South East volunteers

Strengthening our Community through Connecting People

Annual Report

2023/2024

South East Volunteers Inc is proud to acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and Bunurong people as traditional custodians of the land we operate on and we pay respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Elders, past and present who have been an integral part of the region's history and its future.

Our community is made up of diverse cultures, beliefs, abilities, bodies, sexualities, ages and genders. We are committed to access, equity, participation and rights for everyone: principles which empower, foster harmony and increase the wellbeing of an inclusive community.

Our Vision

Our local community should be a place where everyone feels safe and that they belong. At South East Volunteers, our programs will be client and community focused, and will support the needs of our diverse community. We will promote participation, inclusion, connection, and empowerment in everything we do.

"We will live this everyday"

Our Purpose

South East Volunteers has a crucial role to play in the South Eastern Melbourne suburbs in connecting people and our communities. Our services and programs foster inclusivity and connectedness and support safety and wellbeing. We will continue to Strengthen our Community through our Vision and Strategic Plan with programs that remove barriers to participation.

"We are an organisation of dedicated volunteers and staff supporting communities' wellbeing and being a trusted partner that understands and is part of the community"

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1 Our Board

Tamra Keating – Chairperson

Jey Thanigasalam – Vice Chairperson

Stanley Goricane – Secretary

Kee Chi – Treasurer

Despina Djumas – General Member

Elizabeth Benson – General Member

Terry Long – General Member (Resigned 2024)

Christine Papas – General Member (Resigned 2024)

2 Our Staff

Gavin Watson
CEO

Shirlene Standish
Volunteering & Community Engagement Manager

Christina Saladino
Client Services Manager

May El Abyad
Outreach Services Manager

Kerri West
Finance Manager

Sharon Morgan
Safety Register Coordinator

Suzanne Hannigan
Social Support Coordinator

Gary Shih
Chinese Seniors Coordinator

Mei Ip
Volunteering & Chinese Seniors Officer

Sarah Kelly
Disability Inclusive Volunteering Coordinator

Shane Gan
Transport Coordinator

Lisa Hester
VMA Project Coordinator

Mamta Mehta
Intake and Assessment Officer

Agatha Fernandez
Administration & Operations Officer

Marija Rakovic
Administration Officer

Belinda Zaitz
Client Services Administration Officer

Julia Barnes
Client Services Administration Officer

Ridvan Demiral
Digital Communications Officer

Sarah Hudson
Project & Administration Officer

3 Our Volunteers

Life members
Elizabeth Bruce
Norm Gibbs, OAM
Raymond Randall

20+ Years
Judith Wescott
Patricia Witt
Elizabeth McDonald
Susan Trowbridge
Jenifer Sampson

15+ Years
Bronwyn Lloyd
Lisbeth Calder
John Jarvis
Simon Chan
Kenneth Calder
Anthony Alexander

10+ Years
Ross McDowall
Patricia Russell
Phillip G. King
Anthony Bray
Leanne Shaw
Janice Yu
Terence Long
Fay Whitehead
Richard Borthwick
David Hawkins
Kathryn Holder
Rathi Vinay
Quang Pham

5+ Years
Kaye Huxtable
Julie Myers
Stanley Goricane
Joanne Burns
Han Seow
Linda George
Peter Halliday
Brenda Twigg
Rodney Florence
Jo Anne Howell
Carlos Varsavsky
Despina Djumas
Colin Rodrigues
Elisabeth Wilson
Gregory Brown
Gillian Diamond
Raymond Standish
Pamela Smith
Gary Young
Margaretha La Lau
Narelle Walker
Christopher Lodewyke

>5 Years
Mike Wilson
Nurcan Tasci
Robert Piggott
Ralph Holmes
Roger Lough
Graham Robertson
Shellagh Jarvis
Glenn Gillin
Margaret Campion
Raymond Arnold
Christina Bong
Julia Barnes
Garry Miritis
Trevor Huf
Chrisoula Papas
Mae Chen
Sandra Riley
Tamra Keating
Paul Nikakis
Cheryl O'Shea
Kee Chi
Yit Teck Parn
John Bende
Nicholas Derry
Doreen Hall
Mary McLean
Belinda Zaitz
Justina Choy
Moh-Lee Ng
Peter Riley
Tam Lac Tran
Kevin Tse
Jian Shen
Frank Hofmann
Li Fen Wu
Indeera Wimalasuriya
Steven Waugh
Jey Thanigasalam
Yi Zheng
Aswin Srikanthan
Kingsley McDonald
Hiran Leitan
Sui Ping Yam
Elizabeth Benson
Kashifa Shaikh
Sheetal Fotedar
Gwendoline Pinto
HongBin Chang
Fariha Ahmed
Yan Cao
Lillee Handley-Valentini
Michelle Scarff
Yu Jun Chen
Chantelle Yin
Rita Napoli
Marifat Karima
Kavita Mathur
Fahria Talukder

4 From the Chairperson
Tamra Keating

"Volunteers are the only human beings on the face of the earth who reflect this nation's compassion, unselfish caring, patience, and just plain loving one another." – Erma Bombeck.

In May, this year I attended my first official event as the new Chair of the South East Volunteers Board, the Safety Register Clients social event, held at Oakleigh RSL. As I looked around the room, and we sang happy birthday to a lady turning 101, I thought about all the phone calls these volunteers make.

I was saddened by the thought that this might be the only touch point many community members receive, and how welcomed the connection must be. Their 20-minute conversation, sometimes in-language may be the only human interaction, and what a worthwhile yet unappreciated service this is for the older or vulnerable population.

