



**PORT PHILLIP  
COMMUNITY  
GROUP** // *Working for  
Social justice*



**PORT PHILLIP COMMUNITY GROUP**  
ANNUAL REPORT 2021 TO 2022



# Welcome

*This report summarises PPCG activities, partnerships and outcomes achieved from July 2021 to June 2022.*

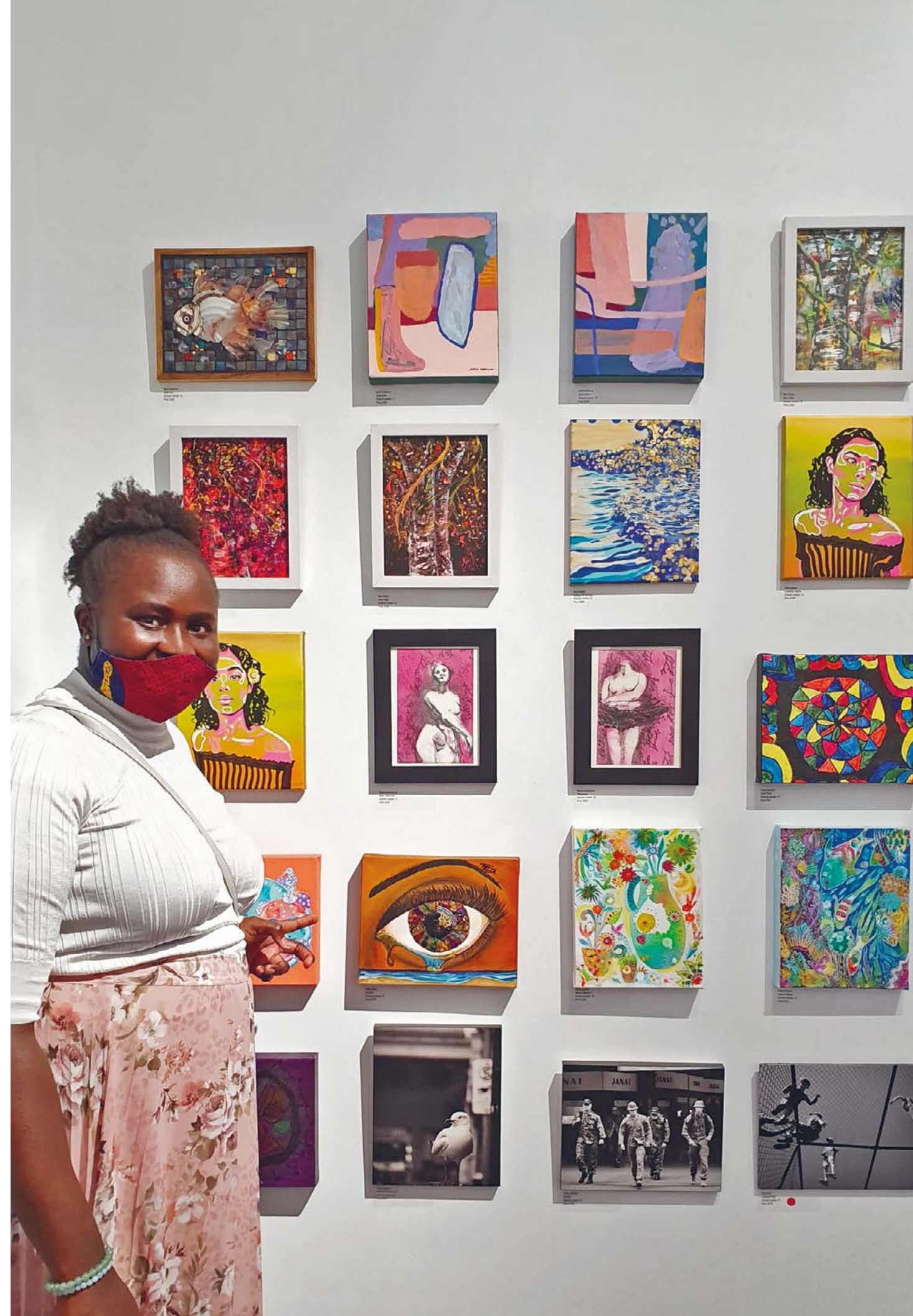
**Port Phillip Community Group (PPCG), is a leading welfare, financial counselling and education provider primarily in the City of Port Phillip enabling more than 20,000 people in any one year, to better connect to their community, achieve their goals, and improve their lives.**

In the LGA of Port Phillip, there are high levels of advantage and favourable social health and inclusion. However, extreme disadvantage and poorer social health and inclusion also exist and are deeply entrenched in some of our neighbourhoods.

As we emerge from successive COVID lockdowns, many residents are experiencing economic pressure: higher rents and mortgage stress; escalating food, petrol and utility costs; and pessimism about their future. On a daily basis, we are doing our bit to support the most affected members of our community.

PPCG is committed to working with our many partners to drive social change. Together, taking action for collective impact provides the best opportunity to make a difference. We remain committed to the **Raise the Rate Campaign** with VCOSS and CISVic with the aim of reducing poverty and inequality in Australia. We continue to enjoy a strong partnership with the City of Port Phillip working closely and collaboratively to respond to and prioritise the needs of our residents.

Cover photo - Patrick (volunteer) with tax help client



## Acknowledgments

Port Phillip Community Group respectfully acknowledges the Yalukit Willam Clan of the Boon Wurrung. We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging. We acknowledge and uphold their continuing relationship to this land.

We appreciate and welcome diversity in all its forms, including staff, volunteers, and community members, and believe this makes our teams, services and organisation stronger and more effective.



**A copy of this report** can be downloaded from our website [ppcg.org.au/aboutus](https://ppcg.org.au/aboutus), by calling **(03) 8598 6600**, or emailing [info-support@ppcg.org.au](mailto:info-support@ppcg.org.au)

**Port Phillip Community Group Limited**  
ABN 34 844 707 349.

*PPCG is registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC). PPCG is endorsed as a Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR).*

**Disclaimer:** This report is provided for information and it does not purport to be complete. While care has been taken to ensure the content in the report is accurate, we cannot guarantee it is without flaw of any kind.

