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MISSION STATEMENT

CRANBOURNE INFORMATION AND SUPPORT SERVICE INC

MISSION STATEMENT

To provide an independent, free, impartial and confidential information, referral and support service to all members of the community.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSES

To assess the needs of people who access the service seeking assistance.

To provide direct aid and assistance for the people of Cranbourne and District who are in need of relief from poverty, sickness, distress, misfortune, destitution, homelessness or helplessness.

To provide people with information about, and referral to the services they require.

To provide a volunteer program which enables personal growth and a high standard of service delivery.

To coordinate a local network of community information providers.

To facilitate the provision of counselling services.

To facilitate the activities of local people and organisations who wish to contribute their time and/or resources to community service.

To pursue donations and subscriptions from benefactors, benevolent societies, philanthropic trusts and like organisations as a means of providing relief and services to people from Cranbourne and District.

To inform Government and the Community about the need of the local community of Cranbourne and District, in order to obtain, maintain and improve services.

To pursue funding from Government, Corporate and Community sources to obtain, maintain and improve services in response to local needs.

COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT

President:	George Nicol	Ordinary Members:	
Vice-President:	Ros Larke	Una McGuire	Dawn Wilson
Secretary:	Judy Symons	Anne Manning	Louise Morgan
Treasurer:	Julie Jones	Di Mainwaring	Margaret O'Callaghan

VOLUNTEER STAFF – 2009/2010

Anne Haylock	Louise Morgan	Gabriele Lindemann
Sue Hopkins	Una McGuire	Sharon Mills
Judy Symons	Susan Arlove	Jo Ferns
George Nicol	Julie Jones	Lyn Kranjec
Ros Larke	Dawn Wilson	Inoka Ratnasekera
Di Mainwaring	Anne Manning	

STAFF – 2009/2010

Manager:	Leanne Petrides
Counsellor:	John Lewis
Counsellor:	Joan Cavanagh
Counsellor:	Jenny Hyland
Counsellor:	Kaye Jones
Financial Counsellor:	Robyn d'Argent
Administration Officer:	Cathy Willmott
Support Worker:	Doug Thompson
CfC Outreach Information:	Ann Proud
CfC Outreach Information:	Flora Warren

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

This being my first report as President of CISS Committee of Management I would like to say what a wonderful experience it has been, one fellow working with nine women. I must say these ladies have made my position very easy, all very keen to put their thoughts and ideas forward when called upon.

As what seems to be the norm for us, it has been a tough year. An increased number of clients, not enough funds, not enough interview rooms and also a shortage of volunteers especially when people take time off for well deserved holidays.

However many of our short comings should soon be behind us, after around seven years of lobbying for larger premises by our hard working manager Leanne Petrides assisted by Cr Kevin Bradford, the City Of Casey Council are making the whole of the building at 156 Sladen Street available to us. There are quite an amount of alterations to be carried out before the building is ready for us to occupy, but by this time next year we should have moved in. This will enable us to give our clients more efficient service.

Our NILS program is still helping families in need of household goods. Our Back to School Support Program once again helped so many families to educate their children. Once again this past Christmas we were able to help many families with toys, meat vouchers and Christmas cakes, all of which were kindly donated.

One of the sad things in an organisation such as CISS, our staff get a little older and some decide it's time to have a rest, so it is with our counsellor John Lewis who is retiring this year. So I, along with all of the staff, wish John and his wife a very enjoyable time for their retirement. Thanks John, you will be missed by all of us and especially your clients.

It's now time to thank all the paid staff and volunteers for their devotion and their dedication in trying to help our clients in their time of need. I must also thank all organisations and members of the community who have made donations throughout the year, without their support we could not operate.

Many thanks to all the committee members who give up their time in assisting to set guidelines required for CISS to operate. To our very efficient administration officer Cathy, what can I say – she is a hardworking person who does such a wonderful job.

Last, but certainly not least, our Manager Leanne Petrides. Leanne works so hard and effortlessly for CISS. We appreciate the time she puts in, the meetings she attends, and the functions she attends out of hours telling the public what we are doing for our clients and how we need their support with donations so as to carry on helping.

George Nicol
President

MANAGER'S REPORT

It is with great pleasure that I present my twelfth annual report as Manager of the Cranbourne Information and Support Service. It has been a difficult year for our community and CISS has been busy dealing with so many new challenges and opportunities. It does not seem like a full year has passed since our last AGM but as always, my report gives me an opportunity to reflect on the year that has passed, and to report on issues for our community and areas of development for our agency.

