamta Mehta and Shane Gan have kept our Transport and Social Support clients connected and ensured clients made it to medical appointments, while Sharon, our Safety Register Coordinator, with help from Hannah and Sarah, has made a special effort to ensure the most isolated and vulnerable clients have not been forgotten, and know we are always ready to listen, and advise if necessary.

Mei Ip and Gary Shih have been invaluable for the non English speaking Chinese elderly who have had trouble interpreting the messages.

Some of these clients have relied upon our coordinators to translate the changing regulations, and those living a long way from family have relied heavily on our weekly calls to prevent loneliness.

I would especially like to thank our committed volunteers, who either kept in contact with our clients or transported them at all the different stages of imposed restrictions, without whom we could not have delivered our services.

Although COVID-19 clusters seemed to pop up all around us, we have managed to continue most of our services safely, right through the tightest restrictions.

More importantly, we have been able to keep in contact with hundreds of clients who have felt like prisoners in their own homes, cut off from human contact, keeping their spirits up.

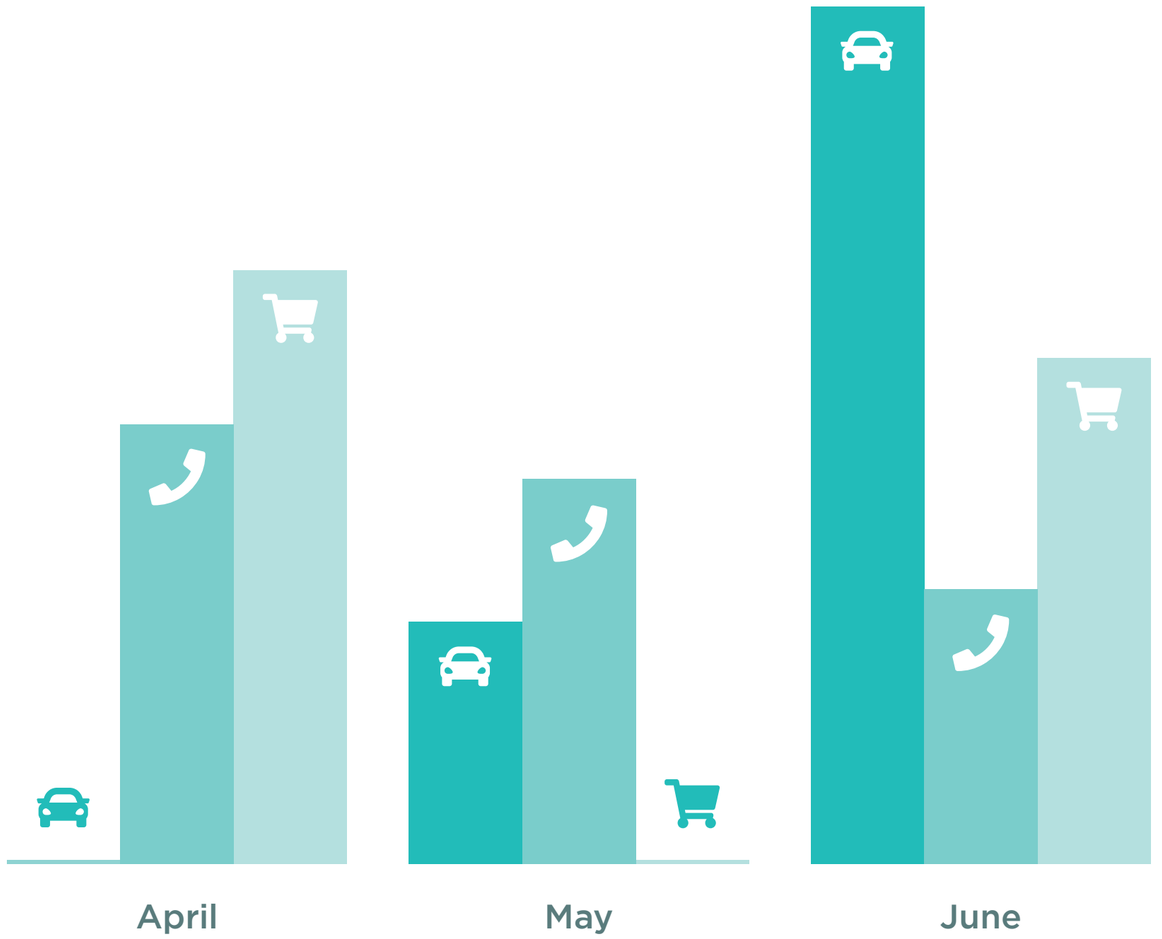
It has been an especially long isolation for them and we look forward to finally being able to safely see them in person. It's been an extraordinary year, with so many unexpected challenges, but we have successfully continued to support our vulnerable clients, more in need than ever.

Client Services During COVID-19

357
Transport trips

2,040
Welfare phone calls

26
Goods deliveries



Service delivery (%)

Christina Saladino
Social Support Coordinator

07

Social Support

Social isolation is a huge problem among our aged clients and enforced Home Isolation during COVID-19 just emphasised how important our social contact with them is for their mental wellbeing.

The year started well, with several successful events and activities.

We know our clients have been enjoying the entertainment when we see the amount of clients who are out of their chairs dancing, even clients who have walking aids!

Regular Activities

Due to the popularity of activities prior to COVID, the bus was booked almost every day, taking clients to Morning Melodies, local Lunch groups, Out And About lunch excursions and Cinema trips.

Our in-house Ageless Grace is so popular that it has a waiting list. Other activities include the Walking Group, in-house Craft groups and fortnightly shopping.

Special Events

Attendance at the large client functions has been steadily increasing and a waiting list has to be created for each event, as we are limited by the number of clients that we can transport and fit into the venues. Due to the demographics of our clients, we often have cancellations up until the morning of the event and we are able to fill some gaps with those who are on the waiting list.

Elia Cannizzo was our entertainer for the mid-year function in July and the newly added Welcome to a New Decade held in February, both held at The Highways. The much loved Brendan Scott was the entertainer for our end of year function at the Novotel, Glen Waverley.

“I would like to put it on record that you guys did a fabulous job on Monday. I totally enjoyed myself.”