Art Attack participant at the Linden Postcard Show



# Chairperson and Executive Officer's Report

A warm welcome to our 2021-2022 Annual Report as we reflect on another year that has been shaped by COVID; both the virus itself and the associated health, social and economic challenges.

The pandemic continues to test us in previously unimaginable ways. As demonstrated in this report, it has been Port Phillip's lowest income earners, people from multicultural backgrounds, and those with existing social and health concerns that have been affected the most.

PPCG has continued to provide our full range of services: information, referral, support, financial counselling, advocacy; pantry goods, fresh food and meals; and essential items. We have done this through contactless deliveries, in-person, online and virtually.

It has been a welcome change to again provide more of our services in-person. This includes: education and skills development courses; social and recreational activities; and social meals. Returning to regular events, familiar places and faces has helped many people to reconnect and look to the future.

The need and demand for food and essential items has not abated. Our Share the Food program continues to respond in collaboration with our remarkable supporters, partners, and the community. We are impressed with the many local organisations, businesses, and individuals for their exceptional generosity and work with us across 2021 and 2022.

**PPCG has continued to place clients and residents at the centre of our work**, responding with compassion and care to the practical, psychosocial and support needs of individuals, families and community groups.

Importantly, we thank all of our staff and volunteers for their expertise and commitment in responding to the challenges of the pandemic whilst also personally experiencing the impacts. Their great work in this time of inconceivable uncertainty and upheaval has been outstanding.

The pandemic has continued to highlight the critical role that community organisations like Port Phillip Community Group play in connecting people, building strength, advocating for change and supporting communities through adversity.

  
**Gina Fiske**  
Chairperson

  
**Karen Sait**  
Executive Officer

### Board of Directors

Claire Edmanson, David Weinberger, Elizabeth Jennings (Treasurer), Gina Fiske (Chair), Karen Sait (EO/Company Secretary), Michael McGann (Deputy Chair), Peter Giles, Susanne Birks and co-opted Director Julie Margetts.

*Photo L-R: Peter Giles, Michael McGann, Gina Fiske, David Weinberger, Julie Margetts, Elizabeth Jennings, Karen Sait, Susanne Birks (Claire Edmanson absent)*



# Income and Funders

For 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022 our total income was \$1,609,372, a 1% increase on FY 2021. We obtained this from grants, donations, interest and fees. This comprised contracted and new funding of \$1,473,820 and other income of \$135,552.

**We gratefully acknowledge the support from our funders and community partners**, in particular our primary funder and partner the City of Port Phillip. Our other key funders are:

- > Department of Education and Training, Victoria
- > Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, Victoria
- > Department of Health, Victoria
- > Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources on behalf of the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications, Commonwealth
- > Department of Justice, Consumer Affairs, Victoria (via Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand - GSANZ)
- > Department of Premier and Cabinet, Victoria
- > Department of Social Services, Commonwealth (via Community Information & Support, Victoria - CISVic)

In addition to contracted funding we received additional one-off grants, donations and fees from philanthropic trusts, businesses and individuals. We extend our appreciation to each of these as these funds have enabled additional services to be delivered to our clients and the community, and particularly to meet the increasing demand for our services as the pandemic continues.

# Treasurer's Report


Due to the continuing and challenging financial environment that PPCG operates in as a small Not for Profit organisation, our expenses FY 2022 were \$1,842,019 an increase of 19% compared to last year FY 2021. Although we successfully **increased our total income** across FY 2022 by \$250,614 through one off grants as in the previous financial year, this **did not cover the additional expenditure required to meet service need** and demand in the third year of the pandemic.

This has resulted in us reporting a significant deficit of \$232,647. Due to past surpluses, we were able to fund this deficit. However, due to the increasing need and demand for our services and the unlikelihood of ongoing funding to meet these costs, we will need to review our work going forward.

In summary for FY 2022:

- > Total income was \$1,609,372 obtained from grants, donations, interest and fees
- > Total expenditure was \$1,842,019
- > This resulted in a net deficit of (\$232,647)

We will closely monitor our expenditure in FY 2023, and as always proactively explore ways to increase our revenue and manage our costs for the next and future years.



Income \$1,609,372

Expenses \$1,842,019

Deficit \$232,647

**Elizabeth Jennings, Treasurer**

The full audited Financial Report is available on our website: [ppcg.org.au](http://ppcg.org.au)



# Strategic Plan

We have achieved a lot in the first year of our Strategic Plan for 2021-2025. During the life of this plan, PPCG will celebrate 50 years of working with the Port Phillip community.

## Our vision and mission

**Vision:** A fair, just and inclusive community

**Purpose:** We support individuals, families and communities to live with dignity and self-determination

**Mission:** We provide responsive services in partnership with individuals, families and communities to empower people to achieve their goals

## Our values

Underpinning all of the work that we do are our **five key values:**

- > **Respect:** we treat all people and each other with dignity and respect
- > **Equity:** we promote fair and equitable access to all of our services and resources
- > **Inclusiveness:** we embrace diversity, celebrate difference, and encourage participation
- > **Empowerment:** we work with individuals, families and communities to build on their strengths and to achieve their goals
- > **Accountability:** we approach our work in open and transparent ways and encourage feedback to improve our services and resources

**Further information** can be downloaded from our website [ppcg.org.au](http://ppcg.org.au)

Pat Hamdorf, Education Coordinator  
and Kim Greenstone, Manager  
Community Engagement & Inclusion



## Services and activities

Our key services and activities include:

- > **Information, referral and support** including emergency relief and material aid
- > **Financial counselling**, tax help, and no interest loans
- > **Community engagement and inclusion** through social, recreational and wellbeing groups
- > **Education and skills development** along with pathways to employment
- > **Advocacy** to reduce inequity, social exclusion and poverty

Our service model incorporates a **client centred**, open door policy combined with **collaboration and partnerships** that build on feedback from key stakeholders and community.





## Service effectiveness and responsiveness

## Information, Referral and Support (IRS)



Tracy Ibrahim, IRS staff



### Clara's Story\*

Clara is a single parent living in community housing. She escaped a violent relationship and is the full-time carer of her 5 year-old son who has learning difficulties and has had incidents of self-harm. Clara reached out to PPCG in late 2021 after not having eaten properly for some time. She was in rental arrears, was at risk of homelessness, and had around \$3,000 of debt.

