

2020  
2021



# SLAC ANNUAL REPORT

CONNECTING COMMUNITY

Collated by: Elena Sheldon CEO

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Designed by: Sela Aaifou – Projects Support

(Some photos included in this report were taken prior to COVID-19 restrictions)

# OUR STORY

Born as a Youth Club back in 1945, our organisation has evolved numerous times & continues to serve the local community around us.

Those humble beginnings started when a police officer courageously stepped out and created a safe place for the local youth to gather getting them off the streets. This youth was made up of children of men who were deployed to World War II.

Today, SLAC continues to take courageous steps, making us well known for our ability to develop timely, innovative and effective responses to local challenges.

Our mission is to reduce social and cultural isolation and causes of economic hardship amongst the vulnerable in our community.

We have developed and constantly refine our educational programs and practical support where participants develop skills, gain confidence, and through our facilitation of connection, they soon find themselves on positive pathways to social and economic participation.

SLAC is not shy to collaborate with like-minded organisations to enhance the services provided so people are equipped with the best opportunity to succeed.





# OUR PEOPLE

## COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT

### **PRESIDENT**

Leah Douglas

### **TREASURER**

David Hawkins

### **VICE PRESIDENT**

Bev Douglas

### **SECRETARY**

Adel Dafla

- Ranka Trisic
- Tuan Tran
- Angela Holl
- Emma Sayegh
- Binita Maskey

## STAFF

- Elena Sheldon –CEO
- Christine Hermawan –OPERATIONS MANAGER
- Mariela Sonn –ADMIN FINANCE COORDINATOR
- Karen DeFransz –ADMIN OFFICER
- Sela Aaifou –PROJECTS SUPPORT
- Peter Hermawan –JOBS VICTORIA ADVOCATE

## CALD TASKFORCE BICULTURAL WORKERS

- Tumpor Vorng
- Phiem Tran

## Learn local TEAM

### **TUTOR COORDINATOR**

Megan Fisher

- Hiba Rajab
- Ruth Robson
- Laura Cerbus
- Sonali Gunasekara
- Louise Blakston
- Shirin Safi
- Amina Alkozai
- Farrukh Amina
- Sharifa Albar
- Carol Lennon

## coco's team

- Kay De La Rue
- Litia Waisele
- Nooroa Andrews (until Feb '21)
- Paroa Andrews (until Apr '21)
- Hannah Richards (until Apr '21)
- Manuella Guillemain (Feb-Jun' 21)

You generously shared your time & energy with us! You gave a helping hand when we needed it. The work you did supports a worthy cause. Thank you ....

# VOLUNTEERS



## Current volunteers

- Ana Brcic
- Andrew Wallin
- Bela Rezmues
- Chandra Piyaratne
- Isu Apulu-Pili
- John Armstrong
- Keith Gibbons
- Maria Moskwa
- Mark Nuske
- Paul McHenry
- Phala Kriv
- Rohitha Perera
- Shae Goodwin
- Quin Sheng
- Cindy Lian
- Berenadeta Takawake

## volunteers

### no longer with COCO's

- Ofa Moala
- Lucy Heng
- Satupai Teraseu
- Susie Teraseu
- Sevuloni Vavabulu
- Caroline Joe
- Milovan Manajlovic

**Across Australia,  
it is estimated that  
nearly 6 million  
(5.897 million)  
people volunteer  
through an  
organisation annually.**





# Relief & pathways

OUT OF POVERTY

**1.1K** HOME DE LIVERIES

**2.7K** PARCELS PACKED  
608 HOUSEHOLDS REACHED  
948 ADULTS  
661 CHILDREN

**19** TONNES OF FOOD  
DELIVERED

## pathway to a better future

A woman regularly participated in covid related information sessions and would ask for food aid at times. After a few weeks, she opened up to a SLAC worker about her rather stressful situation. She lost her job due to covid, her partner had gambling problems and became abusive towards her and their daughter. Their daughter had autism but did not receive any support from NDIS daughter. Our worker provided referrals to a range of organisations, supported the client to apply to Centrelink for relevant payments and facilitated connection with NDIS stakeholders. The family received counseling and financial assistance, their daughter received an NDIS package and is looked after. The client continues to be involved in the project and supports the worker promoting covid vaccination awareness.

Additionally provided over 500 parcels with toiletries and other hygiene and household necessities. Since end 2020, SLAC have been an active member of the CALD Taskforce – a group of likeminded organisations across the Cities of Greater Dandenong and Casey working with CALD communities to promote awareness about Covid safe practices, vaccinations and a range of other social issues. We thank our bicultural workers who work very hard to support their respective communities. Since December 2020, our bicultural workers supported 294 people from 220 households.

**Apart from COVID safety and vaccination awareness, our workers supported and provided referrals for:**

- \*Family Violence
- \*Homelessness
- \*Food Relief
- \*Employment
- \*Services
- \*Financial
- \*Legal or Counselling
- \*Mental Health
- \*Case Management
- \*Education & Training
- \*Business
- \*Community Information and Support Services
- \*Translations and Interpreter Services
- \*People with disabilities – families or carer

# ADULT EDUCATION

## SLAC EDUCATORS DELIVERED

**21,000** student contact hours of English Language and Employability Skills education to **156** learners.

Fatima (not a real name), a 35-yearsold mother of four children arrived from Afghanistan with her family in 2017. She was not able to attend an AMEP program due to her family and caring responsibilities however her English language skills were very low. Fatima felt it was essential to gain citizenship status in Australia so she joined one of SLAC's English for Citizenship classes. This important step would mark a new milestone in their life; a sense of belonging and an end to displacement and uncertainty.