As you will see from the statistics presented throughout the report (and particularly on page 26), the trend we report year after year of increasing numbers of people accessing our service continues – particularly for emergency relief. The workers at CISS support a broad cross-section of people from our local community – many who receive Centrelink benefits (including a rising number of people on Disability or Aged pensions), as well as an increasing number of workers on low incomes. Again, the disturbing trend of people either homeless or at risk of homelessness continues to be an issue we deal with almost every day. Many of our clients requesting emergency relief are forced to do so because they are left with so little money each fortnight after paying their rent or mortgage. The number of referrals received by the financial counselling team, and our counselling team bear witness to the complex problems people face which are often compounded by financial stress.

Our dedicated team of volunteers provide a raft of services to clients in need in addition to emergency relief. Due to the complex nature of issues clients often present with, volunteers have to be multi-skilled and resourceful, while also making the client feel respected. On any given day, volunteers will be providing support with information, referrals to both internal and external programs, advocacy, negotiation and liaison, as well as utilising Utility Relief Grants, Homewise Grants, Telstra vouchers, Discretionary Fund, and Education Assistance. For more complex cases requiring a case management approach, they are able to refer to our Support Worker.

A survey conducted in 2008 by the State Government Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) reported that approximately 29% of the Casey population identify themselves as a volunteer – that would equate to approximately 75,000 people just in the City of Casey strengthening our community by volunteering! Our CISS volunteers work in one of the most challenging volunteer arenas, working with people who are often vulnerable, disillusioned, angry or desperate. The volunteers respond professionally, and with empathy and respect, to individuals and families in crisis across our community. While our team comprises only a small number of the total number of local volunteers, they more than make up for their size in compassion, dedication, humour and intelligence! I would like to officially pay tribute to their continuing hard work and support of me, the agency, and of course, our community.

Our partnership with Windermere Child & Family Services, through the Communities for Children program funded by the federal government, has led to strengthened links not only with Windermere, but with many other organisations thanks to the work of our Infolink team. We also work very closely with The Salvation Army Cranbourne Support Services, particularly in delivering the annual Back to School Support program.

As well as delivering services to the community, we are committed to networking both locally and at a broader level. CISS has been represented on and involved in many local consultative committees, projects, and groups such as the Westernport Regional Association of Community Information Centres, and the Cranbourne & District Community Services Group, which we coordinate. This financial year we have also been involved with the City of Casey's Volunteer Participation Steering Group, Cranbourne Community Plan, a number of state government initiatives with the Department of Human Services, and the federal government's Emergency Relief State Consultative Committee.

As usual, we have a number of people and organisations to thank for their support throughout the year. It is never possible to mention by name everyone who supports our agency, so please take time to read the acknowledgements on the last page of our Annual Report. All of these groups contribute in meaningful ways to keeping CISS functioning well, and we recognise them all. The individuals and organisations that donate food, time and money to us are many and varied – indeed they represent the diversity of our local community, which despite being one that is often represented as one in need, possesses great strength and character.

Our partnership with the City of Casey continues to grow, with the much welcome news that from July 2010, CISS will be able to utilise the entire building at 156 Sladen Street. Given the increasing numbers of clients (and staff) and with limited space, we have been struggling to meet people's needs in a timely manner, and there are many days when the waiting room is so full people are waiting outside to be seen. With the City of Casey leasing CISS the entire building as well as renovating it to meet our needs, we look forward to a new and exciting era of service delivery to our community. The City of Casey also took the innovative step of funding a financial counselling position at CISS. This has proven to be a much needed and well utilised program.

As always, I would like to extend my thanks and congratulations to the Committee of Management for their continued vision, hard work, and support. I would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge our counselling team – John, Joan, Jenny, and Kaye, our financial counsellor, Robyn, as well as June, the outreach financial counsellor, Doug, our Support Worker, and Ann and Flora, the Infolink team. Cathy, our administration officer, always deserves a special mention for her commitment and dedication.

All of them continue to work extraordinarily hard, and their contribution to the agency and their support of the volunteers and me has been invaluable.

I encourage everyone to take the time to read the rest of our Annual Report and I look forward to another year of working with CISS for the residents of Casey South.

Leanne Petrides
Manager

“For to be free is not to merely cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedoms of others”

Nelson Mandela

COUNSELLOR'S REPORTS

John Lewis

It is with pleasure that I present my thirteenth and last annual report as a counsellor with the Cranbourne Information & Support Service.

Most of the information presented below relates to statistics, which are simply numbers. They cannot convey the despair, frustration, anger and helplessness experienced by real people. If in my time with CISS I have been able to relieve some of the hurt and encourage a feeling of hope for the possibilities of the future, I will be well satisfied with my time here.