*\*name has been changed*

Information, referral and support workers promptly supported Clara and her son with:

- > Food vouchers and fortnightly parcels containing healthy food and essential items
- > Referral to our financial counsellor for action and assistance with her debts
- > \$350 grant from the Queen's Fund to contribute to rental arrears and keep her tenancy safe
- > Referral to NILS for upcoming costs (car registration and vet costs)
- > Christmas Hamper and toys to help her provide for her son over the festive period

Through IRS we provided emergency relief funds totaling over \$120,000, a 21% increase from FY 2021.

This service remains the doorway to our programs, activities, classes and many partner organisations. It is focused on strengths-based support to enable dignity and self-determination. Some community members come to us in crisis, whilst others need assistance to navigate social services, make social connections, or build on skills. Some see us only once, whilst others return regularly for support, classes or activities.

Our service delivery was provided mostly via phone and email due to the ongoing lockdowns and restrictions. However there was a substantial increase in the number of in-person appointments at our St Kilda hub. Clients also attended our site regularly to collect food parcels and other emergency relief. As the economic situation has deteriorated IRS responses for food have increased by almost 50%.

Each year we speak to thousands of individuals to provide practical supports and material aid in the form of food vouchers, produce, pantry items, meals, targeted funds, pet food, travel passes, pharmacy vouchers and healthcare items, sleeping rough kits, and winter woollies. In response to COVID we provided health information, face masks, hand sanitiser and other protective equipment. We also assisted with personal advocacy, education and specialist referrals.

The key areas why people access our IRS are in relation to financial hardship, housing instability, social isolation, family violence, unemployment and family breakdown.

In FY 2022 we had 65% single people accessing IRS, an increase of 6%. While the economic situation has impacted all low-income households, single occupants in private rentals have been navigating the increasing food, utility and petrol costs on their own. The closure of several rooming houses led to more seeking support to access local affordable housing options.

The lead up to the holiday season is always a busy time for our IRS team. Due to COVID there were less holiday activities and support provided by other agencies (e.g. lunches and toy drives) resulting in greater stress amongst clients.

Holiday season support  
**50 Share the Dignity bags;**  
**80 Christmas hampers;** and  
**Dozens of toys and books.**



Pinchapoo care packs

Clients also attended PPCG in greater numbers to collect food parcels and other emergency relief in the lead up to the holiday season. This trend has remained consistent across FY 2022.

In October 2021, PPCG became a member of the Rotary Inner Melbourne Emergency Relief Network (RIMERN). This membership has enabled IRS clients to access donated furniture, appliances and household goods to set up homes, and we have provided funds for the delivery of these.

Clara's story above shows the complexity of our clients. It also demonstrates how we are able to promptly provide coordinated wrap-around support through gentle enquiry that often reveals lives of entrenched poverty and despair.





Mark, Billi, Anne, Karen – COVID Mobile Health Bus in partnership with St Vincent's Hospital

## COVID-19 responses

COVID has resulted in lasting impacts from unexpected disruptions to financial stability, employment, secure housing, relationships and social connections.

From March 2020 to October 2021 Melbourne has had **six lockdowns, totalling 262 days** and also became the city with the unenviable record of the longest cumulative time in lockdown in the world.

As the impact of the pandemic including lockdowns and the emergence of new COVID Variants continued throughout FY 2022, we continued to support our clients, Port Phillip residents and local agencies through the following key initiatives:

- > **Our Share the Food Program** continued to operate as a flexible and agile initiative in direct response to the pandemic with committed support from the City of Port Phillip Council. This program has continued to provide emergency relief, food, and essential items for Port Phillip residents, and food to over 45 agencies to support their clients and communities that have experienced hardship or isolation as a result of COVID, all with a particular focus on those that are aged, in economic need, have compromised immunity, or disability needs

- > A \$20,000 grant from the **Department of Health's Community Response Fund** assisted us to deliver resources and information to support communities to self-manage and live safely with COVID. This included a collaboration with St Vincent's Hospital Mobile Health Bus to provide free access to vaccinations (for e.g. COVID, Flu, and Hep B), and health information
- > A \$30,000 grant from the **Department of Premier and Cabinet for Multicultural Food Relief** supplemented our food relief program with culturally appropriate foods such as halal, kosher, and other specific dietary requirements including vegan and vegetarian food items
- > Our continued collaboration and participation in the **High-Risk Accommodation Response Project (HRAR)**, under the auspice of Star Health, to prevent, prepare for, and rapidly respond to COVID infection and outbreaks in priority communities
- > Our close working relationship with the **City of Port Phillip COVID Relief & Recovery Coordination** groups to provide immediate relief and support, as well as looking to the future needs of all of Port Phillip, including the most vulnerable members of our community

## No Interest Loans Scheme (NILS)

The NILS program has been an important part of PPCG's IRS service for many years, providing hundreds of low income households with access to safe, fair and affordable credit. NILS loans are used for items such as whitegoods, furniture, medical services, car repairs, educational courses and computers, with loan amounts typically ranging from \$500-\$1500 paid off over a 12-18 month period. There are no fees, charges or interest payable on a NILS loan and fortnightly repayment amounts are set at an affordable level of \$20-\$60 per fortnight.

*"I had been homeless for more than a year and finally got some stable accommodation and enrolled in an online vocational training course to help me get a job. Then 2 weeks before the course started I stood on my old laptop and completely broke it... with a NILS loan from PPCG I was able to get a great new laptop. The NILS loan absolutely saved me."*

- NILS recipient

**We assisted 13 households** to obtain loans totalling **\$16,000** across FY 2022.

Over the course of the pandemic the NILS program experienced a statewide downturn in applications. However, we are pleased to report there has been a steady increase coming into the next financial year. PPCG is grateful to now be supported by two fantastic NILS volunteers who have become an integral part of our program and have enabled us to meet growing demand.

## Back to School Fund

As more families struggled to keep up with rising school costs, our Back to School program was able to provide financial support to help pay for uniforms, books, excursions and other school essentials.

FY 2022 a \$3,000 grant assisted over 50 local families. In addition we were invited to take part in a pilot program developed by CISVic and State Schools Relief (SSR). Through the program we ordered school uniform items and vouchers directly from SSR. This significantly increased the amount of assistance provided to each family and increased our capacity to support families with school costs throughout the year, rather than just over the usual January/February period.