I would like to thank Christine Papas and Terry Long, who both stepped down from the board but remain volunteers at SEV. Both made significant contributions during their time on the board, and I thank them considerably for their service. With 3 new members joining the team in recent months, we move forward with a full board of 9 tremendous volunteers. We recently completed some professional development in governance, and we look forward to supporting Gavin and the team at SEV.

The new offices although not perfect have created a fantastic opportunity for many of the SEV programs to share resources and utilise meeting rooms in the local area. We would like to thank Mount Street Neighbourhood House, Notting Hill Neighbourhood House, Glen Waverley Uniting Church, the Clayton Community Centre and the Ibis Hotel for all their support.

The 2024 AGM gives us a wonderful opportunity to review our programs. The new transport system although not working at 100% just yet, gives the team optimism for the potential of the software. We look at the programs and services we do well, but also where we need to expand to deliver innovative programs and services and which new communities can be enriched. SEV needs to continue to grow, offering new services to the wider communities, streamline current services to be more efficient and look at increasing revenue generating opportunities to survive into the future.

We know the government will have new reforms and expect more with less funding, which is why we need to look to our amazing staff and volunteers. SEV has the talent and experience to be the leader. The board looks forward to supporting the next stage of the South East Volunteers journey.

5 From the CEO
Gavin Watson

Last year, I said change is going to be the common theme for us over the next few years. We certainly got plenty of that.

I firstly need to thank all our volunteers, staff and board, for your patience through these changes. I will list some of those changes below, but one of the biggest things we needed to learn was how to change. After being in a single location for almost 2 decades and delivering the same programs, the world and sector was changing around us. This took up a lot of our efforts, and we will improve how we go about that aspect as we learn and experience change more.

I would like to thank the team at CrimCheck, our social enterprise. They do an amazing job for the community sector in their own right, and the funding support to us is greatly appreciated and allows us to continue working through the unknowns of government funding.

I would like to thank all the organisations that support us and make our work happen.

- The local councils that fund and support us; the City of Monash, the City of Greater Dandenong and the City of Casey; we work well with their teams and look forward to continuing these amazing relationships.
- Our other funding bodies the Commonwealth represented by the Department of Health and Aged Care, and the State of Victoria represented by the Department of Health. We have managed to strengthen our relationships with the responsible officers in each of these government organisations, which is important to navigating the changes in their needs.
- The peak bodies we work with in Australia Community Transport Association, Volunteering Victoria, Volunteering Australia, and Victorian Council of Social Service.
- We have moved our social support activities, team meetings, and training into other community venues and they have all been very supportive in accommodating us.

All the people and organisations I have mentioned above are an important part of the SEV team. Everyone has an important role to play in the delivery of our programs and without each and every one of them, we could not do what we do.

To quickly list some of the changes implemented this past 12 months;

- Our phones have moved to the Teams telephony platform allowing us to work remotely and communicate better.
- Our Transport management software, along with Social Support coordination moved to the Polixen platform, allowing us to better scale our programs once implementation is complete.
- We joined the Community Transport Pilot program called the National Variable Pricing Matrix Pilot that is important to informing the future on the community transport sector.
- The big one was relocating our office to 290 Springvale Rd and renovating some of the building.
- We have had many recent changes in staff, both new arrivals and some staff leaving, and also one staff member going on maternity leave (a first for SEV we believe)
- We have just commenced some For-purpose/For-profit enterprises within SEV in the areas of providing fee-based training programs and workplace accessibility support.
- We extended our community development with the Hot Topics events, with much more to come in this space.
- We also participated in the Workforce Australia program and established a Student Placement program, which has generated interest from people needing experience in our sector, and provided us with great support.
- We have a new website, and new look and feel, which will continue to roll out through all our materials.

So, after doing all of that, our teams are now very much focused on their program needs and continuing to deliver service to the community with more impact and in more efficient ways. Currently we are in the process of using technology better, being more engaged in our community, and communicating internally better. We continue to focus on what type of organisation we want to be, and how we work together, and how we serve our community better. We have achieved a lot but there is still a lot of work to be done.

Team meetings became a big part of our operational reviews and improvements. We are all part of a program team, but also part of one larger team, South East Volunteers. We have started our Reconciliation Action Plan and hope to finish that soon and have already completed some activities in this area.

We need to continue working towards our vision: We will promote participation, inclusion, connection, and empowerment in everything we do. “We will live this everyday”.

Thanks again, for all your continued support to us.

SEV collage from Myrtle Street building

6 Client Services

Christina Saladino

This really has been a year of changes; communication systems, buildings, computer packages along with the processes and procedures that comes with it. We have also had a few staff changes with Sarah moving into the Administration Team and the hiring of two part time staff members, Julia and Belinda, to help out with the administration/compliance in the Client Services Team.

Last financial year identified that if South East Volunteers was to remain relevant and competitive within the Community Transport and Social Support areas and grow, our software would need to be updated. SEV decided to work as a development partner with Polixen. The complete software system change occurred at the beginning of April 2024, and although there have been some challenges, the staff at SEV has seen many benefits in areas such as Intake & Assessment, as well as the Invoicing. More improvements in the Transport and Social Support areas are still to come. Safety Register will remain separate from the system for the foreseeable future.

With the new software package, we have moved to a cashless service and also been able to sign transport service agreements with over 30 Home Care packages to support their clients. South East Volunteers is participating in the Community Transport Pricing Pilot, which started in December 2023. There have only been 5 organisations included in the pilot from Victoria and 32 from across Australia. The pricing pilot is a collaboration between the Department of Health and Aged Care, University of South Australia and Australian Community Transport Association. Although there is extra work for the team, the data provided for the pilot and the sessions SEV are attending will aim to ensure that Community Transport continues in a sustainable and efficient way, into the future.