So I would like to formally acknowledge the courage and determination of many clients as they strive to make changes in their lives.

WAITING TIME FOR SERVICES

For most of the year, the demand for services remains consistent, but perhaps because of Relationship Australia moving to Cranbourne, there have been some quiet periods.

TRAINING & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

I am currently receiving supervision fortnightly, from Eddie Gallagher. Joan, Jenny, Kaye and I have a weekly peer supervision meeting, which now includes the CASA workers from next door on a monthly basis.

STATISTICS

During the last financial year, 458 counselling sessions were provided, which is similar to last year. There has been a 5% increase in Cranbourne clients and a concomitant decrease in other areas.

During the year I have seen 51 new "clients", where a couple or family counts as one "client". There has been a 10% increase in the number of male clients.

Four hundred and fifty eight counselling sessions were provided to 529 people.

ISSUES RAISED, in order of frequency: -

- | | | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Personal Issues | 2. Family Violence | 3. Relationship Issues | 4. Family Issues |
| 5. Sexual Abuse | 6. Drug & Alcohol | 7. Divorce | |

Family Violence is now the second most common issue. I believe this does not indicate a large increase in actual violence but rather a refusal by partners to accept violence as being "OK".

Note that 'issues' are categorised by their most significant characteristic, normally of course clients come with a complex range of issues; these could include grief, depression, isolation, addictions, anger problems, child/adolescent behaviour problems, sexual and other abuse, and so on.

STATISTICS SUMMARY

During the nearly thirteen years I have worked with CISS I have seen a grand total of **8,350 clients, provided 6,974 counselling sessions and had 13,139 contacts.** Whew!

Contacts, by Location.				Counselling sessions, by client location.		
Cranbourne	578	76%	(74%)	322	71%	(71%)
Hampton Park	53	4%	(7%)	39	9%	(9%)
Casey South	69	8%	(9%)	65	14%	(14%)
Outside Casey South	81	12%	(10%)	26	6%	(6%)
TOTALS	826	3% more than last year.		458		

Note: All figures in brackets refer to last year's percentages.

Client Contacts by Type.			
Individuals	625	79%	(80%)
Males	426	65%	(55%)
Females	229	35%	(45%)
Couples	68	8%	(7%)
Families	34	4%	(4%)
Consultations with other professionals	69	9%	

Note: Continuing high number of male clients ('normal' ratio - 66% female, 33% male).

Counselling Sessions by Income of client.			
Pension or Benefit	304	66.4%	(64%)
Up to \$20,000	24	5.2%	(7%)
Between \$20,000 and \$30,000	21	4.6%	(8%)
Between \$30,000 and \$40,000	41	9%	(10%)
Between \$40,000 and \$50,000	39	8.5%	(5%)
Above \$50,000	29	6.3%	(6%)

Note: 72% of sessions were provided to clients with incomes below \$30,000.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Once again my thanks to all the people who have helped and supported me during my time with CISS, including the Monday night crew (Gabriele and Leanne), Joan, Jenny and Kaye, the Committee of Management, all the volunteers, but especially Leanne.

It has been your loving caring support and professional respect, which has made working here so rewarding. This enabled me to work with some difficult clients at times. I shall miss you all and the fascinating interactions I have had with you over the years, oh yes and all the good humour.

CISS is a wonderful place to work.

John Lewis
Counsellor

Joan Cavanagh

It is with pleasure that I present my tenth Annual Report to the AGM of the Cranbourne Information and Support Service (I can't believe ten years has gone by so fast).

The work at CISS continues to be challenging and rewarding. I continue to be grateful for the working environment provided by CISS and for the generosity extended in providing outside supervision and professional development. It is commendable that the importance of supervision and professional development to the counselling role is recognised and funded by the organisation.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

During this financial year I continued to participate in weekly peer supervision with John Lewis, Jenny Hyland and Kaye Jones. SECASA staff also join our supervision sessions when they are available (our contact with SECASA staff is vital as we have a mutual referral arrangement).

I continue to receive external supervision with Dr Ingrid Sturmeijer who is Director of Counselling at Relationships Australia.

Professional development programs I have attended this year included a two day program on 'The Intersystem Approach to Couple Therapy' by Dr Gerald Weeks. I was also fortunate to attend a workshop by Harville Hendrix who is considered something of a "guru" in the relationship counselling field as the author of *Getting The Love You Want*. I also attended some other lectures by local and international speakers. As always, I undertake a dedicated professional reading program.