We are extremely grateful to South Melbourne Community Chest for their ongoing support of this valuable and much needed program.

*"We moved into the area recently and I had to get uniforms for my 3 kids who started at new schools. PPCG really helped us by giving us vouchers and also finding other ways we could get assistance."*

- School Fund recipient parent



# Financial Counselling

Financial counselling, in partnership with Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand (GSANZ), continues to be a busy and highly in demand service, dedicated to assisting clients with unmanageable debts. Our casework has continued to involve assistance and support with debt management options with clients, and direct advocacy with banks, energy providers, local councils and other creditors. We continued to work collaboratively with local services including Family Violence and St Kilda Legal Service.

We assisted clients with debts including credit cards, personal loans, utility bills and increasingly mortgages, council rates, rental arrears and Buy Now Pay Later products where we have seen a further noticeable increase over FY 2022. The majority of our clients now have at least one of these Buy Now Pay Later products, with many having multiple such products. The reality is that having spent money not yet earned on top of everyday living expenses, many have experienced a spiral into unmanageable and distressing debt situations. We welcome the federal government's review to more tightly regulate these products to ensure protections particularly for the most vulnerable in our community.

## Fiona's Story\*

Fiona a 23-year-old woman was referred to our financial counselling service from a family violence service for support with historical utility debts.

Fiona suffered years of family violence from her father including financial abuse. As an 18-year-old, despite having no income and no capacity to pay bills, Fiona's father forced her to put the family utility accounts in her name.

At 19, Fiona moved out of home seeking a better and safer life taking large utility debts with her. With spiralling mental health issues, Fiona found herself in and out of homelessness for the next year. At 20, Fiona had a baby and for the second time in her life, experienced family violence. Fiona eventually managed to leave this relationship, finding safety for herself and her young child.

With the support of family violence services, social workers, youth workers and housing providers, Fiona was able to start rebuilding her life with her young child. On her behalf our financial counsellor successfully advocated with the utility companies for full debt waivers on Fiona's old debts, relieving a great deal of stress for Fiona and enabling her to focus on building her future financial independence and security.

*\*name has been changed*



Maz Fox, Financial Counsellor and Catrina Sofo, IRS/Social Media

## Financial Capability

We have continued our strong partnership with GSANZ with in-person and virtual financial capability appointments that have complemented our financial services through building people's financial knowledge and skills and promoting holistic financial wellbeing.

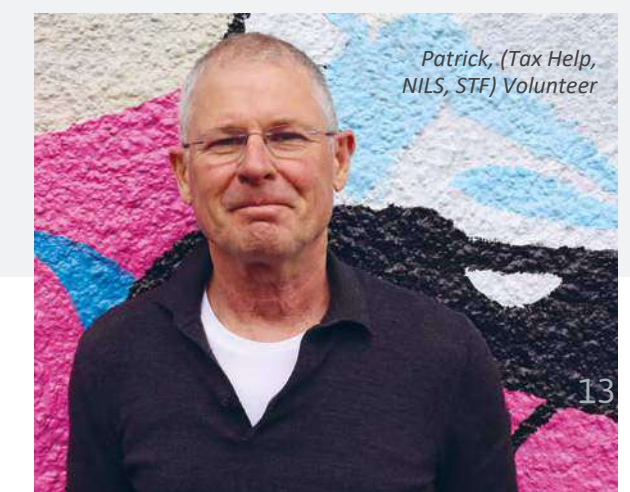
*"I help clients to become more financially confident by building financial knowledge. Each client approaches our sessions with different aims, and we work together to help set financial goals and a realistic pathway to achieve these goals. It is an honour to partner with PPCG and together provide a much needed service to the Port Phillip community".*

Romy Prins – Financial Capability Worker, Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand

## Tax Help 2021

PPCG offers free tax help in partnership with the Australian Tax Office and the City of Port Phillip Council. This program reduces barriers for low-income earners and assists them to maximise their tax returns. Frequent lockdowns and restrictions impacted the program FY 2022. We responded by offering in-person and virtual appointments. Between August - October 2021, our three committed and professional tax help volunteers supported 51 community members to complete their tax returns, which was an increase of 27% on the previous FY 2021 with tax returns between \$200 to \$1,000.

Across FY 2022 Patrick has volunteered in Tax Help, No Interest Loans Scheme, and Share the Food. Patrick and his wife initially volunteered at Share the Food to deliver contactless food parcels during the long lockdowns and restrictions. Patrick now also delivers surplus food, meals, essential items and clothing to several local rooming houses, and has enhanced our contacts for surplus food from local restaurants for broader distribution. Patrick embodies the many qualities of our volunteers that include: care for community and individuals in need, flexibility, and willingness to share their skills and time with organisations such as PPCG.



Patrick, (Tax Help, NILS, STF) Volunteer



# Share the Food: Responding to Community Need

Supported by the City of Port Phillip and in collaboration with multiple agencies, businesses and volunteers, PPCG established the Share the Food program in 2020. This was in direct response to COVID to help our clients, Port Phillip residents and community during lockdowns, restrictions, outbreaks and infections.

The program was intended to be short-term. However as both the virus itself and the associated health, social and economic challenges have continued, the need for the program has remained.

We have continuously adapted the program, scaling up and down in response to the pandemic and correlated need, consistently providing food staples, essential items, and bulk food to support vulnerable members of our community.

Across FY 2022, we provided **18,420 food parcels**, plus essential items, meals and hundreds of kilos of non-perishable and fresh food **valued at \$706,363**. We expanded our reach by supplying all of the above, to 30 collaborating agencies that also distributed to those in need in their networks.



Volunteer from Inclusion Foundation

*"Thanks a lot for yesterday's supply of various goods. I and my son got plenty to eat. I emailed Catrina (PPCG staff) yesterday regarding all the COVID support, housing, Myki and food vouchers. Thanks a lot for your support in this difficult time."*  
 - Share the Food recipient

The pandemic has revealed (and exacerbated) food insecurity across Australia and in Port Phillip. SecondBite's Annual Agency Survey, part of its wider research project into food rescue future trends, found the key themes of:

- > Demand for food relief was up from FY 2021
- > Increases in demand were more prevalent in single parent families, unemployed, those receiving Government payments, low income workers, and those experiencing homelessness
- > There is a need for diet-specific and culturally appropriate foods within metropolitan regions

The survey confirmed that people who are requiring food relief are often in need of additional support, including information and referral to other services.