SEV applied and received funding through the Commonwealth Home Support Program, to run Social Support activities, with notification received in April 2024. As the new SEV building does not have space to run the social support activities, as per the old building, SEV is starting to work out of different centres. Mount Street Neighbourhood House holds the existing programs that were run at Myrtle Street and we have trialled a few new activities at the Notting Hill Neighbourhood House. In the coming year, we will revisit the structure, programs and areas the programs will run, as the new pricing structure has been implemented which incorporates the new funding.

The Monash Community Safety Register numbers remain steady, although this year has seen referrals come from several organisations, within the City of Monash.

Now that there are 2 minibuses available, we have been approached by several organisations to hire the older bus, although as SEV has been short on volunteer drivers, the organisations have had to provide their own driver on most occasions. This has been a new income stream for SEV, while we build up our Social Support activities for days when 2 buses are needed for SEV outings.

June (Left) and Despina (Right) our volunteers taking calls

7 Monash Community Safety Register

Sharon Morgan

700+ Active members, 7248 Calls made, 9 Languages supported

The Monash Community Safety Register had a successful year, actively supporting the safety and well-being of its members and achieving good outcomes for all Safety Register members.

For the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024:

- There was constantly over 700+ active Safety Register members.
- A total of 7284 calls were made to Safety Register members on a regular basis, with clients in need receiving more frequent calls.

The Safety Register volunteer team comprised 8 Safety Register volunteers for the majority of the year. Call schedules were maintained to members by recruiting a casual Safety Register volunteer, when needed.

In addition to English, three members of the Safety Register volunteer team also speak Italian, Greek and Chinese dialects (Mandarin and Cantonese). SEV staff members can also provide language-specific services if required, with staff members speaking Italian, French, Hindi, Arabic, Croatian and Chinese dialects.

109 members are considered to be particularly vulnerable due to a number of factors (including, but not limited to, minimal or no family or friends to provide support, health and have significant mobility issues, disabilities and advancing age).

As at 30th June 2024, there were seven Safety Register members aged between 100 and 102, all of whom were living in their own homes. In 2024 four Safety Register members joined the 100+ Club

Calls to Safety Register members included reminders about changing their clocks at the start and end of daylight saving. They were advised to ask a family member, trusted friend or service provider to check their smoke alarms to ensure they were working, or to help change batteries if required.

Quarterly newsletters were mailed out to members, which included various articles relating to safety and wellbeing. Following is a sample of articles:

- strategies for managing extreme heat,
- tips for fire safety in winter,
- checking smoke alarms,
- scams awareness information and how to report a scam,
- elder abuse awareness
- updates on changes to My Aged Care, Home Care Packages (HCP) and Commonwealth Home Support Programs (CHSP).
- An article in the Summer 2023/2024 newsletter gave some tips on preparing for unplanned power outages, which was timely given the power outage in February 2024 which significantly impacted some areas in Monash.

Safety Register members were provided with information about and referrals to other services, programs and organisations, including South East Volunteers' transport and social support programs, Council on the Ageing (COTA), Seniors' Rights Victoria and Victoria Police in the City of Monash.

The coordinator (and other SEV staff members) remained connected with local community organisations and actively participated in various networks. In addition to this, several public speaking engagements were undertaken which provided a good opportunity to maintain community engagement and extend the promotion and reach of the Safety Register program.

A successful and enjoyable event for Safety Register members was held at the Oakleigh Carnegie RSL in Oakleigh on Friday 24 May 2024. This was a new venue and all who attended provided extremely positive feedback about the venue, live music entertainment and catering. In addition to Safety Register members, the event was also attended by dignitaries representing, City of Monash Community Safety Officer, Victoria Police in the City of Monash and SEV Board. Senior Sergeant Deb Day and Senior Constable Sara Coe gave short presentations on personal safety. Sergeant Mark Carbone also attended and all engaged with Safety Register members.

SEV's CEO (Gavin Watson), Client Services Manager (Christina Saladino) and Monash Community Safety Register Coordinator (Myself) also provided mentoring and support to two other similar Community Support Registers who were navigating significant challenges in running their programs. They were most appreciative of SEV's guidance and support. This demonstrates an unofficial acknowledgement that the Monash Community Safety Register is a well-run and resourced service, and a best practice benchmark for other similar programs.

8 Intake & Assessment

Mamta Mehta

1066 People contacted SEV for assessment

Over the years, we have supported, and continue to support, Monash residents aged 65 and older, as well as those under 65 with disabilities, who wish to live independently in their homes by offering: Transport, Social Support or Safety Register services. SEV services help clients sustain their independence, stay connected with friends and family and it reduces their isolation. Recognising the significance of social connection and interaction drives our commitment to providing these services.

This year, we have seen many positive changes, including the implementation of a new computer program that has transformed operations at South East Volunteers. The intake and assessment process has become more efficient with the use of laptops, which reduces the use of paper copies, as clients now sign their care plans electronically during visits, with copies emailed to them immediately. Adopting a cashless policy has provided a convenience for clients.

We have observed an increase in referrals from My Aged Care for transport and social support services, over the period, which replaces the clients who are moving onto Home Care Packages that we may no longer provide services to or are moving into Aged Care facilities. The referrals from MAC and other organisations are prioritised to conduct face to face assessments.