– Ellen

COVID-19

The pandemic started to hit our Social Support numbers at the beginning of March, with clients starting to decline outing invitations on the advice of their doctors and requests of their families. On Monday March 16 it was decided that all the Social Support Programs would be suspended until further notice and then March 20 saw the State and Federal Governments start implementing staged restrictions.

It was vital that I continued regular contact with our clients to support them through such a lonely home isolation. Some clients had no family close by who could check on them.

As I started to work from home, the following weeks were spent contacting all the clients listed for Social Support. We discussed whether they have support systems in place for shopping and medication and referrals were made to the Monash Council's Meals on Wheels Program as well as to the Safety Register Program.

As time passed, the phone calls became longer and longer, as the clients felt more and more deprived of social interaction.

The volunteers for the Ladies Lunch Groups also kept in touch with the ladies they take out in their groups on a regular basis.

In June our Social Support program was restarted briefly for Craft & Ageless Grace with limits placed on the number of clients who could attend as well as limiting transport to the SEV offices to be only by car. This was short lived with the announcement of going back into Stage 3 restrictions.

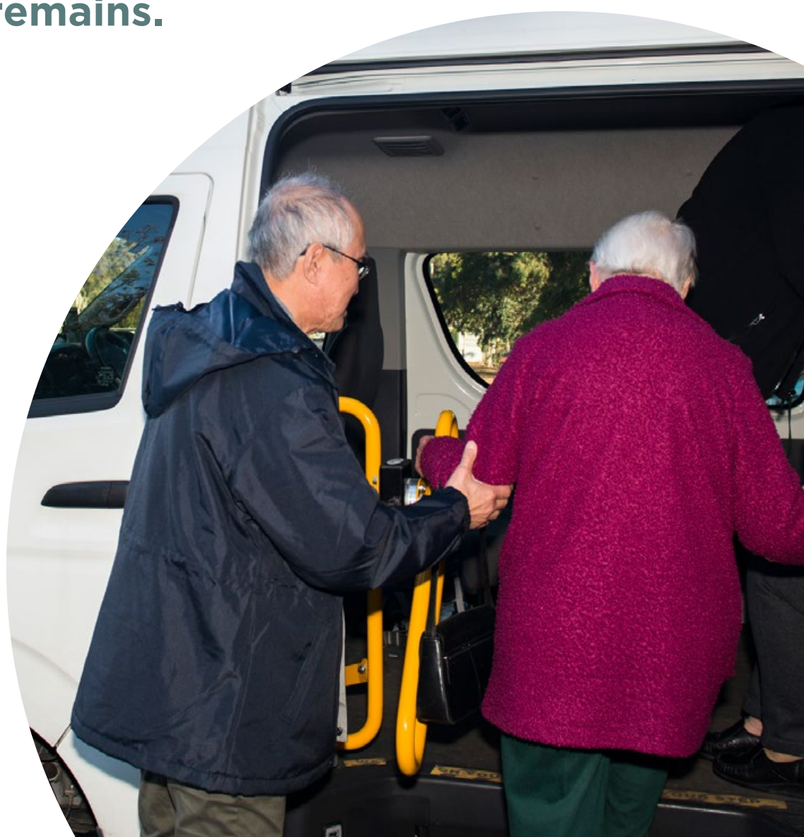
Calling the clients during this period has been both rewarding and challenging. Clients recalled events from their past where they have had their movement limited by the polio outbreak, wars and other events in their life.

Many of our clients do not have family members living with them, so calling them has been a way of keeping in touch and up to date with their circumstances. They are very appreciative that they have someone to talk to and someone who will listen to their concerns during these unprecedented times.

As much as the clients and I would like to return to the normal Social Support program, everyone is happy to wait until it is safe enough to do so. Some of our luckier clients are now keeping in contact and celebrating events with family and friends through Face Time, Zoom and social media that were set up for them by other people. We are working on setting up the same for other clients, but most still do not have any IT skills or access.

There are some clients who fear they may not feel safe enough to attend another outing, even if restrictions are eased.

While the rest of the world is still fighting COVID-19, the fear among the most vulnerable, remains.



A Client's Story

Fay is very happy to be connected with SEV as a client and Safety Register member, but she was especially grateful for our shopping service during COVID-19 restrictions.

"With the distancing requirements of our time and two locked down sons that live at different ends of regional Victoria, Mum has felt most acutely the isolation and anxiety that goes with a most necessary but arduous social lockdown.

I would like to thank you and your team for your service to the community especially at this time of COVID-19.

My mother is a resident in your community and speaks often of the great service SEV provides. This morning she sent me photos of the food support including potatoes, pumpkin, butter and cheese (yes and I think even some chocolate) that was left at her door following a most welcome knock and hello from a distance!

I know she is extremely grateful for this service and the quiet check on her health that you and your team provide her with these services.

Mum is an independent person who would normally relish going down the street and shopping for her groceries and perhaps stopping off for a cuppa with a friend.

You and your team provide a vital and valued service for which my brother and I share Mum's gratitude for and ask that this acknowledgment be shared with your team."

Fay
Safety Register Client
(written by her son David)

09

Transport

COVID-19 showed just how much our clients rely on and trust our Transport Service.

This pandemic meant re-writing procedures, and re-thinking our parameters, in order to meet the new needs of our clients in enforced Home Isolation, in a quickly changing environment.

The year started well, with referrals coming in thick and fast from My Aged Care, causing us to reassess the order of priorities to ensure that the most needy were registered first. By refining our forecasting and wait list systems, we were able to squeeze in 98% of our transport booking requests. Before COVID hit, we were considering the need for adding another car to our fleet, and where we could keep it.

Mamta Mehta & Shane Gan
Driver & Vehicle Coordinators

COVID-19

As the coronavirus threat became evident, we introduced strict frequent cleaning procedures and spraying of vehicle interiors. We insisted that drivers wore face masks long before it became mandatory for taxis to do so. Our clients felt safer with us.

On 23rd March, when we were all forced into the first Home Isolation, we temporarily stopped the Transport Service, as clients had become nervous about travelling, practitioners were cancelling appointments and we also wanted to protect the safety of all clients, volunteer drivers and staff.

However, we knew many of our clients would feel even more isolated as we could not take them out so we switched to phoning clients regularly instead. With so many goods shortages we realised that the biggest immediate need was for grocery deliveries.