We will continue to evolve Share the Food to offer new and innovative ways to improve food security for our community.



# Building Capacity (individual and community)



## Pathways to Education and Employment

Our Learn Local Education Hub continues to provide supported courses and classes to our cohort of learners, many of whom are vulnerable and marginalised. These activities create pathways to better lives through employment, further education and social connections.

COVID continued to have an impact on access to training and course delivery. Lockdowns and restrictions throughout the year proved to be a challenge for our learners. Despite this, we offered online learning opportunities in digital literacy, creative art, music skills and creative media throughout the year. **When permitted, in-person classes were provided in these and our 'Work This Way Training and Employment Pathways' program. We are pleased to report a 20% increase in enrolments FY 2022.**

*Our education partnerships include: City of Port Phillip, South Melbourne Community Chest, Park Towers, Access Inc., Wild@heArt, Aspect Autism, Galiamble Men's Recovery Centre, Space2b, Uniting 101, Christ Church Community Centre, Star Health and Uniting Employment Services.*



**159 students**  
**447 enrolments**  
**11,542 hours of training**

We delivered 40 targeted courses of 20-30 hours duration in digital literacy, art therapy, podcasting, blogging, gardening, hospitality, financial literacy, songwriting and music production.

Notable initiatives FY 2022 include:

- > Our partnership with Christ Church Community Centre, Uniting Employment Services and the Job Advocate Program to grow the 'Work this Way' employment program
- > Extending our collaboration with the City of Port Phillip Council to provide digital literacy training to older residents across Port Phillip through a Crossword Club and targeted workshops at the St Kilda Library, to increase confidence in IT use
- > Exhibiting art pieces at the 2021 Linden Postcard Show by 10 of our participants from 'Art Attack' resulting in sales of their art
- > Developing online training modules for our Family in Focus parenting skills course
- > Providing financial wellbeing modules for women, many of whom are vulnerable and marginalised

Wild@heART music group



# Community Engagement and Advocacy

We continued to be an active voice in our community throughout FY 2022 through a range of activities and using social media as a key medium to engage with the broader community.

- > **Top 3 social media posts** included: a lockdown activities guide, street pantry food call-out, and Anti-Poverty week client story
- > **9 community newsletters reached 1,890 people**, sharing important health and COVID information, program updates, local service information, and key equality campaign updates
- > As part of the **Community Response Fund (CRF)**, we carried out engagement activities to support clients to manage and live safely with COVID. This included: regular welfare checks via phone and email; social media content about key issues (vaccinations, rapid antigen tests, access for people with disability/on a low income); and guidance on accessing health information and services, and how to respond to a positive result

- > **During Neighbourhood House Week** we invited community members to share their creations on the theme of community resilience and what community meant to them with an art and storytelling competition. Submissions culminated in a beautiful exhibition at Alma Road Community House (ARCH)
- > For **National Volunteer Week** we invited people to acknowledge and celebrate our volunteers by writing 'Thank You' notes. Messages were collated and presented to each volunteer
- > **Homelessness Week and Anti-Poverty Week** promoted social housing equity and 'raise the rate' for income support. Community members contributed heartfelt messages to the CISVic *Origami House Campaign – 7,000 houses for 7,000 homes*, which travelled the state with a message to end homelessness once and for all



International Women's Day 2022

# Our Volunteers

Volunteering has long been an integral part of the ethos of PPCG enabling us to provide programs that we do not have the resources or funding for.

Across FY 2022 volunteer support fluctuated in all sectors as the pandemic continued with intermittent lockdowns to October 2021, as well as ongoing restrictions. Many volunteers ceased volunteering due to pandemic fatigue and family stress exacerbated by home-schooling, whilst others have now secured alternative paid work.

Towards the end of 2021 and early 2022, the shortage of volunteers was offset through the welcome redeployment of City of Port Phillip staff from Community Transport and Adventure Playground programs, as new COVID Variants emerged and demand for food relief and support escalated.

As we moved into a new COVID-normal world, we welcomed back many regular volunteers, along with some new volunteers. We saw a return to some of our more established volunteer roles in service delivery, administration and support.



L2R: Aunty 'Jacko' Judith Jackson, Aunty Joy Murphy Wandin AO and Juliana Banken

We were thrilled when Juliana Banken received a 2021 volunteer state award for her "outstanding voluntary contribution to [her] local community". Juliana has volunteered in several organisations including PPCG, and her volunteer role with Share the Food helped lead to a paid position with OzHarvest.

**Across FY 2022 volunteers contributed more than 3,800 hours, conservatively valued at \$106,400, which is an incredible contribution to the local community.**



St Kevin's Student helping Digital Essentials class





# Volunteers are the heart of our community

Meet some of PPCG's amazing volunteers. Each of them has shared a bit about themselves, when they started with PPCG, what their role(s) are, and their favourite thing about volunteering with PPCG.

## Meet Gary

Gary came from the south of Ireland (Cork) to Melbourne in 2018. He spent two years travelling in Australia, but then the pandemic hit. He spent four months working with Lou, Dean and others at Share the Food. His roles included 'housekeeping' at STF, collecting food donations and, of course, packing hundreds of food parcels before delivering these across the community. Gary's favourite part has been the friendly, honest and helpful people he's met along the way. He said: **although it was busy and hard work, every day was a pleasure.**