South East Volunteers, is an organisation that embraces multiple cultures & languages, enables clients with a language barrier, to connect, thus giving them an opportunity to be a part of society where they feel they belong. Our primary goal is to enhance clients' physical and mental well-being. With the dedication of our volunteer drivers, we continue to provide transport for medical appointments and social support activities, as well as the Safety Register regular calls.

Personally, my interactions with clients have given me deeper insights into their daily challenges and efforts to improve their lives. I hope our organisation continues to offer meaningful support to help them achieve their goals.

9 Social Support

Suzanne Hannigan

8000+ Social Support Hours

Social Support, as per the other programs has been filled with change. This past year has been an ever-changing scene, that we as a team, have navigated our way through. With change, brings opportunity.

Our CEO has brought to the table many wonderful new ideas of where SEV can direct its Social Support focus. With the efforts of a number of the team we were fortunate to secure funding through the Commonwealth Home Support Program (same area as our Community Transport Funding), to allow our Social Support program to not only continue, but be funded independently from SEV Transport. We are now able to offer programs to the greater community and not only to the clients who are referred to SEV for their transport requirements.

We recently commenced our program strategy with a matching pricing structure to allow SEV to expand into other areas in the South East. As a result, we are in discussions with other community groups to look at collaborating to bring more opportunities for the greater community to connect socially. A unified South East working towards breaking down barriers that isolate our community.

We now welcome the community to register with SEV, to join our Social Support Groups such as our fortnightly Hobbies & Craft Group and Ageless Grace (chair-based exercise classes) both currently run out of Mount Street Neighbourhood house. There has also been a trial class of Ageless Grace running at Notting Hill Community House since the beginning of the year, during school terms.

Out & About - Lunch group outings are popular and the clients have attended various venues such as local cafes, restaurants in the greater South East and have visited a number of nurseries often towards the Yarra Valley way. In addition, our Men's Lunch Groups have been not only travelled locally but have gone as far as Healesville and Williamstown. They've even been known to grab a sneaky ice-cream along the beach front. Another favourite outing is going down near Port Melbourne to watch some of the ships heading in or out of the bay. Our Ladies' Lunch Groups, although haven't travelled as far, are generally local and intimate. More importantly, they have marked some memorable milestones, with more centenarians among them.

Thanks to our devoted & loyal Volunteer Drivers and Jockeys, we have continued to provide services, to take our clients out regularly, taking into account what can be Melbourne's 4 seasons in 1 day weather conditions. The nursery café outings have been a welcomed outing and we look forward to offering this on a more regular basis. Even with the shortage of volunteers we have been getting the buses out, as often as possible, for the clients to be socially connected and have enjoyable experiences.

As we all know, change can be a wonderful thing. Navigating our way through little hiccups here and there, has caused a delay on our intended expansion. In saying that, the new computer program partnership we have embarked on is proving to be a wonderful tool. As we work together to develop its efficiency, this in turn will make our social support outings more accessible to more people wishing to be involved.

We look forward to the opportunities this past year of change has brought about. With my deepest gratitude to our Volunteers, we couldn't make this difference to the community without them!

Monash Community Safety Register Event

10 Chinese Social Support Group

The Monday Group

Gary Shih

During the period from 1st July 2023 to 30th June 2024, the Chinese Seniors' Social Support Group held 44 meetings. The big change for clients this year has been moving venue.

The new meeting venue, Mount Street Neighbourhood House, is well-suited in terms of size and equipment, allowing clients to continue attending the group comfortably.

Over the past year, our regular group activities continued to enrich the lives of our members. Morning exercises, including Tai Chi and Qigong (Ba Duan Jin), helped maintain physical well-being and promote a healthy lifestyle. Local news updates kept our members informed and engaged with current affairs, encouraging community participation. Playing games together provided mental exercise, a playful escape, and fostered a friendly competitive spirit.

The Chinese Seniors' Social Support Group celebrated four significant festivals: Chinese New Year, Dragon Boat Festival, Mid-Autumn Festival, and Christmas. These celebrations allowed our members to embrace and cherish their cultural heritage, bringing them closer together as they shared traditions, stories, food, and delightful moments.

Chinese Group outings promote an active lifestyle and enhance social interactions, and we arranged outings for our members with this in mind. These excursions allowed them to explore the beauty of nature, visit interesting places, and create lasting memories with friends. They also enjoyed BBQs in the park.

Thanks for the support of our staff and volunteers. At the beginning of 2024, we were short of volunteers to help, but now there are four volunteers who help run the group. When there is an outing, we prefer to have more volunteers. Special thanks to our volunteer Janice, who did not miss any meetings and always helps our clients with a smile. She is the most reliable volunteer I have ever seen.

As we look ahead to the next year, we aim to build upon past achievements and continue expanding our programs and services. The Chinese Seniors' Social Group remains committed to providing a nurturing and inclusive environment for our beloved seniors.

Chinese Social Groups

The Friday Group

Mei Ip

The Chinese Seniors' Social Support Group plays a crucial role in improving the well-being of Chinese seniors by addressing their common challenges. It provides a warm, caring environment that helps prevent isolation and loneliness by fostering social connections and community integration. By offering a platform for engagement and support, the group creates a strong sense of belonging among the elderly, enhancing their overall quality of life and ensuring they remain connected and valued within the community.

South East Volunteers is aware of the importance of physical and mental health for the elderly. To address these aspects, the Chinese Seniors' Social Support Group provides a variety of activities aimed at enhancing overall well-being and encouraging community engagement. These activities include Tai Chi, joint exercises, fall prevention steps, sharing local and international news and community information, talks, games, karaoke, outings, and celebrations of traditional festivals.