As some stores became hit with cases of COVID-19, it was too big a risk for aged people to do their own shopping. Then grocery deliveries went online which most of our clients could not access. Clients without family nearby relied on us to deliver essential grocery items, particularly as items became scarce.

Toilet paper was highly sought after so we amassed a big supply to redistribute. We also quickly put together a list of services that we could tell stranded clients about, for example, delivery of meal services, home doctor services, pharmacy prescription deliveries and more.

Essential Transport

Some clients still phoned asking if we were running our Transport Service. In fact, some could not attend their essential medical appointments unless we took them.

The medical practitioners became concerned that too many clients were avoiding necessary appointments. Our clients did not feel confident in the reliability of taxis COVID Safe procedures, and just felt safer with our caring drivers and our consistently strict COVID Safe protocols.

Less than two months later, as restrictions eased, we began to operate a skeleton transport service with volunteer drivers who were offering to help. The service was restricted to only essential medical appointments but we soon received requests for other essential services, such as prescription deliveries. Our aged clients, being the most vulnerable to COVID-19, needed to stay at home to stay safe.

When we hit Stage 4 restrictions, we scaled back staff and volunteers working in the office to 25% of our numbers. We decided to keep running the Transport Service for as long as we had requests from clients and still had some volunteers prepared to drive.

We further raised the level of protection - to clients wearing face masks and drivers wearing both face masks and eye shields.

A few, very committed volunteer drivers were prepared to risk their own safety in order to ensure our clients continued to receive their medical attention, inspiring us all.

Our clients have nothing but praise for our loyal drivers and the service we have managed to continue, even through the tightest restrictions. We have issued our drivers with Work Permits in order to continue to take the most vulnerable members of our service to their essential medical checks and to keep them safe.

Both pre-COVID, and during COVID, the Transport Service continued to be our most requested service. We are hugely thankful to our committed and caring drivers.

Mei Ip & Gary Shih
Chinese Seniors Coordinators

10 Chinese Seniors' Support Groups

The Chinese Seniors are among the most isolated in the City of Monash – they are vulnerable due to age, but also isolated by language barriers.

Some of the seniors frequently relied on us to interpret the fine details of the restrictions and health advice, and to remain connected to the community.

During COVID-19, it was more important than ever for us to stay connected with the group members, all being in the high-risk age range. In the absence of face to face social support, a phone call could still give them some of the social support they needed.

Pre COVID, our Chinese Seniors Social Support groups were very popular as the activities motivate seniors and help to improve their physical and mental fitness. This group also provides a safe and friendly environment for members to make new friends, establish friendship and to engage in the community.

The group activities include Tai Chi, news updates, practical English lessons, community announcements, health talks, outings and particularly popular, are the celebration of traditional festivals.

The weekly Chinese Seniors Social Support groups had to stop running for a few months for the first lockdown, and so the groups' meetings changed to either an online chat or a weekly phone call. In those times especially, it was important that group members maintained their social connections, and to have someone to talk to.

Group members often expressed how they felt through these phone conversations. Some seniors felt depressed, while others felt lonely, and without social activities, both their mental and physical health was at risk.

The groups briefly recommenced in June, with the government hygiene procedures in place, including training of volunteers in ensuring hygienic practices were maintained. They offered the members a safe place to meet, and to talk about the experiences that they had gone through.

"It is important to have the heart to help elderly people and I feel SEV's staff give all they can to help me."
– Pauline

"Thank you for the weekly calls. There are a lot of people I consider as heroes and SEV is one of them."
– Yin Chong

"If I can give likes to SEV, I would give three likes and more!"
– An Yi

The members were incredibly supportive of each other. Restarting the group, they became more positive about life amidst the pandemic and encouraged each other to stay strong during this time.

South East Volunteers (SEV) provided transport for those who did not feel comfortable in taking public transport, and were unable to walk to the Centre.

Unfortunately, in mid-July, the 2nd wave of COVID-19 meant that the group had to stop again. Most of the members found it hard without any social interaction in stage 4 restrictions. Almost all social activities were not allowed, and one of the hardest parts were that no family visits were permitted. This meant most members heavily relied on the SEV weekly phone call for support.

To give additional support to group members, SEV connected the more IT savvy Chinese seniors into an online group chat, with permission from all parties.

Some of the seniors also needed other assistance, and we at SEV were happy to help them with shopping and transport. We also provided masks to those who needed them. Our assistance is still ongoing.

I would like to give a special thank you to all the volunteers - Simon, Vanessa, Winsie, Janice, Cindy, Wei Wei and Lisa. Your contribution is not only the time that you offer to help others, it is also the caring, giving attention that you provide to the seniors.

Sharon Morgan
Safety Register Coordinator

11

Monash Community Safety Register

The Monash Community Safety Register became one of our most vital and busy services during COVID-19.

SEV client registrations had been growing steadily until the first Home Isolation, but when calls were made for our other services, we identified several more clients who were quite isolated or vulnerable who we then recommended should register for more frequent ongoing calls from our Safety Register, and then did so without hesitation.

Up until COVID-19 hit, the Safety Register was continuing to promote and reach out to more isolated clients, through publicity in the Council's PALS booklet, a guest spot on 3WBC local radio (accompanied by the Monash Crime Prevention Officer, Victoria Police), attendance at SEV client events, through public speaking opportunities with local Probus and Lions clubs, and the Monash Stroke Support Group.

As we always find, some new Safety Register members had also heard about the program through recommendations from friends, relatives and word of mouth.

Despite the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, 8349 calls were made to Safety Register members during the period 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020, which is an amazing result.

I continued to build and strengthen partnerships within the local community (Monash Welfare Network, City of Monash, Victoria Police in the Monash municipality), and the broader community through connections with other similar Community and Seniors' Registers throughout Victoria.

We held our annual extremely successful Safety Register event in October 2019 at the Novotel, Glen Waverley. Approximately 100 Safety Register members and the key stakeholders attended.

The City of Monash's Mayor, Cr Shane McCluskey, personally welcomed everyone to the event and short, informative presentations were given by Victoria Police's Local Crime Prevention Officer, Senior Constable Sara Coe, and the Local Area Commander for Monash, Inspector Paul Robotham. All who attended enjoyed musical entertainment by the Royal Australian Navy band and excellent hospitality and catering by one of SEV's major sponsors, The Novotel, Glen Waverley.