### Thinking of volunteering?

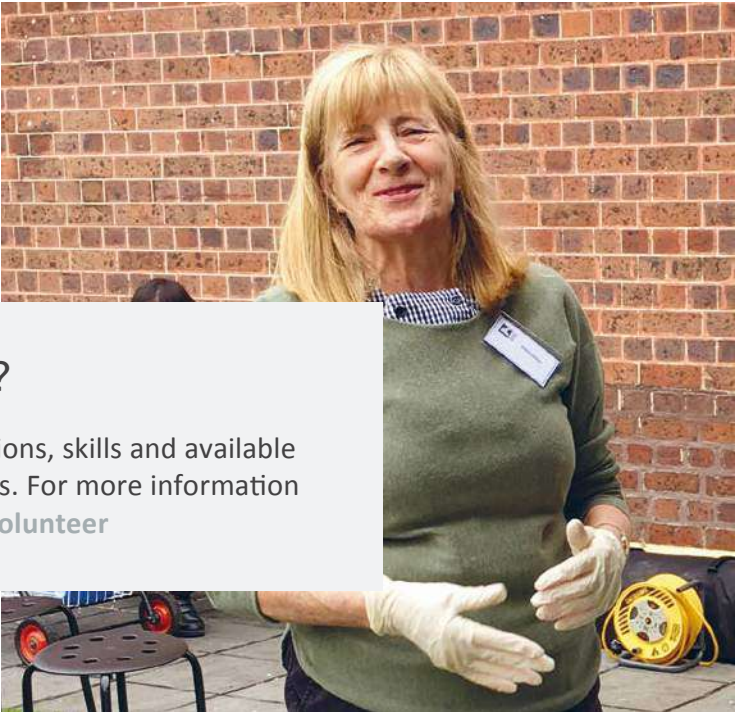
We would love to match your passions, skills and available time with one of our program areas. For more information head to [ppcg.org.au/support-us/volunteer](https://ppcg.org.au/support-us/volunteer)

## Meet Margaret

Margaret is a semi-retired secondary teacher. Family is a valued part of her life and she recently became a delighted grandmother. She has volunteered with Share the Food as an invaluable and key volunteer since the pandemic, and also assists at our St Kilda hub. Below she shares what she likes about volunteering:

*"Working with everyone who has contact with PPCG and the Share the Food program in particular has been positive and rewarding. It is wonderful to be part of a group who provide assistance to vulnerable people in our community. Also, I have developed meaningful relationships along the way."*

- Margaret, PPCG volunteer



## National Volunteer Week

To celebrate National Volunteer Week, we invited community members to write a 'Thank You' note to our volunteers to acknowledge their contributions. The many responses were a powerful reminder of the importance of volunteers.

*'Thank you so much for all that you do and for helping to make a difference. Your energy and enthusiasm are inspiring and greatly appreciated.'*

- NVW 'Thank You' note response



## Meet Di and Phill

Di and Phill are a retired couple who like walking, playing with their new grand baby and helping out in the community. They started volunteering in early 2020 and delivered food throughout the lockdowns. Across FY 2022 they have continued to help with food deliveries and packing food parcels at Share the Food. They commented that they enjoy being able to help people, especially during the pandemic as: **some people were really struggling and it was good to help them out.**



## Meet Emma

Emma is a 27-year-old young woman from France, working in hospitality and studying Tourism. She has volunteered since 2019 with us at our Fruit and Veg Market in St Kilda. Across FY 2022 Emma has volunteered at Share the Food and Social Meals helping Fiora with food shopping and meal preparations. Emma notes: **they have had a lot of fun chopping veggies, and that she loves making connections with the team and witnessing the joy that PPCG brings.**

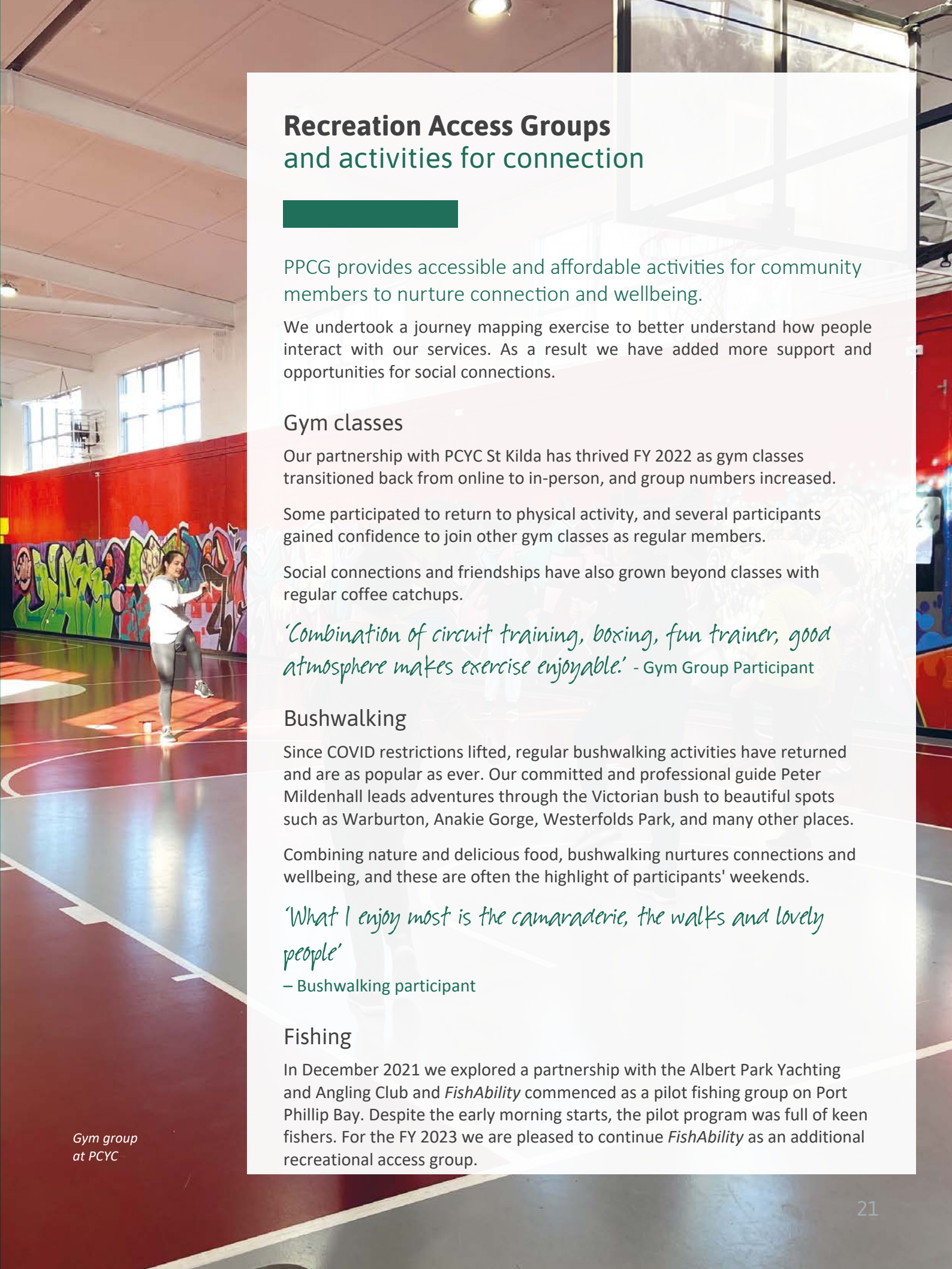


# Client Feedback

PPCG undertakes a client experience survey each year which provides us with valuable information to improve our services and ensure they are effective and responsive.