This year, we moved our Social Support Group to the Neighbourhood House, which has more space to welcome additional members. We also offer transportation services to the new location, making it easier for more isolated individuals to attend the group.

The Chinese Seniors' Social Support Group's activities are greatly enjoyed by the members, with outings such as picnics in the park and sightseeing excursions being particularly popular. These events offer them the chance to explore new environments and experience various activities. This year, for the Dragon Boat Festival, the group celebrated with a special outing in the park.

South East Volunteers is dedicated to ensuring that their members receive the support they need, working tirelessly to fulfill this goal.

We sincerely appreciate all the volunteers who dedicate their time and effort to the Chinese Seniors' Social Support Group. Their commitment is crucial to our success, allowing us to offer valuable support and activities to our community. Their contributions are essential to our ability to serve and engage with our members.

Chinese Seniors' Social Event

11 Community Transport

Shane Gan

13,784 Community transport trips

Client Testimonial:

"I would like to say thank you to the drivers who have assisted me with my trips so far. They are always on time and courteous."

They say that change is the only constant and we can expect change to happen whether we like it or not. This year has indeed been a year full of changes for this organisation, and even more so for SEV Community Transport. Our ability to anticipate the changes in our environment and taking action to adapt will make the difference between thriving and growing or having to reduce our services as resources are squeezed out by forces beyond our control.

SEV Community Transport had 2 challenging times over the year. The first was the office relocation in November 2023. The new premises can hold more vehicles than the Myrtle Street premises, although there is still some juggling with volunteer cars and SEV vehicles at both ends of the day, due to street restrictions. The 2nd was the introduction of the new computer software Polixen starting on the 2nd April, 2024. Polixen will be a software program that can be utilised if SEV increases Community Transport into other Municipal areas and is working towards operating in a paperless environment. In both cases SEV was able to continue providing transport.

One of the highlights towards the end of this financial year was the purchase of a new vehicle, which was based on the outcome of a working group, between volunteer drivers and staff, into the most suitable vehicle for servicing our client demographics. We looked at several factors including vehicle configurations, sustainability, price and obtained comments from a number of clients before settling on a SUV as the best configuration and value for our clients. Based on the recommendation from the working group, SEV purchased a 2024 MG ZS Vibe to add to our fleet.

We have mentioned in previous annual reports that SEV is very fortunate to have a loyal and dedicated base of volunteers and staff, and it is worth mentioning it again, and again. For almost 40 years, 39 to be exact, our volunteers have given their time and effort selflessly to serve and strengthen our community. This has made the lives of many of our clients so much better with the ability to access services for their health and well-being. Clients have been able to attend their medical appointments, attend

rehabilitation and exercise sessions to improve their health, go to banks and chemists, and meet with their friends at social groups for their “happy time of the week” as one client puts it.

All this could only be done by the combined effort of our staff and volunteers who answered the phones, took bookings and cancellations, called clients to confirm their bookings, allocated clients into vehicles, drove the vehicles to take the clients, and entered data into the system for reporting to the government departments.

SEV Community Transport continued to provide our clients in the midst of all the changes with the best transport service that we could to enable our clients to get to their appointments and social activities such as clubs or groups easily and with minimal issues. Our service enabled our clients to remain connected to the community, and continued to have and enjoy good health and well-being while living independently in their own homes.

Ray (Right) our volunteer driver transporting a client

12 Volunteering & Community Engagement

Shirlene Standish

Volunteer Testimonial:

"I started volunteering because I felt a need to give back to the community. I am a volunteer driver and I enjoy meeting people and helping those who are less fortunate than I am."

Every year we seem to be looking at changes in the volunteer sector and 2023/24 was no different. This year saw us change location – having been at 5 Myrtle Street for almost 20 years, and moving roughly 600 metres away to 290 Springvale Road. This change was necessary, and it gave us a great opportunity to partner with other organisations to provide volunteer interviews and training, as well as opening up our Clayton office again at the Clayton Community Centre. We expanded our services to the Springvale Community Hub once a week, and we are preparing to do the same at the Noble Park Community Centre. In essence, we have taken volunteering "on the road" and offered volunteer referrals to other areas of the South East region of Melbourne.

The success of our programs is not done alone and we are part of a village that works together to make our community a better place. We continue to work with the City of Monash, the City of Greater Dandenong and the City of Casey, and we are grateful for the support they provide to our volunteer programs. Volunteering Victoria has also been invaluable as we work together to remove barriers to volunteering and provide more opportunities to be inclusive and celebrate diversity in the community.

The Volunteer Services team is excellent and we work together to assist each other and provide support to volunteers. My sincere thanks to Mei Ip – Monash Volunteer Resource Service, May El Abyad – Greater Dandenong & Casey Volunteer Resource Service, Sarah Kelly – Access & Inclusion, and Lisa Hester – Volunteer Management Activity & Strong & Resilient Communities. As a team, we work together with volunteers, non-profit organisations, local governments, and state government to ensure the volunteering sector grows and our communities have the opportunity to engage in volunteering.

We continue to offer volunteers three options for interviews - face to face, via telephone or online via Zoom, MS Teams or FaceTime. This has proved very effective.

In total, we recruited 612 volunteers for non-profit organisations located in the South East area. This is down from last year, and again, the reasons include the continued uncertainty of COVID and also, the need of paid employment opportunities.

Out of the 612 volunteers we interviewed in 2023/24:

- 355 people were from a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background, speaking 55 different languages
- 33 people were living with a disability
- 11 people struggled with mental health issues
- 134 people were unemployed and
- 137 volunteers referred were under the age of 24

Our Administration team, Agatha Fernandez, Sarah Hudson and Marija Rakovic, ensured our many offices, locations and training ran smoothly and everyone got to where they needed to be. They coordinated a fantastic team of admin volunteers who faithfully showed up, showed initiative and made our lives so much easier.