STATISTICS

(Statistics in parentheses provide a comparison to the 2008/09 financial year)

During the last financial year 187 counselling sessions were held (compared to 180 during the last financial year). A total of 214 (209) clients attended appointments. As in previous years, the issue of clients not attending counselling appointments continues to be a problem. This is especially evident in the school holidays. In the 2010/11 financial year the number of appointments not kept will be documented to form part of the statistical reporting to Committee so that the extent of the problem can be seen (without this figure the true level of demand on the service cannot be ascertained).

Waiting lists remain short with clients usually being seen within a week or two. As in other years the majority of my clients (71%) were female.

Counselling sessions by location	Number	Percentage
Cranbourne	137 (118)	73% (65.5%)
Hampton Park	27 (36)	14% (20.0%)
Casey South	24 (3)	12% (1.7%)
Outside above areas	2 (23)	1% (12.8%)
TOTAL	187 (180)	100%

Counselling Sessions by Income of client.		
Pension or benefit Income up to \$20,000	91 (75)	49% (41.7%)
\$20,000- \$30,000	7 (5)	4% (2.8%)
\$30,000- \$40,000	25 (15)	13% (8.3%)
\$40,000 - \$50,000	14 (30)	7% (16.7%)
Over \$50,000	50 (55)	27% (30.5%)
TOTAL	187 (180)	100%

As is usually the case, the highest percentage of clients (49%) accessing our services are in the lowest income bracket. The second highest (27%) is the highest income bracket, as was the case last year.

Client Contacts by Type.	Number	Percentage
Total Number of Clients	214 (209)	100%
Males	62 (64)	29% (31%)
Females	152 (145)	71% (69%)
Individual sessions	160 (151)	85.5% (84%) of total sessions
Number of couples	27 (59)	14.5% (16%) of total sessions

ISSUES RAISED, in order of frequency: -

1. Personal (includes trauma, grief, personal development, stress management, alcohol and drug dependence etc)
2. Relationship
3. Family Issues
4. Separation/Divorce
5. Domestic Violence
6. Crisis Management
7. Divorce

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks as always goes to Leanne, John, Jenny, Kaye, Doug, Ann, Flora, Cathy, Robyn, Volunteers and to the Committee of Management for their role in supporting our work and for creating and sustaining a positive working environment. Thanks also go again to June Blamires (financial counsellor) for her support.

The counselling team has continued to work well together but faces some changes in the future. John Lewis left in the last days of this financial year to go on sick leave before retiring. The team will miss his input, friendship and support and we wish him every happiness in his life after CISS. We welcome the addition of Doug and June into the team as they take up some of John's load.

I am always grateful for our Monday meetings which are vital for good communication, good clinical practice and mutual support.

Joan Cavanagh
Counsellor

Jenny Hyland

I am pleased to present my sixth annual report to the AGM of the Cranbourne Information and Support Service. There has been no change to my working hours which total 15 per week (Mondays and Fridays). The work at CISS continues to be stimulating and the issues with which clients present varied. My clients are my best teachers. The richness of their life experiences continue to challenge and extend my knowledge, awareness and skills as a counsellor. It is always an honour to be invited into the client's world at such a personal level.

I continue to work as a counsellor at Chisholm but will be resigning from that position at the end of the year. Should the opportunity arise in 2011, I would like to pick up an extra day at CISS.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

I continue to receive monthly supervision from Leni Foster, psychologist in private practice. Although she has been my supervisor for a few years, I still enjoy and benefit a great deal from these sessions. The CISS counsellors continue to meet once weekly for peer supervision. This provides an excellent opportunity to receive guidance with difficult cases, to share ideas and to catch up. Robyn Breheny and Jan Bland, SECASA counsellors, attend these sessions from time to time. This provides a valuable opportunity to network and to discuss relevant cases involving sexual abuse and trauma.

During the past year I have attended the following professional development sessions either through CISS or Chisholm:

- Intersystem Approach to Couple Therapy: An Integrative Perspective – Gerald Weeks.
- Mindfulness and Psychotherapy Conference – E-Vam Institute
- Multicultural Forum – Chisholm Institute
- Imago Relationship Therapy Training: An Introduction – Harville Hendrix

STATISTICS

During the last financial year 274 counselling sessions were provided to 196 clients. As reflected in the figures, the percentage of clients in the lowest economic bracket has increased substantially over the last financial year while the percentage in the over \$50,000 bracket has levelled out substantially. The needs of new clients have generally been met in a timely fashion with slightly more availability for clients in acute need. For the first time I have included statistics on the number of appointments not kept, either through cancellation or "no shows". These reflect approximately one third of the total number of appointments. Perhaps this high percentage in part reflects the value and commitment some clients place on a service for which they do not have to pay. It may also reflect the number of clients who are in great distress when they make a counselling appointment but who feel more able to cope and less in need of counselling when some time has passed.