Key feedback from this survey included many clients wanting to reconnect in-person and with social activities, as well as wanting greater access to practical assistance and support, advocacy on their behalf, and referrals to specialist services.

You told us...	Our response...
<i>We would like more social activities now that COVID lockdowns are finally over</i>	We have recommenced our social inclusion activities and education courses face to face, including art, ICT, music and creativity, gym, pathways to employment, and bushwalking; and are exploring a new fishing group
<i>Since March 2020, I have found it hard to receive or apply for any help or assistance</i>	We now provide more access options via phone, online (digital vouchers), and in-person to services such as counselling and support, emergency relief, brokerage and support funds, financial counselling and contactless delivery of food and essential items during lockdowns. We also help you to apply for government, housing and other assistance whether this is by helping you to complete the necessary paperwork or advocating on your behalf
<i>I have a large family and need more assistance to provide for them.</i>	We continue to offer a range of emergency relief and material aid that cater for individual, multi person and family households. We also offer financial and budget support to help you to best use your income and resources, and we can also refer you to specialist family support services



Gym group at PCYC

## Recreation Access Groups and activities for connection

PPCG provides accessible and affordable activities for community members to nurture connection and wellbeing.

We undertook a journey mapping exercise to better understand how people interact with our services. As a result we have added more support and opportunities for social connections.

### Gym classes

Our partnership with PCYC St Kilda has thrived FY 2022 as gym classes transitioned back from online to in-person, and group numbers increased.

Some participated to return to physical activity, and several participants gained confidence to join other gym classes as regular members.

Social connections and friendships have also grown beyond classes with regular coffee catchups.

*'Combination of circuit training, boxing, fun trainer, good atmosphere makes exercise enjoyable.'* - Gym Group Participant

### Bushwalking

Since COVID restrictions lifted, regular bushwalking activities have returned and are as popular as ever. Our committed and professional guide Peter Mildenhall leads adventures through the Victorian bush to beautiful spots such as Warburton, Anakie Gorge, Westerfolds Park, and many other places.

Combining nature and delicious food, bushwalking nurtures connections and wellbeing, and these are often the highlight of participants' weekends.

*'What I enjoy most is the camaraderie, the walks and lovely people'*  
- Bushwalking participant

### Fishing

In December 2021 we explored a partnership with the Albert Park Yachting and Angling Club and *FishAbility* commenced as a pilot fishing group on Port Phillip Bay. Despite the early morning starts, the pilot program was full of keen fishers. For the FY 2023 we are pleased to continue *FishAbility* as an additional recreational access group.





## Alma Road Community House (ARCH)

Nowhere had the sense of community and shared activities been more keenly missed than at Neighbourhood Houses, including our own Alma Road Community House (ARCH).

The return of in-person community groups, classes, and workshops was warmly welcomed after two years in and out of lockdowns.

Feedback from the community was that whilst it was wonderful that groups and classes continued online while restrictions were in place, nothing could replace the value of being in a room together.

The parrot group, meditation class, bike maintenance workshops, chess club, computer classes and art group have all recommenced. We were also happy to see the Te-Arai community garden group resume. The little library, street pantry and children's playground continue to add to the vibrancy of the space, and weekends are once again filled with community groups and children's birthday parties.

ARCH and Te-Arai Park are important connectors of the local community in East St Kilda.

*"I have met a lot of people like me who have found support in an inclusive environment, and we learn from each other's experiences. I love my community neighbourhood house and that one smile from them does more for me than anything else in the day."*

– Regular group member at ARCH



## Social Meals

We were pleased to provide Social Meals again FY 2022 in partnership with Housing First, St Kilda Community Housing and South Port Community Housing Group, with funding from the City of Port Phillip.

This program fosters connections between rooming house residents through shared meals. **FY 2022 we provided a total of 1,903 meals. 59% of residents told us that they met somebody new in their house through a social meal, and their rating of the quality of the meals was 96%.**

*"The best part of social meals is meeting other residents and seeing happy people."*

– Social Meals Participant

Lockdowns and restrictions in 2021 prevented residents from coming together as often as usual, so we maintained contact and support through delivering individual meals, fresh food boxes, and essentials. As restrictions lifted we transitioned to outdoor BBQs, and have returned to regular meals

Residents are again socialising in-person with each other after meals – chatting after lunch, helping to clean up, and sharing meal ideas with our committed Social Meals staff and volunteers.



Jen Peatfield and David De Roach, PPCG Social Meals facilitators





Fiona and Jack, Star Health Active Linkages staff

## Partnerships and Innovation

PPCG continues to work in partnership to deliver responsive services to our clients and the community. We invest in our relationships and influence decision makers to help reduce inequity and inequality. Taking collective action for collective impact provides the best opportunity to make a difference.

Notable collaborative initiatives FY 2022 included:

- > City of Port Phillip COVID Relief and Recovery Coordination
- > HRAR Leadership Group
- > Share the Food (see p14 for more)
- > Community Information Services Victoria (CISVic) Network
- > Inner South Multicultural Network
- > Neighbourhood House Sector Development Network
- > Bayside Peninsula Financial Counselling Network
- > Southern Metro Region Learn Local Network
- > The Inner South Rooming House Group
- > Port Phillip Zero Executive Group (addressing homelessness in Port Phillip).

### High-Risk Accommodation Response (HRAR Project)

The HRAR project (under the auspices of Star Health) concluded on 30 June 2022. It was established in 2020 in direct response to COVID for high-risk accommodation settings including public housing, community housing, rooming houses, supported residential services and other sensitive settings.

The Leadership Group for HRAR of which PPCG is a member, will continue its collaboration and shared activities. This will include active linkages, community engagement and development, health and social digital literacy, and equity advocacy.