Volunteer Expos

In the previous year we had great success with 2 Volunteer Expos, so this year we did 2 more – one in the City of Monash and one in the City of Stonnington. Our Monash Expo had a great turnout of community organisations, however the weather was against us, so the community attendance wasn't as good as we had hoped. The Stonnington Expo, however, had good weather, good participation by community groups and a great turnout of potential volunteers.

Training & Workshops

As part of our VMA project and SARC funding, we were able to provide some great workshops for Managers of Volunteers, such as Accidental Counsellor, Cultural Awareness on site at the Willum Warrain Aboriginal Association in Hastings, Fundraising for NFPs and Targeted Recruitment & Engaging Young People, Dealing with Difficult People, and Cultural Safety.

We also provided training directly to volunteers including Accidental Counsellor, Disability & Inclusion, Cultural Safety in the Community, as well as our Introduction to Volunteering – provided in English and Chinese. We offered these workshops in person and online and, in some cases, we did hybrid training – both online and in person.

National Volunteer Week & International Volunteer Day

We try and make a point of thanking our volunteers on a regular basis, but we love taking time to focus on them specifically. Celebrations were held for National Volunteer Week with thanks to the Ibis Hotel for a beautiful breakfast. We took this opportunity to let our volunteers know what a difference they make to their community and to our programs. We also celebrated volunteers in the city of Greater Dandenong with thanks to Belletti Restaurant for making it such a great afternoon.

Our International Volunteer Day took place on the 5th of December with a BBQ dinner at the Notting Hill Hotel and again, we celebrated with the rest of the world the important role volunteers have.

Community Engagement

At the end of the financial year, we commenced what will be a series of "Hot Topics", which will be opportunities to engage the local community, providing them with opportunities to meet with each other, and at the same time provide information on topics that are of interest to them. Our first event was held in June – and was entitled "Making Ends Meet in Challenging Times". We are holding another one on Personal Safety & Domestic Violence in July and have plans to have the "Hot Topics" events in other areas of the community and with topics that are pertinent to them. These events are free to all who wish to attend.

What Lies Ahead

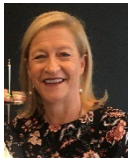
What lies ahead? More exciting changes, more opportunities to grow our programs, branch out into social enterprises, and continue to look for ways to engage and include the community – strengthening our community through connecting people. We are supported in these changes by our Board, our CEO, but most importantly, our amazing volunteers – they are our Unsung Heroes!

David Hawkins (Left) and Ken Calder (Right) receiving awards

13 Volunteer Snapshot

I have been volunteering in the administration area at SEV. I enjoy interacting with the staff, volunteers and I love talking with the clients – it gives me a sense of purpose. I think the role SEV plays in the community, providing transport and personal interactions with potentially isolated people is so important and I love being a part of it.
-Sandra Riley, 7 Years of Service

I commenced volunteering to fill up some time after my retirement. I enjoy helping the clients and spending some time talking with them. My volunteering helps those who might be isolated connect with others. I get real satisfaction from helping others.
-Hiran Leitan, 1 Year of Service



I have been a volunteer with the Monash Community Safety Register and also a member of the Board of Management for SEV. I retired from work and needed to fill my time. I love the satisfaction of knowing that I have helped someone who may be vulnerable, lonely or just struggling day to day.
-Despina Djumas, 7 Years of Service

What I enjoy most about volunteering with the social support team is making people feel like they are part of something – that they are included and valued in the community. I also benefit by getting out and about, socialising with people and knowing that I am helping others.
-Marga La Lau, 5 Years of Service

I started volunteering because I needed to gain back my confidence and to boost my self-esteem, while building my skills. My role includes connecting with potential volunteers and referring them to volunteer roles, so I get to use my admin skills and help others like me find volunteer work.
Fahria Talukder, 4 Months of Service

14 Outreach Volunteer Program

May El Abyad

Volunteering is the heart of the community.

Our commitment to the Greater Dandenong and Casey communities focuses on serving as a vital point of contact for the public, facilitating discussions on volunteering, and connecting potential volunteers with community organisations. These organisations rely on volunteers to drive their programs forward. Additionally, we actively collaborate with community organisations, offering training sessions for both volunteers and volunteer managers. We also provide these organisations with a platform to network, enabling managers to exchange ideas, share successes, and address concerns.

An example of our community engagement was with the Dandenong Toy Library. We successfully fostered connections between Disability Inclusive Organisations and the Toy Library. As a result, we have established two dedicated volunteer groups to support these services. The Toy Library expressed appreciation at our network meeting, highlighting the excellent performance of both volunteer groups in their respective roles.

Moreover, we conduct comprehensive monthly information sessions for new volunteers, including specialised sessions; a student session at Killester College and at Wellspring for Women, focusing on migrants and women refugees. Given that the cities of Greater Dandenong and Casey are significant hubs for new migrants and refugees, our engagement with these communities is vital. Volunteering serves as a pathway to employment, a means of learning, and an opportunity to improve English language skills. It also plays a crucial role in reducing isolation and supporting recovery from accidents or mental health challenges.

One poignant example of our impact is a young refugee mother who approached us seeking a volunteer opportunity. Despite the challenges of caring for two children with learning difficulties, she was eager to find time to learn new skills while her children attended kindergarten. We successfully matched her with a community organisation where she could work in social support, helping to reduce her isolation and empower her personal development.