Counselling sessions by location	Number	Percentage
Cranbourne	219 (227)	79.92% (74.67%)
Within our catchment	15 (30)	5.47% (9.86%)
Outside our catchment	41 (47)	14.96% (15.46%)
TOTAL	274 (304)	100%

Counselling sessions by income	Number	Percentage
Pension or benefit Income up to \$20000	97 (30)	35.27% (9.86%)
Between \$20000 and \$30000	44 (57)	16% (18.75%)
Between \$30000 and \$40000	57 (42)	20.72% (13.81%)
Between \$40000 and \$50000	21 (32)	7.63% (10.52%)
Over \$50000	56 (143)	20.36% (47.03%)
TOTAL	275 (304)	100%

Client Contacts by Type.	Number	Percentage
Total number of clients	196 (227)	100%
Males	52 (60)	26.66% (26.43%)
Females	167 (167)	73.33% (73.56%)
Number of couple sessions	41 (44)	15.27% (13.48%) of total sessions
Appointments not kept	100	36.49%
Consultations with other professional staff	2	

ISSUES RAISED, in order of frequency: -

- | | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 1. Family | 2. Personal | 3. Relationship | 4. Domestic Violence |
| 5. Other | 6. Separation/Divorce | 7. Sexual Abuse | 8. Loss & Grief |
| 9. Anger Management | | | |

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As always CISS is a fantastic workplace to be part of. Leanne leads by example, encouraging a dynamic where everyone is valued and treated equally with consideration and respect. Under her guidance, the volunteers, support staff and counsellors work together to form a very cohesive and supportive team and all contribute to a unique work environment. It is a privilege to be part of the counselling team from which I gain an enormous amount of support, knowledge and honing of skills. I would like to thank the Committee of Management for their ongoing support of the counsellors' professional development needs and for their generosity in terms of the time they give to ensuring that CISS is a happy and efficiently run Centre.

Jenny Hyland
Counsellor

Kaye Jones

It is my pleasure to present my fourth annual report to the AGM of the Cranbourne Information and Support Service. I have continued to work a total of 20 hours per week spread over Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays.

In addition to counselling, many of our clients require a measure of case management and we often need to refer them to other professionals, including GPs, Legal Aid, Mediation, Doug Thompson (our CISS Support Worker) and SECASA. I have noticed a marked increase in clients with ongoing and often severe financial difficulties and it has been invaluable having a second financial counsellor available in-house as a referral for these clients. There has also been an increase in the number of clients with drug or alcohol addictions.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In addition to the weekly peer supervision group with fellow counsellors Joan Cavanagh, Jenny Hyland and John Lewis I have continued to receive valuable monthly professional supervision from Hans Schmidt.

Professional Development this year has included attendance at a workshop by Eddie Gallagher entitled *Violence towards Parents* and a seminar at the Australian Centre for Grief & Bereavement on Road Trauma. I am grateful to the CISS Committee for making these possible. I and my fellow counsellors are also grateful for the purchase of various professional books which are valuable tools in enhancing our knowledge, thus enabling us to provide the best possible aid to our clients.

STATISTICS

In this past financial year 361 counselling sessions were provided to 222 clients.

Counselling sessions by location	Number	Percentage
Cranbourne	289 (336)	80% (79.3%)
Hampton Park	4 (24)	1% (5.7%)
Lynbrook	4 (8)	1% (1.9%)
Pearcedale	2 (3)	1% (0.7%)
Tooradin	10 (0)	3% (0%)
Blind Bight	0 (7)	0% (1.6%)
Outside our catchment	52 (46)	14% (10.8%)
TOTAL	361 (425)	100%

The counselling sessions provided to people outside our area were due mainly to clients who moved away from Casey during the counselling process.

Counselling sessions by income	Number	Percentage
Pension or benefit Income up to \$20000	156 (247)	43% (58.3%)
Between \$20000 and \$30000	56 (67)	15.5% (15.8%)
Between \$30000 and \$40000	56 (39)	15.5% (9.2%)
Between \$40000 and \$50000	53 (16)	14.7% (3.8%)
Over \$50000	39 (54)	11% (12.7%)
Unknown	1 (1)	0.3% (0.2%)
TOTAL	361 (424)	100%

Client type	Number	Percentage
Total number of clients	222 (236)	100%
Males	57 (64)	26% (27.1%)
Females	165 (172)	74% (72.9%)
Number of couples	18 (17)	16% of total sessions
Number of families	0 (2)	0% of total sessions

ISSUES RAISED, in order of frequency: -

- Personal
- Relationship
- Separation
- Addictions: Drug, Alcohol, Gambling
- Chronic Illness
- Anger Management
- Anxiety & Depression
- Other

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CISS is a wonderful place to work. The atmosphere of support, care, compassion and hope complements the work we do in counselling the clients and assists with positive outcomes.