Extreme Heat Calls to Vulnerable Members

When extreme heat conditions hit at the end of January, staff and volunteers prioritised making additional calls to approximately 110 vulnerable Safety Register members (or their emergency contacts). We phoned to check on their safety and wellbeing, both leading up to and during extreme heat conditions, and to remind them of useful strategies to prepare for and cope with the heat.

8,349

Safety Register phone calls made

↑629

Increase in calls from 2018/19

“My daughter has her own family. I do not want to call her and bother her. With SEV’s phone call, I know there is someone that I can talk to. Thank you for listening to me.”

– Sui Wha

COVID-19

In March 2020, SEV had to respond swiftly to restrictions imposed due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, managing the risks of this virus to staff, volunteers and Safety Register members. SEV staff started to work from home, and we deemed it too high a risk for the Safety Register volunteer team to come into the SEV office but it was more important than ever that we found a way to keep in regular contact with our often very isolated Safety Register Members.

The Safety Register was at least fortunate that the program is a telephone connection service, not requiring face-to-face contact. By establishing protocols for Volunteer remote secure access to calling lists and accurate data capture plus enlisting SEV staff to assist with calls whenever possible, we were still able to run the Monash Community Safety Register Program continuously and effectively throughout the COVID-19 restrictions.

In addition to the regular calls, I identified a number of especially vulnerable members who received more frequent calls (weekly at first and then fortnightly) to ensure that they were coping with the restrictions and to advise of any services that might be able to assist them during this time. This group of approximately 20 extremely vulnerable members had very few supports, or multiple and complex health and mobility issues. I personally stayed in touch with this group to ensure they felt supported during lockdown, providing referrals, guidance and information.

In many respects, Safety Register calls were even more vital during COVID-19 restrictions than at any other time.

Many Safety Register members were increasingly isolated and scared and a fair number did not have family or friends who were able to support them due to the restrictions in place.

Our thanks go to the City of Monash for their ongoing funding and to Victoria Police for their support of this vital program.

Shirlene Standish
Volunteer Services Manager

Volunteer Services

What an eventful year for the Community Service Sector and for SEV in particular!

Once again, I am reminded of the amazing resilience of the community that we live in and how adaptable we can all be.

We started the first half of the financial year with a decrease in funding and some uncertainty about the future of some of our programs. We ended the financial year with renewed funding, but with the challenge of a world pandemic and, closer to home, a lockdown that required us to find different ways to serve our community.

Once again, we had great support from the City of Monash, City of Dandenong and the City of Casey, as well as the Department of Social Services all working together with their staff to ensure that the residents and volunteers were connected and supported.

As we have often pointed out, our strength lies with the staff and volunteers who give of their time and talents to support our programs. This year required them all to rise to the challenge of COVID-19 – something with which none of us had any experience. We relied on each other and the flexibility of each person to learn new things and adapt to extreme changes, while providing services to our clients and volunteers.

In total, we recruited 888 volunteers for 605 Not-For-Profit organisations - a good result considering there were very few places that we could refer volunteers to after March. Of the 888 volunteers we interviewed, 495 were from a culturally & linguistically diverse (CALD) background, speaking 72 different languages; 54 had a disability; 10 struggled with mental health issues and 163 were unemployed. In addition to these numbers, 235 of the volunteers we referred were under the age of 24.

From April onwards, all our interviews were conducted online or via telephone. We were in contact with organisations to ascertain who were taking volunteers for remote or virtual volunteer work.

From April onwards, we were forced to close all our outreach offices, but the staff rose to the occasion.

We were particularly inspired by the number of people wanting to volunteer amid a world-wide pandemic, wanting to lend a hand to those in need in the community.

Mei Ip (Clayton), May El Abyad (Casey) and Wendy Fox (GDVRS) showed their initiative and embraced Zoom and MS Teams to provide online face-to-face interviews, as well as phone interviews for those who did not have online options. They also participated in online network meetings and provided training.

Our incredible administration staff worked offsite and onsite to ensure that our systems kept going and information made it to the right person, wherever that person was working. Our Administration Team, Mamta Mehta, May El Abyad and Diane Harris provided support to the office, as well as keeping in touch with the administrative volunteers when they were no longer able to come into the office.

Many of our administrative volunteers took up the banner to help from home, assisting with mail outs, calling vulnerable clients and doing whatever they could to help.