In Greater Dandenong we had 301 interviews, which consisted of:

- 178 people were from a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background, speaking 55 different languages
- 60 people were unemployed
- 30 people were living with a disability

In Casey we had 128 interviews, which consisted of:

- 61 people were from a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background, speaking 55 different languages
- 50 people were unemployed
- 17 people were living with a disability

Lisa (Left), Sarah (Middle) and May (Right) at the Doveton Show

15 Disability Inclusive Volunteering Project

Sarah Kelly

The goal of the Disability Inclusive Volunteering project was to increase the number of organisations (who engage volunteers) who are disability inclusive, within the City of Greater Dandenong. These organisations would have an improved understanding of disability inclusion and would be better able to recruit, support and retain people with a disability in meaningful volunteer roles.

The Disability Inclusive Volunteering project worked with organisations within the City of Greater Dandenong, who engage volunteers or are volunteer led. The structure of the program consisted of workshops and tailored in-house support across 3 rounds between 2023 and 2024. A large number of resources and tools were developed and made available online, to the participating organisations, along with a 'Community of Practice'. The content of the workshops was collaboratively designed with people with a lived experience of a disability (the Disability Advisory Group). The project also worked with an Organisation Advisory Group to assist with the development and presentation of the workshops.

The Disability Inclusive Volunteering program was operating in the City of Greater Dandenong for four years and has come to an end. We are grateful for the support and funding during that time from the City of Greater Dandenong. During the last 12 months we worked with a number of other organisations to improve their inclusion of people with disabilities and we look forward to assisting more in the future.

Sarah at the Snow Festival

16 Volunteer Management Activity (VMA)

Lisa Hester

It has been a very productive second year for SEV and the VMA5 Project with lots of interaction and new partnerships. Once again SEV is at the forefront of building relationships that continue to prosper.

Presenting at the Volunteering Victoria conference was a great opportunity to share the SEV vision and put the spotlight on our initiatives. It also enabled us to continue building on our current connections and developing new ones.

The addition of three new priority groups along with a shift in the funding model, means that SEV is now able to truly bridge the gap in volunteering services for those groups that have the largest barriers by connecting volunteers and VIO's for the good of all.

Year 3 sees us officially adding in 3 further priority groups and establishing a solid foundation of supporting;

- First Nations
- People living with a Disability
- New Migrants
- Youth
- Vulnerable Women
- Unemployed

First Nations

The expansion of The First Nations space has seen SEV continue to build strong relationships with local Gathering Places. An encouraging sign has been the facilitation between Gathering Places within Southern Metro which has been very exciting. This shows the depth of trust that has been built in the previous years of the program and supports our Reconciliation Action Plan.

This year, the decision was made to look at different ways of engaging with First Nations. Through the VMA5 Project, SEV was able to partner with Willum Warrain, a local Gathering Place within the Southern Metro Region. SEV staff were invited to attend an excursion where they were able to engage with First Nations Peoples and build on their own knowledge and understanding. We were also able to facilitate an introduction between Willum Warrain and Murnong Gathering Place, a new space in Glen Iris which fostered further relationship building and trust.

Disability

The disability priority group continues to expand with the Disability Inclusive Volunteer Program now revamped with a focus on being even more 'inclusive'. SEV has been able to secure partnerships with several key Disability providers enabling us to provide ongoing support and volunteer matching.

New Migrants/ Vulnerable Women

This year we have been focusing on creating marketing material in various languages to support our expanding cultures within Southern Metro. This has allowed SEV to streamline advertising of volunteering positions as well as social activities. SEV has also partnered with several local agencies supporting new migrants with a variety of programs to be rolled out in year 3 and beyond.

Youth

With the addition of the Youth priority group, we have been busy building relationships with schools within the Southern Metro Region. A highlight has been the year 10 students at Lyndhurst Secondary College, who have been working through Cert 2 in Inclusive Volunteering. SEV was able to present an Introduction to Volunteering training session for the students. This led to the students holding several fundraising activities before going on to engage at a local not-for-profit.

Unemployed

SEV has partnered with Windana, a locally run rehabilitation facility, to assist residents currently at the facility to apply for a Working with Children Check (WWCC) and then apply for volunteer positions. The project is designed to empower participants, allowing them to create necessary pathways needed on the road to recovery.

The feedback we received has been extremely positive, with 16 residents going through the program so far:

"Your work with them creates such a buzz, the feedback from each is that they feel empowered, feeling as though they are taking care of the things that worry them the most. One resident was quite emotional, telling me that he no longer felt like he was hiding from his responsibilities and that this process gave him newfound hope and confidence."

Richard Price: Recreation & Community Development Officer

SEV is committed to providing a 'People First' approach with several new partnerships in the works that will enable us to continue supporting these amazing programs and participants.

Hot Topics Event

17 Auditors Financial Report

17.1 Independent Auditor's Report

To the members of South East Volunteers Inc. and Controlled Entities

Opinion

We have audited the accompanying financial report of South East Volunteers Inc. and Controlled Entities, the (Registered Entity) and its subsidiaries (the Group), which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2024, the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, the statement of changes in equity and the statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of material accounting policy information, and the responsible persons' declaration.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial report of South East Volunteers Inc. and Controlled Entities has been prepared in accordance with Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012, including:

i. giving a true and fair view of the Group's financial position as at 30 June 2024 and of its financial performance for the year ended; and
ii. complying with Australian Accounting Standards - Simplified Disclosures and Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report section of our report. We are independent of the Registered Entity in accordance with the auditor independence requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 (ACNC Act) and the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (including Independence Standards) (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.