As always I have been very grateful to the volunteers and other staff of CISS, for their continuing hard work and support, and especially to Leanne and my fellow counsellors for their advice, support, understanding and ongoing assistance.

Kaye Jones
Counsellor

SUPPORT WORKER'S REPORT

The number of clients I have seen during the last 12 months have been consistent with those of last year, taking into account that I was on annual leave during May.

The referrals to me have been from many different areas including for the larger part, the front-line CISS volunteers, also the counsellors, Enhanced Maternal & Child Health, Connections, WAYSS, Schools and increasingly, Centrelink.

While there has remained a need for financial help, ie through vouchers and discretionary funds, there is a large component of the assistance given as advocacy on behalf of the clients.

Again the months of December, January and part of February have been mainly devoted to working with Julie on our Back to School Program (BTS). The number of families seen was up from 230 last year to 240 this year, and the value of the assistance went from \$34,800 to \$37,000 this year. The Educational Assistance Program (EAP) has also continued during the year, and from February to June, we saw 47 families, assisting them to the value of \$6,900.

STATISTICS (July 2009 – June 2010)

CLIENTS

	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	TOTAL
CLIENTS	14	13	13	9	4	10	5	11	18	14		10	121
SESSIONS	21	18	17	14	5	10	8	12	23	18		11	157
NEW	6	6	5	4	-	7	2	8	13	10		6	67

LOCATION

	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	TOTAL
3977	12	9	8	3	3	7	3	7	13	12		5	82
3976	1	2	2	1	-	1	1	1	2	-		1	12
OTHER	1	2	3	5	1	2	1	3	3	2		4	27

GENDER

	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	TOTAL
MALE	3	5	5	6	4	2	2	7	5	4		3	46
FEMALE	11	8	8	3	-	8	3	4	13	10		7	75

ISSUES PRESENTED: -

The main issues that are being presented are financial, housing problems, increased costs of rents and utilities. For a lot of the clients coming in for assistance, the main problem is that the money coming into the household, (ie Centrelink payments) doesn't cover their basic living costs for food and shelter. This includes young families through to the aged pensioner.

By far, the largest group of Centrelink recipients seeking our assistance were Parenting Payment Single (PPS), double those receiving Disability Support Pension and Newstart.

The following are areas where assistance was given: -

Financial	Education
Housing – Rental/Mortgage	Immigration/Visas
Advocacy	Drug/Alcohol
Health Disability Issues	Child Support/Separation
Domestic Violence	Centrelink Problems
Legal	Bereavement
Employment	Assistance with Forms/Resumes

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

During the year I attended a number of courses, and also represented CISS at information sessions. These included: -

- Windermere Community Reference Group
- Understanding Mental Illness
- Who's Settling in Casey
- Cranbourne Youth Information Centre

Doug Thompson
Support Worker

“It is one of the beautiful compensations of this life that no-one can sincerely try to help another without helping himself”

Ralph Waldo Emerson

CRANBOURNE COMMUNITIES FOR CHILDREN **'INFOLINK' REPORT**

It has been a busy and productive time for the Infolink Team in the Cranbourne community during the last twelve months.

The last financial year was certainly busier than previous years, as the scope of the project was expanded to cover families and children aged 0-12 years. This enabled Infolink to enter into not only the Primary Schools but also the Secondary Colleges. This opened up a new audience of teachers and support staff. To date four primary schools have been visited totalling 29 attendees. Centro was once again our biggest opportunity to provide information with 347 customers incorporating 363 referrals/ information enquiries.

Due to most of the childcare centres already being visited the previous year, only 5 childcare centres were visited during the last financial year with 172 info packs distributed to families. An additional 33 resources, books and directories were also handed out to centre Directors. A group of 15 students was also addressed at Merinda Park Learning Centre and informed about CISS and the service we provide to the community.

In the four months that our ADHD Parent Support Group has been operating we have had 25 parents attend and one worker from Connections attending too. This service has provided a much needed support base for these families with several coming into CISS for further advice and assistance. Three of the parents are now having counselling with Kaye Jones who is providing invaluable support.

We look forward to the coming year and expanding our outreach service further.