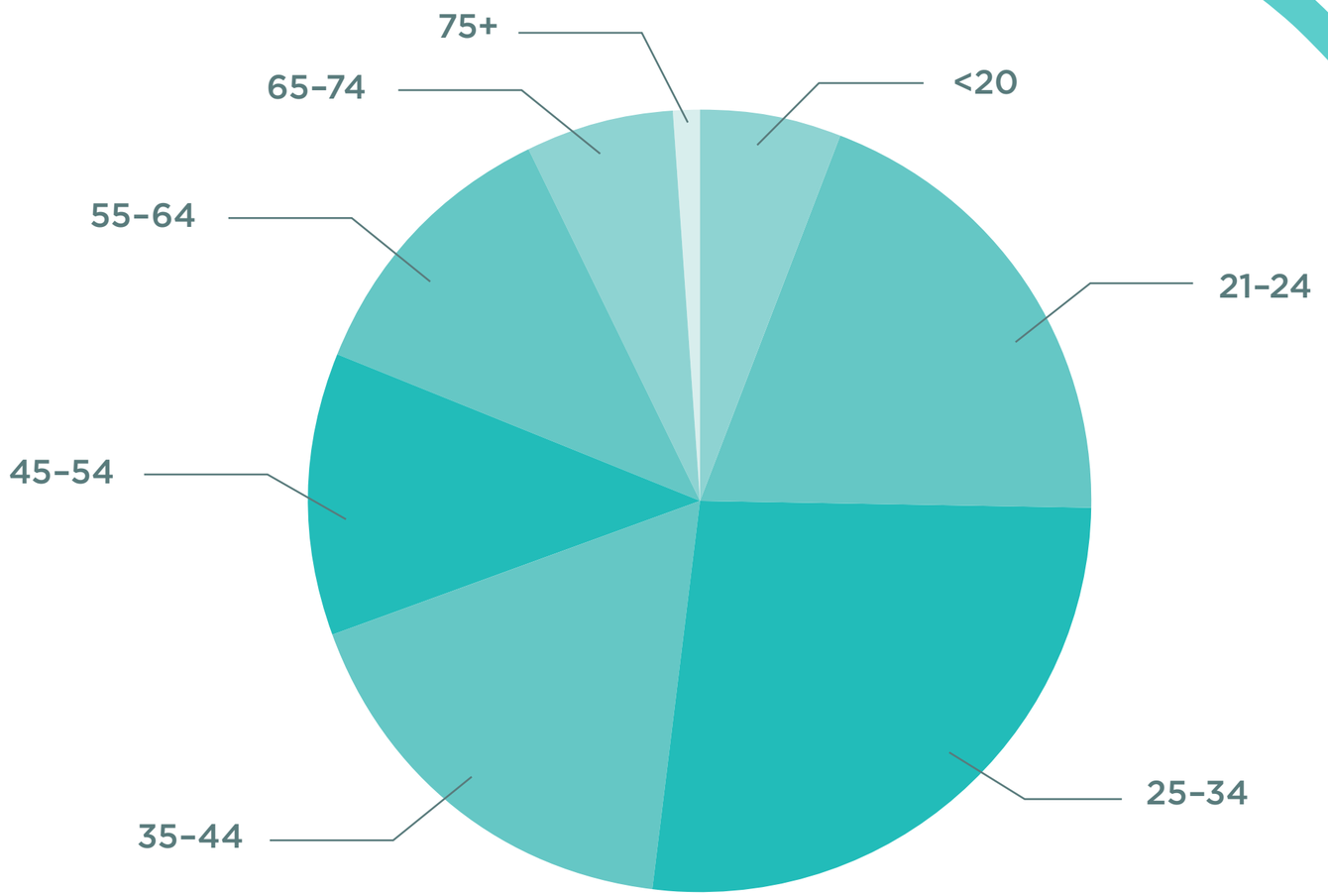
Volunteer snapshot

888
Volunteers recruited

72
Languages spoken

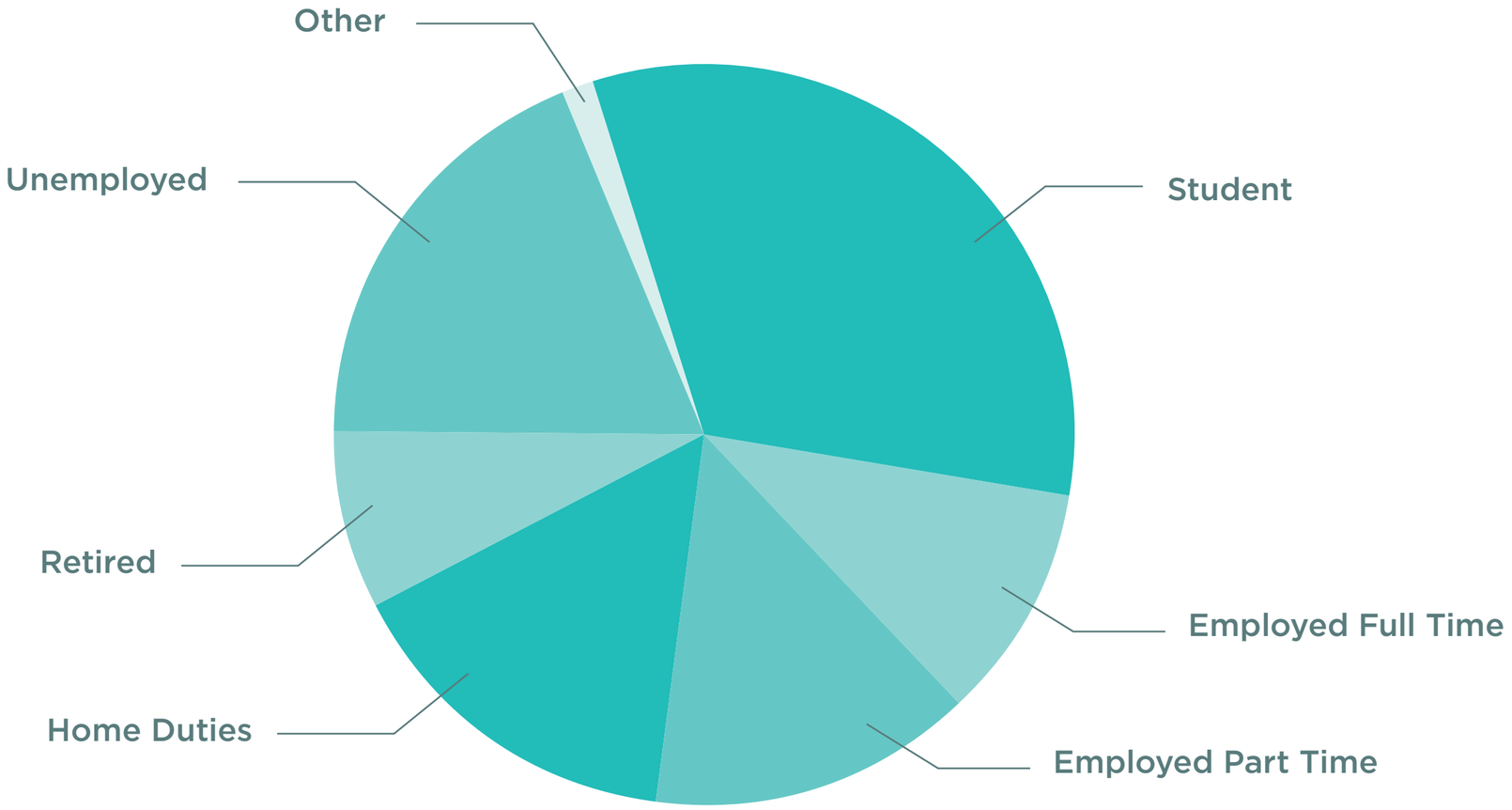
70%
Female volunteers

6%
Volunteers with a disability



Age groups

Volunteer snapshot



Employment status

55%

Volunteers from a CALD background

- India
- China (inc HK & Taiwan)
- Sri Lanka
- Afghanistan
- Pakistan
- Malaysia
- Vietnam
- Indonesia
- Other

Training & Workshops

Our training programs have always been extremely popular, and this did not change with the lockdown. We looked to facilitators who were able to incorporate their workshops to online platforms and continued the training. Altogether, we trained 289 volunteers and 95 Managers of volunteers. We included workshops like Mental Health First Aid, Introduction to Volunteering, Elder Abuse, Management vs Leadership, Cultural Awareness, and Stress Management. We are thankful for the ongoing support we receive from these facilitators who are experts in their field.