Responsibilities of Responsible Entities for the Financial Report

The responsible persons of the Registered Entity are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards - Simplified Disclosures and the ACNC Act, and for such internal control as the responsible entities determine is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error. In preparing the financial report, management is responsible for assessing the Registered Entity'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 Registered Entity or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so. Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Registered Entity's financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities 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 auditor's 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.

17.2 Auditor's Independence Declaration

Auditor's Independence Declaration under the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 s60-40 to the Directors of South East Volunteers Inc. and Controlled Entities

I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, during the year ended 30 June 2024, there have been:

i. no contraventions of the auditor independence requirements as set out in the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission Act 2012 in relation to the audit; and
ii. no contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.

Ashfords Audit and Assurance

Ashfords Audit and Assurance Pty Ltd Chartered Accountants

Ryan H. Dummett
Director

10 October 2024
Unit 301, 148 Logis Boulevard, Dandenong South VIC 3175

17.3 Committee of Management Declaration

South East Volunteers Inc. and Controlled Entities
ABN: 66 484 048 216

The directors of the entity declare that:

1. The financial statements and notes, as set out on pages 2 to 21, satisfy the requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 and:

   (a) comply with Australian Accounting Standards - Simplified Disclosure Requirements applicable to the entity; and

   (b) give a true and fair view of the financial position as at 30 June 2024 and of the performance for the year ended on that date of the entity.

2. In the directors' opinion, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the entity will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

This declaration is signed in accordance with subs 60.15 (2) of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013.

Director:
Tamra Keating

Director:
Kee Chi

Dated: 7/10/2024

17.4 Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

	Note	2024 $	2023 $
Net Cost of Services			
Revenue	4	3,241,646	3,121,403
Interest received	5	62,737	13,641
Other income	4	126,936	118,163
Loss on disposal of assets		(3,222)	-
ACIC expenses		(1,246,108)	(1,288,074)
Administration expenses		(271,187)	(192,822)
Advertising and marketing expenses		(26,101)	(35,336)
Auditor's remuneration		(15,602)	(13,600)
Depreciation and amortisation expense	6	(125,922)	(127,602)
Employee benefits expense	6	(1,699,991)	(1,529,196)
Interest on leases	5	(5,390)	(3,000)
Motor vehicle and travel		(51,553)	(32,240)
Occupancy expenses		(90,481)	(25,188)
Program and project expenses		(48,560)	(46,658)
Volunteer expenses		(7,643)	(4,931)
Surplus/(deficit) before income tax		(160,441)	(45,440)
Income tax expense		-	-
Surplus/(deficit) for the year		(160,441)	(45,440)
Total comprehensive income for the year		(160,441)	(45,440)
Surplus/(deficit) attributable to:			
Members of the parent entity		(160,441)	(45,440)
Total comprehensive income attributable to:			
Members of the parent entity		(160,441)	(45,440)

Notes

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

17.5 Statement of Financial Position

	Note	2024 $	2023 $
Assets			
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash and cash equivalents	7	1,985,481	2,190,821
Trade and other receivables	8	129,258	57,984
Other assets	11	68,513	90,186
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		2,183,252	2,338,991
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			
Property, plant and equipment	9	263,394	105,237
Intangible Assets	10	12,500	-
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS		275,894	105,237
TOTAL ASSETS		2,459,146	2,444,228
Liabilities			
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Trade and other payables	13	237,814	201,820
Lease liabilities	12	84,922	46,764
Employee benefits	15	344,738	267,985
Other liabilities	14	258,835	331,579
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		926,309	848,148
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Lease liabilities	12	70,653	32,559
Employee benefits	15	32,439	34,845
TOTAL NON-CURRENT		103,092	67,404
TOTAL LIABILITIES		1,029,401	915,552
Net Assets		1,429,745	1,528,676
Equity			
Accumulated Surplus		1,464,321	1,624,762
Total Equity		1,464,321	1,624,762

Notes

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

17.6 Statement of Changes in Equity

For the Year Ended 30 June 2024

2024

	Accumulated Surplus $	Total $
Balance at 1 July 2023	1,624,762	1,624,762
Deficit for the year	(160,441)	(160,441)
Balance at 30 June 2024	1,464,321	1,464,321

2023

	Accumulated Surplus $	Total $
Balance at 1 July 2022	1,670,202	1,670,202
Deficit for the year	(45,440)	(45,440)
Balance at 30 June 2023	1,624,762	1,624,762

18 Acknowledgements

Alejandro Aguanta
Angela Paladin
Ashford Accountants
Australian Department of Social Services
Beletti Restaurant Café
Box Hill Tai Chi Centre
Brendan Scott
Bridges Connecting Communities
City of Casey
City of Greater Dandenong
City of Monash
Clayton Community Centre
Department of Health & Human Services
Glen Waverley Uniting Church
Ibis Hotel
InTech Pty. Ltd.
John Mullahy MP
Juniper Networks
Koorie Heritage Trust
Lions Club of Waverley
Mornington Peninsula Shire
Mount Street Neighbourhood House
Nick Lauria, Underdog Design
Notting Hill Neighbourhood House
Oakleigh Carnegie RSL and Community Club
Patricia Malowney OAM
Rhythm Culture
Rotary Club of Glen Waverley
Sandra Romero, Coonara Community House
South East Community Links
Springvale Community Hub
The Notting Hill Hotel
Victoria Police, Monash Unit
Volunteering Victoria
Waverley Industries
Whitehorse Driving School
Willum Warrain Aboriginal Association Inc.