Ann Proud & Flora Warren
'Infolink' Team

“Power is the ability to do good things for others”

Brooke Astor

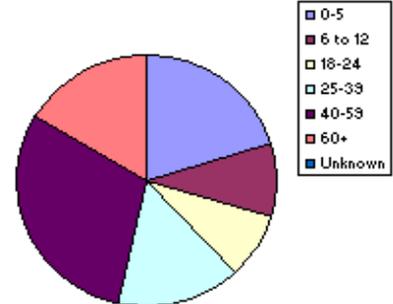
Cranbourne Communities for Children 'Infolink'

Centro

Age Groups

0-5	31
6 to 12	14
18-24	13
25-39	23
40-59	46
60+	25
Unknown	0
Total Age Groups	152

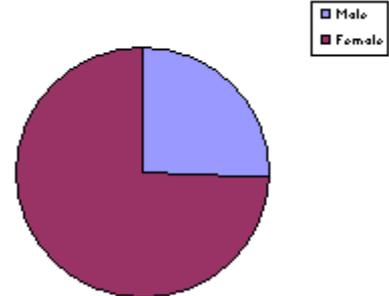
Age Groups



Gender

Male	27
Female	78
Total Gender	105

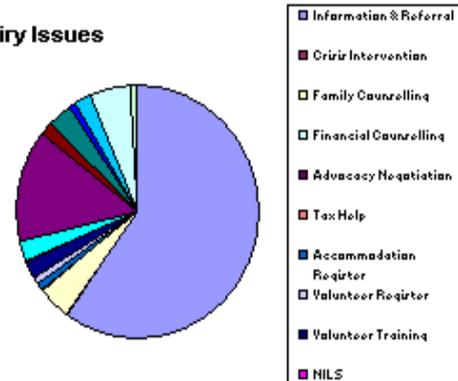
Gender



Enquiry Issues

Information & Referral	70
Family Counselling	5
Accommodation Register	1
Volunteer Register	1
Volunteer Training	3
Housing	3
Health Wellbeing	17
Benefits Concessions	2
Education Training	4
Employment Needs	1
Consumer Problems	3
Community Issues	6
Other	1
Total Enquiry Issues	117

Enquiry Issues



Schools Visited

4

Age Groups

0-5	4
6 to 12	9
18-24	0
25-39	2
Total Age Groups	15

Gender

Male	27
Female	78
Total Gender	105

Information & Referral Enquiries	29
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SERVICES

Information and Referral

Information and referral services are the core activity of the agency, and are available on a wide range of subjects including:

- * Accommodation
- * Community Affairs
- * Education
- * Employment
- * Health
- * Legal
- * Support Services
- * Counselling
- * Consumer Affairs
- * Emergency Relief
- * Environment
- * Income
- * Recreation
- * Transport

Trained volunteers provide information in person or over the phone. A current, comprehensive community information database, pamphlets, booklets, and manuals enable access to thousands of agencies, services and procedures. Data is maintained on National, State, regional and local agencies, and provides people with improved access to resources and services, and knowledge of their rights and responsibilities.

Crisis Support

An intervention service is provided for people in crisis. This can include a 'listening ear', support, practical assistance (such as filling in forms or writing letters), information, and referrals to appropriate specialist supports. Demand for our crisis support service grows each year as increasing numbers of people present with complex needs and numerous issues.

Emergency relief is provided for people experiencing financial hardship, and includes food, food vouchers, gas and petrol, Met tickets, nappies, baby food/formula, and pharmaceutical needs. Guidelines and eligibility criteria apply, and a 'holistic' rather than 'bandaid' model of service delivery is used.

Counselling

A generalist crisis intervention and counselling program is provided, with individual, couple, and family counselling offered; and specialist counselling is also available for adolescent and adult males. The service is free and available to individuals, couples and families who live or work in the Casey South area.

Advocacy and Negotiation

This is provided on behalf of clients with Government departments, service providers, utility companies, landlords, businesses, and neighbours, etc, with regard to issues including debts, services, complaints, and procedures. Emphasis is placed on the client developing these skills for future use.

Casey No Interest Loans Scheme (NILS)

The Casey No Interest Loans Scheme (NILS) offers low-income earners an accessible source of credit for the purchase of essential household goods with an achievable repayment plan that does not compromise the household budget.

NILS is jointly operated by CISS and Casey North CISS, and commenced in April 2001 with a small amount of capital. Since inception, the program's capital has increased significantly, which has allowed us to respond more effectively to the need of the Casey community.

This scheme continues to grow, with many clients now on their second or third loans.

Share Accommodation Register

A register for people looking, or offering to share accommodation is available on site. Sharers are resourced with a "Sharing Kit", and staff can act as mediators in establishing share arrangements. Sharing can be an economical and practical way of finding accommodation in the local area, and this free service has enabled many people find suitable, affordable housing, and is a useful community resource.