National Volunteer Week

We like to celebrate our volunteers all year, but particularly during National Volunteer Week. This year we were unable to gather and express our appreciation all together. Instead we hand delivered a small gift and personalised card to thank each one of them individually in person, where possible.

Adapting to Change

SEV has 107 volunteers – all of whom play a vital role in our services. We were incredibly fortunate that some of these volunteers continued to provide services to our clients, either through regular phone calls to our most vulnerable clients, to shopping for them and yes, even providing transport. Many of our clients are not computer savvy and many do not drive, so our volunteers kept them connected and kept them supplied with essentials that they were unable to go out and get for themselves.

Much of this work required these volunteers to take on extreme sanitising protocols such as wearing masks and face shields, sanitising cars between clients, wiping down packages of groceries before delivering, asking clients to wear masks and sit in the back seat. For those making phone calls, the conversations became longer and a bit more intense as clients felt the isolation.

Our volunteers made a real difference to the lives of our clients and I am proud to be associated with each and every one of them.

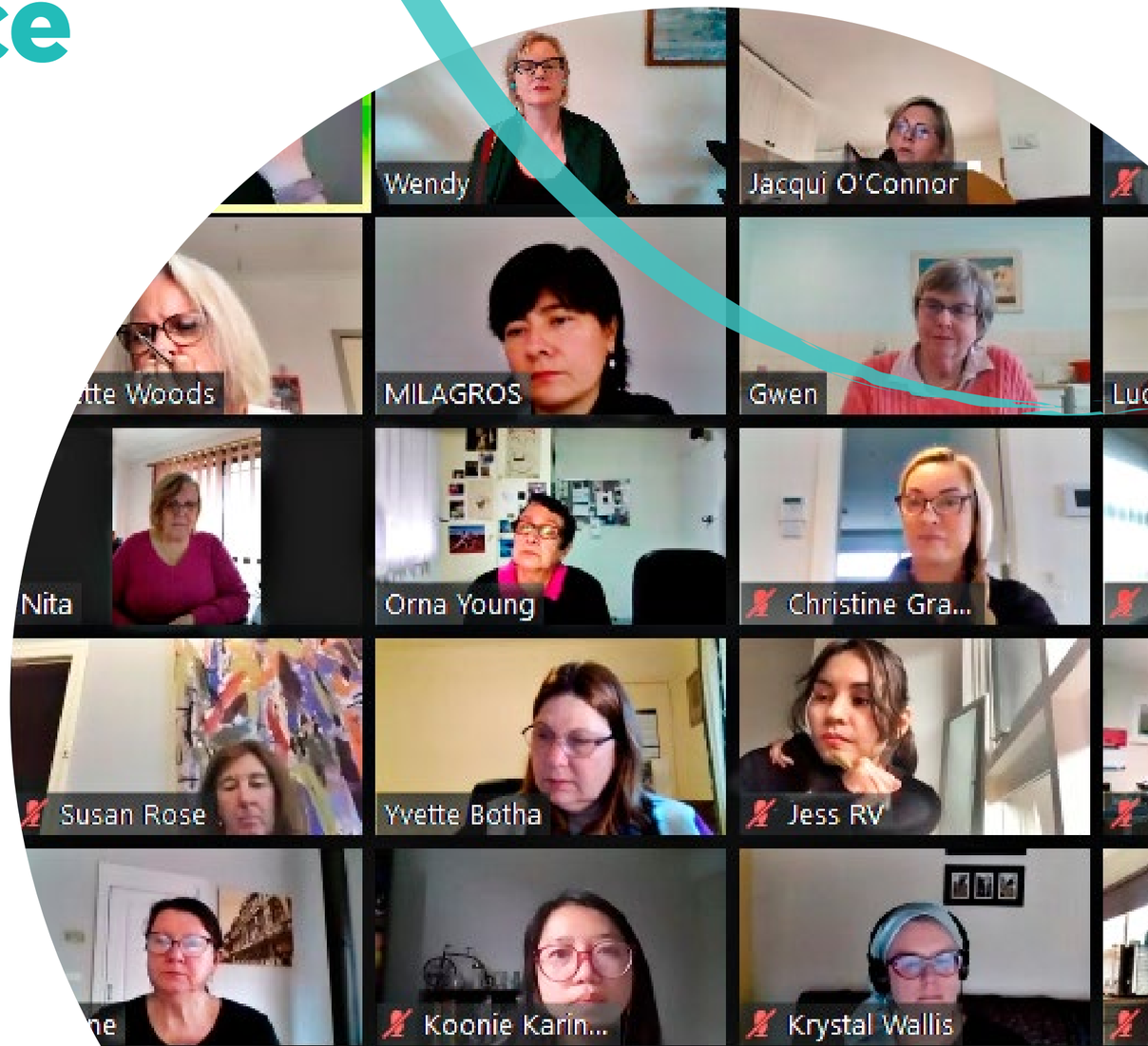
Greater Dandenong Volunteer Resource Service

Wendy Fox
Outreach Services Manager

It was another fantastic year for the Greater Dandenong Volunteer Resource Service (GDVRS). Over the past twelve months we held more than 400 interviews with potential volunteers and trained 90 volunteers and managers and coordinators of volunteers.

Interviews were either face-to-face, online or by phone. And topics of training included *Introduction to Volunteering, Stress Less: Dealing with Difficult Situations, Leadership and Management: The Difference,* and *Mental Health First Aid*.

At the end of 2019 we farewelled Melissa Hardy, who had successfully led the GDVRS for five years. Melissa had established GDVRS and continued to grow the service throughout the years that followed. We wish Melissa all the very best in her future endeavours.