PPCG also continues its long-standing partnerships with St Kilda Community Housing, South Port Community Housing Group, Housing First, the Department of Education and Training, Adult, Further Education and Community (ACFE), CISVic, Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand, the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, and the Department of Health.

## City of Port Phillip Towards Zero

Causes of homelessness are many and varied. Family violence, a critical shortage of affordable housing, unemployment, mental illness, family breakdown and drug and alcohol abuse all contribute to the level of homelessness in Australia. Homelessness is not a choice and it can happen to anyone.

The Port Phillip Zero Project is an example of a collaborative and integrated response led by the City of Port Phillip and local support services focussed on **ending rough sleeping and homelessness in the City of Port Phillip** by providing appropriate, secure, affordable long-term housing, and support, to all individuals who are living without a home.

Since the creation of the City of Port Phillip Zero (PPZ) Project in July 2019, **271 people have been identified as sleeping rough** in the LGA and subsequently provided with specific and consistent support. By the end of June 2022, there were 93 people identified as homeless. The outcomes of this collaboration include 79 people who have moved into long-term housing.

### Nyala's Story

Nyala contacted PPCG seeking food support in February 2022. She had moved into a public housing unit in South Melbourne after being homeless (sleeping in her car), and was new to the area. Nyala had previously worked in hospitality on a casual basis but lost her job as a result of ongoing lockdowns and was now on Jobseeker. Costs associated with setting up her new accommodation had left her short of money and she could not pay her electricity bill.

PPCG provided Nyala with a food voucher, food parcel and toiletries. We assisted her to access her utility provider's hardship program and other grants, and set up an affordable payment plan via Centre Pay. We also referred her to other relevant local supports.

Nyala also expressed concern about COVID transmission as she was now living in a high-density high-rise apartment block. Although she had emigrated from Ethiopia 5 years ago and was reasonably proficient in English, she said she sometimes struggled to understand health and technical information. PPCG were able to provide Nyala with masks and hand sanitiser, and the relevant Government health advice in Tigrinya. We also referred her to the Star Health HRAR Program for COVID-related outreach services.

*\*name has been changed*



# PPCG by numbers 2021-2022 financial year



While **client numbers remain similar** to FY 2021, **the cost of doing business and complexity of client presentations have both increased** across FY 2022

**51,284** Direct Client **Contacts** up 529 from FY 2021



**33,710**  
Information, Support  
and Referral

**6,360** Education and Skills Development

**5,674** Social Inclusion Activities

**5,540** Financial Counselling\*

*\*Despite reduction in the number of contacts, client hours remained the same due to people presenting with more complex issues.*

**\$706,363** Food Distribution for **COVID relief**



**18,420**

Food parcels and meals



**30**

Agencies supported to provide relief

**\$ 136,647** Payments for **Assistance** up 4.3% from FY 2021

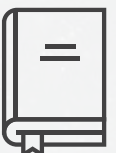


**\$117,647**

Emergency Relief  
up 21%

**\$16,000** No Interest  
Loans Scheme

**\$3,000** Back to  
School Fund



Education

**1,152** hours  
with 159 students



Digital Reach

**36,982** people  
reached through our channels



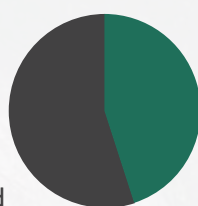
Volunteers

**3,800+** hours  
by 35+ volunteers

## Client Demographics\* 40% new clients



**55%**  
identified  
as female  
**44%** as male  
**1%** as non-binary



**3%** Under 25

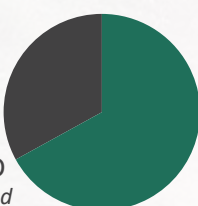
**60%**  
25-49 years  
of age



**26%** 50-64 years  
**11%** 65 plus years



**33%** CALD  
Culturally and  
Linguistically Diverse



**Top five backgrounds:**  
Polish, India, Horn of Africa  
Chinese, Russian/Ukraine



**53%**  
Public  
rental

**25%** Homeless up 10%  
hotel quarantine ended

**20%** Private rental

**2%** Home owner

**65%** Single **35%** Families **20%** With dependent children *\*Note Client demographics is based on IRS data*

## Looking Forward

Across FY 2022 our work has been shaped by COVID; both the virus itself and the associated health, social and economic challenges. The pandemic tested us in previously unimaginable ways.

In May, our Board and Staff enjoyed the opportunity to come together in-person to reflect on the achievements and challenges of the first year of our 2021-2025 Strategic Plan and confirm our future focus.

Almost three years with COVID in our lives has allowed us to develop a clear focus on the things that matter. We confirmed our commitment to partnering with our community and clients and to provide opportunities for their input into how best they can be supported to build on their strengths and to achieve their goals. We also confirmed a commitment to engaging in and supporting reforms that address entrenched and systemic challenges that have been further highlighted by the pandemic.

Looking forward, we will be focused on:

1. Understanding our impact and embedding an outcomes framework to support evidence-based services and initiatives, continuous quality improvements, and social inclusion.
2. Engaging with the community to refine and improve our services with a focus on co-design and advocacy for systemic changes.
3. Strengthening the foundations of PPCG through financial sustainability, environmental action, and ongoing commitment to an engaged, skilled and client/consumer focused staff and volunteer workforce

## You can help

Make a donation.

It has never been easier or more straightforward on our updated website:

[ppcg.org.au/support-us/donation](https://ppcg.org.au/support-us/donation)

*Donations over \$2 are tax deductible.*



Underpinning all that we and our partners do in an increasingly complex environment of need and demand must be a strong and well-funded Victorian community sector. The pandemic has highlighted the critical role that community organisations such as PPCG play in connecting people, building strength, advocating for change and supporting communities through adversity. Politicians from across the political divide and at all levels of government acknowledge this contribution.

Currently, whilst the community sector is valued, it is underfunded as demonstrated in this document through the range of work that we and our partners undertake, and yet that we struggle to fund. This must change if local areas such as Port Phillip and all members of our community are to truly thrive. Only with secure, adequate, and long-term funding can the community sector play its role most effectively.

**Our future is what we make it.**





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**PORTPHILLIP  
COMMUNITY  
GROUP**  
Working for  
Social Justice