Tax Help

Volunteer staff are trained by the Australian Taxation Office to assist people fill in simple tax returns. This service is offered to people on low incomes, the aged, people with disabilities, people whose primary language is not English, Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders, young people, pensioners, unemployed, and people with literacy or numeracy difficulties. CISS is the only agency providing Tax Help in the Casey South area, and the demand is such that many people cannot be assisted.

Volunteer Register

A register of service providers and community groups who offer opportunities for people interested in volunteer work is available on site.

Volunteer Program

CISS volunteers undertake an extensive training program, including a nationally accredited course – "Assess and Provide Services to Clients with Complex Needs", orientation, and a probationary period before becoming accredited community information workers. A focus on personal development enables volunteers to further develop particular skills or interests in fields such as public relations, information management, research, administration and computers, amongst many more.

"Volunteering is the ultimate exercise in democracy. You vote in elections now and then, but when you volunteer, you vote every day about the kind of community you want to live in"

Marjorie Moore

Audit report

Financial Position

Financial Performance GA

Financial Performance ER

Financial Performance ER

EMERGENCY RELIEF

Many of our clients are dealing with complex personal and financial issues that dominate their lives. Just over 15% of clients attending our agency for assistance with emergency relief are approaching us for the very first time, reflecting both the vast growth in population, and the number of families in our region living below the poverty line, and therefore increasingly dependent on the welfare system to survive.

It is important to note that all people accessing our service receive a comprehensive and holistic service, often receiving a range of support services in addition to material aid. Some people requesting emergency relief may only require assistance once, but generally, families in this area need further support during times of crisis or prolonged hardship. Requests for assistance with transport costs (both petrol and public transport expenses) remain high, as does the need for assistance with medical and pharmaceutical costs.

Once again, we are proud to acknowledge the support of many local organisations and individuals who donated to our Emergency Relief program throughout the year. We received donations from Lawson Poole Daylight Lodge, Ulysses Club Shearwaters Branch, Inner Wheel Club of Cranbourne, Rotary Club of Cranbourne, Cranbourne Arthritis Support Group, Cranbourne Country Women's Association, Mr Fred Brooks, Mr Bruce Greenland, Trios Taberet, Ms Makea Koronui-Katu, Mr George Brown, Ms Therese Mulcahy and the City of Casey.

During the last financial year, almost \$200,000 was distributed in emergency relief and a further \$43,900 was distributed through the Back to School/Education Assistance Programs. This would not have been possible without the federal department of Families, Housing, Community Services & Indigenous Affairs, The R.E.Ross Trust, The Salvation Army Cranbourne Support Services and the Dandenong Magistrates Court, as well as additional support from local churches, donations from the Ritchie's Stores Community Benefit Card, and the aforementioned groups and individuals. We also received and distributed \$7,000 of Telstra vouchers.

STATISTICS

Please see the following graph for a breakdown of service provision. We received over 1,200 more requests for services in this financial year compared with the 2008-2009 financial year. As usual, emergency relief was our most utilised service, with over 6,000 requests for assistance. This was an increase of over 1,300 requests from the previous year, and translated to a total of 7,540 adults and 8,216 children who benefited in some way from our emergency relief service. The majority (57%) of people attending our agency were aged between 25-39 years, with a further 31% aged between 40-59 years. Six percent of clients were under 24 years of age.

Statistics

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We extend our thanks to the following individuals and agencies for their support, donations or assistance to clients and staff of the Cranbourne Information & Support Service:

City of Casey Councillors and Staff
Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA)
Department of Justice Victoria – Southern Courts Fund
Community Information Victoria
Woolworths Limited
Ritchies Stores Ltd – Cranbourne
Windermere Child & Family Services
The Salvation Army Cranbourne Support Services
The R.E. Ross Trust
St Vincent's de Paul Society
Techdeck Computer Service (John & Derek)
Pharmore Pharmacy
Centrelink - Cranbourne
June Blamires – Southern Health Financial Counsellor
Australian Taxation Office – Tax Help Program
Cranbourne Lions Club

For donations to CISS Emergency Relief Fund –

- Lawson Poole Daylight Lodge
- Ulysses Club Shearwaters Branch
- Inner Wheel Club of Cranbourne Inc
- Rotary Club of Cranbourne
- Cranbourne Arthritis Support Group
- Cranbourne Country Women's Association
- Mr Fred Brooks
- Mr Bruce Greenland
- Trios Taberet
- Ms Makea Koronui-Katu
- Mr George Brown
- Ms Therese Mulcahy
- City of Casey