In January 2020 we saw the start of a new contract for the GDVRS, having successfully retendered for the program in the later part of 2019. A new Outreach Manager, Wendy Fox, was appointed in February.

Shortly after joining the team, the COVID-19 restrictions occurred and the service quickly adapted to a remote model of service delivery, with volunteer interviews, agency support and training for volunteers and managers, now occurring online. Over 160 volunteer interviews were held in the first six months of the year with many in our community wanting to offer their help through the crisis. Consultations with volunteer involving organisations were held to constantly be aware of their needs, in a quickly evolving situation.

Our volunteer network also continued to meet online through the period of COVID-19 restrictions. During this time, the strength of the network was demonstrated through the inter-agency support, the sharing of ideas to continue to support and engage volunteers and the adaptions that have occurred to services, so that they are able to continue to deliver a service.

The knowledge and expertise of the GDVRS volunteer Information Officers and the strength of providing a personalised service was apparent again this year. Providing a personalised service to meet the needs of both the volunteers and the volunteer involving organisations is a priority for GDVRS and can be simply illustrated by the many volunteer stories.

We would like to thank our volunteers, Lida van den Berg and Kaylin Armstrong, for their skills and efforts in providing support to potential volunteers. We would also like to thank the City of Greater Dandenong for their ongoing support of the GDVRS service.

How we match the needs of volunteers and organisations

Mariam, in her third year of a psychology degree, attended an interview for volunteering. She wasn't sure what she wanted. Upon inquiring about her interests, the Interview Officer learned she loved horses. She was very surprised that there was a volunteering role where she could be involved with supporting those who work with disabilities as well as caring for the horses.

Mariam was referred to *Riding for the Disabled* at Myuna Farm. Mariam was thrilled. She was contacted about a month later and advised she was thoroughly enjoying her volunteering role for the RDA.

Anusha was very clear about the area she wanted to volunteer in. Her skillset included marketing, social media and the arts. She was a new arrival to Australia and still in the process of building her life in a new country.

Having recently become aware of a small not-for-profit organization that was looking for a volunteer who could market their programs, the Information Officer recommended the organisation and an interview was arranged.

We spoke to Anusha a few weeks later and she was so pleased with her volunteering role as she was able to contribute to the organization's vision as well as strengthening her own skills and gaining Australian workplace experience.

Brett Holland
CrimCheck Manager

CrimCheck

Crimcheck enjoyed a productive year until the impact of COVID-19 was felt across the nation.

We managed to achieve good results for our clients through the first half of the financial year, but as the pandemic hit we were faced with the reality that staff and volunteer movements would be impacted. We managed to keep operating at full capacity throughout the pandemic and even increased the level of service we provide to many clients.

As with all Victorian organisations we have awaited the news of changing restrictions with trepidation for what it means to everyone. Whilst our volunteers needed to take a break all of the paid staff have remained consistent throughout the year.

CrimCheck staff

Brett Holland
Alyson Ritchie
Samuel Lucas
Hayssam El Janoudi
Samantha Dove
Louise Byrne
Nuashaba Oishee Ennamullah

CrimCheck volunteers

Monika Bushan
Reshma Lachireddi
Athini Amarasiri

Carlos Varsavsky
Volunteer Driver

15

A Volunteer's Story

As I approached retirement, I always thought that volunteering would be a very good option to fill my time, keep me engaged, and generally feel good about it. I like driving, so after seeing huge numbers of volunteering opportunities on govolunteer.com.au

I settled on a shortlist. After a process of applications, reference checks and Police checks I settled for two days a week with SEV and another two with Doncare, the latter in a very different role. Despite being a highly active person, and a self-starter, I have found that having an established routine of commitments is a positive contribution to organising my days around volunteering, with spare time dedicated to my multiple projects.

However, it is on the job satisfaction front that volunteering, particularly at SEV, had turned out to far exceed my expectations.

I know I am helping provide a necessary and welcomed service to our clients, but when at least 60% of them tell you, without prompting or being asked, how much they value the service it feels great!

I feel being part of something fundamentally good, as I told some people some time ago.

It is fantastic, I highly recommend it, and I will not give it up in a hurry, that's for sure!

Independent Auditor's Report

To the members of South East Volunteers Incorporated

A.B.N. 66 484 048 216

Report on the Audit of the Financial Report

Opinion

We have audited the accompanying financial report of South East Volunteers Incorporated (the association) which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2020 and the statement of comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements including a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information, and the statement by members of the committee.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial report of the association for the year ended 30 June 2020 is prepared, in all material respects, in accordance with the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 and Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditors' Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report section of our report. We are independent of the association in accordance with the auditor independence requirements of the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (the code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the code.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Emphasis of Matter – Basis of Accounting

We draw attention to note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report is prepared to assist the association in complying with the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose. Our report is intended solely for the association and should not be distributed to or used by parties other than the association.

Our opinion is not modified in respect to this matter.

Responsibilities of Management and those Charged with Governance

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, management is responsible for assessing the association's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the association or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the association's financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibility for the Audit of the Financial Report

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditors' report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit.

We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the company's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the director.

- Conclude on the appropriateness of the director's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the company's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditors' report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditors' report. However, future events or conditions may cause the company to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with Management regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Name of Firm ..... Morton Watson & Young

MORTON WATSON & YOUNG AUDIT PTY LTD
Chartered Accountants

Name of Director ..... Kerpal

Kerpal S Harnam – Registered Company Auditor

Address 51 Robinson Street, Dandenong Vic 3175

Dated this 12th day of October

17 Statement by Members of the Board

The board has determined that the association is a reporting entity and that this general purpose financial statement should be prepared in accordance with the accounting policies outlined in Note 1 to the financial statements.

In the opinion of the board the financial statements as set out on pages 41 to 51:

1. Presents a true and fair view of the financial position of South East Volunteers Incorporated as at 30 June 2020 and its performance for the year ended on that date.
2. At the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that South East Volunteers Incorporated will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.
3. The financial statements and notes satisfy the requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission Act 2012.

This statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the Board of Management and is signed for and on behalf of the Board by:

Chairperson ..... Andrew Freeman .....

Treasurer .....

Dated this ..... 07/10 ..... day of ..... Oct 2020 .....