Fatima continued to study for a year and a half and was one of many students who rose to the challenge, taking on the opportunity to continue their learning online via zoom. Fatima's perseverance resulted with success and she felt immense relief and pride after successfully passing her Australian Citizenship test in May 2021.

Fatima now continues to study English with SLAC to improve her language skills building pathways to further education while working part time in a caring role.

## FATIMA



## KIM

Kim (not a real name) is a 50+ year old woman who migrated to Australia over 30 years ago. It was difficult for Kim to get a job as she didn't know how to speak English. She had worked in a fish and chip shop to pay bills. When her expenses increased, due to her son pursuing an education, she got a job at a factory through her networks. There she was recognised for her hard work and was soon offered a course to upskill by her employers. Unfortunately, she couldn't complete the course as she was not able to understand the advanced English used throughout the course. Since then, Kim had to leave this job and had not been able to find an alternative job as many factories closed down and her English had not improved enough over time.

Kim is now attending SLAC Everyday English classes. She was so excited and happy when one of her friends told her that her text messages and her spoken English had improved so much. Kim is an ardent reader and loves reading poems as well as biographies. She is now attempting to read her favourite books in English.

It has been a slow progress but a fulfilling one throughout her journey.





## COCO'S WORKING SOLUTIONS PROGRAM

The program includes work experience at CoCO's, individual coaching and mentoring to develop work readiness skills for local community members as well as deliver community awareness about the Greater Dandenong Sustainability Strategy and capture CoCO's environmental impact.

Due to covid restrictions we could only take in a small number of participants but the outcomes have been fantastic.

## COCO'S WORKING SOLUTIONS PROGRAM

During lock down we provided Material Aid and English classes to two women who are on a Protection Visa. They had been exploited in illegal labour hire and their whole journey of being brought out to Australia for work was built on deception so they were extremely vulnerable and lacked the education on how to support themselves in Australia.

While Red Cross provided accommodation and financial support, SLAC and CoCO's supported them with fortnightly Food Parcels as well as English classes and education on Australian culture, particularly around employment. As soon as CoCO's reopened post 2020 lock down, both women signed up to the CoCO's Working Solutions program.

**Both participants have significantly improved their communication skills, developed appropriate work behaviours and most importantly, increased their social networks. Both women were successfully employed at the end of the 12 week program.**

CoCO's was established in 2018 as a social enterprise of the **Springvale Learning and Activities Centre.**

CoCO's prime responsibility is to sell secondhand quality goods at affordable prices.

CoCO's is a dedicated member of the Greater Dandenong Anti-Poverty Consortium contributing by offering opportunities to training and employment pathways and emergency food relief to the vulnerable of our community.



## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

1tonne

Donated textiles from Feb-Jun 2021 that otherwise would have gone into landfill.

70%

Donations sold. 30% sent to recycling through 'Southern Textiles'

46 pieces

Household furniture donated. Members of the community were able to purchase good quality pre-loved furniture at bargain prices.

## FACT

Incineration, or simply burning, is the most popular method of disposing of textile waste, and it has significant effect on global warming. According to the "Carbon footprint and energy use of textile recycling techniques" report - (Department of Chemical and Biological Engineering Chalmers University of Technology Göteborg, Sweden), incineration of 1 tonne of textile waste has a value of global warming potential of 230 kg CO<sub>2</sub>.

# SLAC COMMUNITY GROUPS

The Covid 19 Pandemic caused major disruptions to our otherwise vibrant community programs and activities in Springvale.

We would like to thank all groups, volunteers and participants who, despite all the challenges, continue their activities and ensure compliance with covid safe plans and procedures.

- Springvale Italian Elderly Citizens Club
- Southern Migrant and Refugee Centre
- SICMAA
- Line Dancing
- Clarinda Fishing Club
- Social Badminton Group
- Springvale Mandarin Support Network
- Social Basketball Group
- Springvale Senior Table Tennis Group
- Than Phong Taek Wondo Australia

## Our Funders:

- Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
- Adult Community and Further Education Board
- City of Greater Dandenong
- Helen Macpherson Smith Trust

## Our partners and supporters:

- Brotherhood of St Laurence
- South East Community Links
- WeCare Community Services
- Chisholm Skills and Jobs Centre
- Catholic Care (Dandenong)
- Springvale Rise Primary School
- Dandenong South Primary School
- Yarraman Oaks Primary School
- Greater Dandenong Youth & Family Services
- SICMAA
- The Swinburne Social Startup Studio

## Consortiums and Networks:

- Jobs Victoria Advocates Consortium
- Greater Dandenong Anti-Poverty Consortium
- Greater Dandenong Community Connections Network
- CALD Taskforce



**SPRINGVALE ITALIAN  
ELDERLY CITIZENS CLUB**



**THAN PHUONG TAEK  
WONDO AUSTRALIA**



**LINE DANCING**





# THANK YOU!

ANY QUESTIONS?