Statement of Comprehensive Income

	Note	2020 ($)	2019 ($)
Revenue	3	1,113,560	1,091,384
Other income	3	31,976	2,264
		1,145,536	**1,093,648**
Administration expenses		(58,851)	(55,815)
Auditor's remuneration	4	(3,250)	(3,200)
Depreciation and amortisation expenses		(45,675)	(47,913)
Employee expenses		(819,395)	(828,628)
Motor vehicle and travelling expenses		(29,449)	(30,659)
Occupancy expenses		(53,437)	(53,517)
Police check expenses		(937)	(1,229)
Program and project expenses		(45,596)	(57,599)
Volunteers expenses		(5,783)	(10,572)
Profit before income tax	**5**	**83,163**	**4,516**
Retained earnings at the beginning of the financial year		1,231,993	1,227,477
Total comprehensive income for the year		**1,315,156**	**1,231,993**

Notes

A complete set of notes will be made available to members at the Annual General Meeting or on request.

Statement of Financial Position

	Note	2020 ($)	2019 ($)
Assets			
Current Assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	6	1,317,597	1,178,611
Trade and other receivables	7	49,272	41,939
Total Current Assets		**1,366,869**	**1,220,550**
Non-Current Assets			
Property, plant and equipment	8	128,752	174,426
Total Non-Current Assets		**128,752**	**174,426**
Total Assets		**1,495,621**	**1,394,976**
Liabilities			
Current Liabilities			
Trade and other payables	9	15,542	23,976
Provisions	10	164,923	139,007
Total Current Liabilities		**180,465**	**162,983**
Total Liabilities		**180,465**	**162,983**
Net Assets		**1,315,156**	**1,231,993**
Equity			
Retained earnings	11	1,315,156	1,231,993
Total Equity		**1,315,156**	**1,231,993**

20 Statement of Changes in Equity

	Retained earnings ($)	Total ($)
Balance at 1 July 2018	**1,227,477**	**1,227,477**
Profit attributable to members	4,516	4,516
Balance at 30 June 2019	**1,231,993**	**1,231,993**
Profit attributable to members	83,163	83,163
Balance at 30 June 2020	**1,315,156**	**1,315,156**

21 Statement of Cash Flows

	Note	2020 ($)	2019 ($)
Cash Flows from Operating Activities			
Receipts from funding/grants		865,835	872,404
Payments to suppliers and employees		(999,215)	(1,037,152)
Interest received		27,657	17,681
Other income		244,709	202,841
Net cash provided by operating activities	**12**	**138,986**	**55,774**
Cash Flows from Investing Activities			
Proceeds from sale of equipment and motor vehicles		-	9,091
Payments for equipment and motor vehicles		-	(27,986)
Net cash provided by (used in) investing activities		**-**	**(18,895)**
Net increase in cash held		138,986	36,879
Cash at beginning of financial year		1,178,611	1,141,732
Cash at end of financial year	**6**	**1,317,597**	**1,178,611**

Income and Expenditure Statement

	2020 ($)	2019 ($)
Revenue		
Fees & Charges Unrestricted	46,059	48,928
Training & Seminar Income	7,234	-
Donation from CrimCheck Ltd	150,000	140,000
Outgoings Reimbursed	9,750	9,409
Donations Received	25	445
Cashflow Boost	31,976	-
	245,044	**198,782**
Other Revenue		
Interest Received	**27,657**	**17,681**
Grants		
City of Monash	110,000	125,257
Department of Health & Human Services, Victoria	190,535	199,025
Department of Social Services	417,297	392,773
In-Kind Rental Assistance	41,981	41,981
City of Greater Dandenong	85,522	80,000
City of Casey	20,500	20,000
Other Grants	7,000	13,369
	872,835	**872,405**
Sundry Income	-	2,516
Profit on Sale of Non-current Assets	-	2,264
	900,492	**894,866**
	1,145,536	**1,093,648**

	2020 ($)	2019 ($)
Expenditure		
Annual Report Design	1,770	1,680
Assets purchased < $5,000	90	174
Auditor's Remuneration	3,250	3,200
Board/Governance Expenses	1,940	1,103
Casey Outreach Expenses	1,988	3,006
Cleaning & Pest Control	6,668	7,042
Computer Expenses	22,653	18,412
Conferences	2,119	-
Consultancy Fees	750	-
Depreciation	45,675	47,913
Electricity & Gas	3,805	3,990
Employees' Amenities	1,485	2,417
Health & Safety	1,604	-
Holiday Pay Provision	11,841	4,853
Insurance Premiums	1,010	1,004
Long Service Leave Provision	14,076	(3,686)
Motor Vehicle Expenses	28,730	29,610
Police Checks & Fees	937	1,229
Postage, Freight & Couriers	8,323	8,350
Printing & Stationery	7,421	7,812
Project Expenses	6,972	5,797
Registrations, Subscriptions & Conferences	559	3,991
Rent of Premises	41,981	41,981
Repairs & Maintenance	893	330
Social Support Program	35,886	48,796
Staff Training & Development	2,430	10,612
Sundry Expenses	83	133
Superannuation Contributions	66,239	67,054
Telephone, Fax & Internet	12,973	13,330
Travel & Accommodation	719	1,049
Volunteers Expenses	5,783	10,572
Wages & Salaries	706,929	732,068
Workcover	14,791	15,310
	1,062,373	**1,089,132**
Profit for the Year	**83,163**	**4,516**

Acknowledgements

City of Monash

City of Greater Dandenong

City of Casey

Australian Government Department of Social Services

Department of Health & Human Services

Andrews Foundation

Aus Consulting

Balanced4Life

Better Place Australia

Bill Pyman

Brendan Scott

Bridges Connecting Communities

Bruce County Hotel

Department of Nutrition, Dietetics and Food, Monash University

Grill'd Glen Waverley

Highways Hotel

InTech Pty Ltd.

Michelle James, AUS Consulting

Moderate Nutrition Services

Monash Police Stations

Mulgrave Country Club

Nick Lauria, Underdog Design

Norton Rose Fulbright

Novotel Glen Waverley

Pinewood Bendigo Bank

Public Libraries, City of Monash

Roula Fenech

Royal Australian Navy Band

St Johns Ambulance

The Hub for Learning

Waverley RSL

Wellbeing Campus

Wimmigrants of Australia

South East volunteers