

Southern Peninsula Community Support



Supporting marginalised individuals and families experiencing disadvantage within our community.

Newsletter No. 4

Your Compassion and Care IS the Difference.

It's been a while since our last newsletter. With the new year well underway, please know you have our very best wishes for a safe and successful 2023.

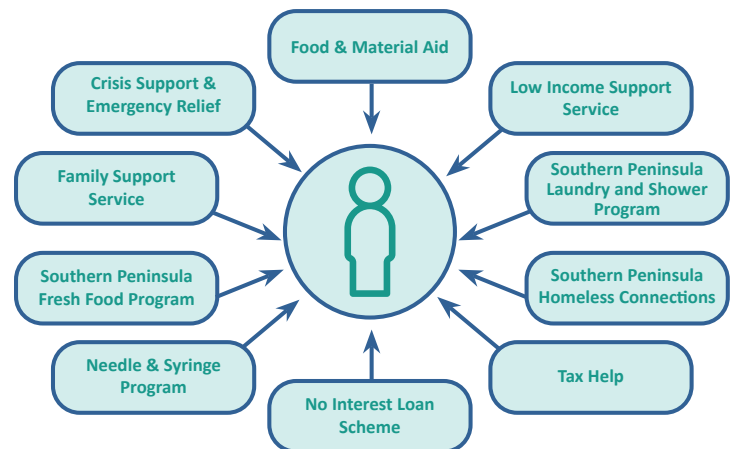
Last year was tough for many people. Sadly, this year is also looking pretty grim, as the cost of living increases, expenses grow and affordable housing in the Southern Peninsula continues to shrink.

Many people - families, individuals, pensioners and retirees are feeling the squeeze and tightening their very tight belts. The number of people at risk of homelessness grows daily.

The compassion and care we receive from our wonderful community of supporters has been so important to our work in helping the marginalised and vulnerable in our community.

Together, you have provided essential goods, financial donations including monthly contributions, grants and philanthropic support, Gifts in Wills, and hours of volunteer time.

Because of all of you, we are able to continue to operate, providing a range of programs and services that meet the immediate and long-term needs of those who reach out to Southern Peninsula Community Support. This includes:



Your support is essential in ensuring that our services are available and accessible for EVERY person who comes to us. **Thank you for being our partner in helping the vulnerable and marginalised in the Southern Peninsula.**

"You all gave us not only material help but treated us with respect in very difficult times. I want to express my heartfelt thanks for your empathy and sympathy, especially when I could hardly talk due to crying! Bless you all. Thank you."

THE KEY TO CHANGE IS UNDERSTANDING

The devastating effects of Covid-19 have not let up. Enormous social and economic hardship have increased the housing crisis across the Peninsula, nowhere more than the Southern Peninsula. Coupled with increased costs and reduced income, many people are living in fear of job losses, family violence, disrupted education, homelessness... the list goes on.

I can't hide from the fact that this year has been more challenging for our staff and volunteers. The pandemic took its toll on our volunteers and while we are gradually rebuilding our numbers, our new volunteers need time to learn the ropes. When I checked recently around a quarter of our interviewers and close to half of our reception staff have been with us for less than a year.

What I love about having so many new volunteers is their energy and how quickly they connect to the organisation mirroring the passion of our existing volunteers by jumping right into helping. It's hard work getting volunteers, so we are very grateful that people do want to join us.

The other thing that makes a difference are our other supporters. It really is special to see the smiling face of someone with a box of veggies or bags of groceries at our gate or to get a generous cheque in the mail with a lovely handwritten note (yep this still happens and we love it). **It lifts us up and gets us through some pretty tough days.**

As we open up, it's also great to have community groups such as the Lions and Rotary Clubs inviting us to talk about what we do and how together we can help those in our community who are doing it tough (see the stories about SPLaSh on page 6). We also thank those who visited Southern Peninsula Community Support to learn more about our work. **I firmly believe the key to changing things is to spread understanding.**

Every person, business and organisation that supports us does so as a partner to our cause. It really feels like every member of the Southern Peninsula is wrapping their arms around those who are hurting. As someone we have supported said, *"we live in an awesome community"*. They are right.

I am truly humbled by the outpouring of support we continue to receive. It is evident that our community – the Southern Peninsula community – deeply cares for those in need.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jeremy Maxwell".

Jeremy Maxwell
Chief Executive Officer

YOU'RE INVITED TO SEE THE DIFFERENCE YOU MAKE

Come and join people interested in our work on a tour of Southern Peninsula Community Support's main centre with CEO Jeremy Maxwell.

Held most Tuesdays, starting at 9.30am and running for an hour, you'll hear first-hand how your support makes a difference.

You will get to see what we do, why we do it and why we are different to other food and material aid programs. **Please call our centre on 03 5986 1285 or email admin@spsic.org to register.**
We look forward to seeing you.



“THIS IS THE FIRST PLACE PEOPLE COME TO...”

For more than 12 years, Margaret Brown has helped countless numbers of people through Southern Peninsula Community Support’s Low Income Support Service. Her tireless efforts, patience, and matter-of-fact style, have been instrumental in guiding people to examine their financial and life situations, address their daily struggles, and make their own informed decisions.

Yet Margaret’s role goes deeper, much deeper than helping them with a ‘budget’.

*“I hate using the word budget. What we do is so much more than that. **We have people walking in through the door in crisis or distraught.** They don’t know how to start or what to do, yet **this is the first place they come to.**”*

Margaret points out that most people can manage very little money very well. However, an unexpected utility bill, health issue, contracts with hidden costs, or a personal crisis, can leave a person with no options and that then tips them over the edge.

*“The biggest change has been the cost of living. When I first started in this role people could scrape by with rent. It was tight but doable. People on a pension, disability carers or age pension could manage. Those days are long gone and now it’s even worse since Covid with the housing market. It’s a real crisis. **You’re constantly trying to support people that are in a very precarious situation. It doesn’t take much for the scales to tip.**”*

Housing uncertainty and a constant struggle to make ends meet has placed many under enormous stress, particularly

those with pre-existing physical and mental health concerns.

Reluctant to seek help, embarrassed that they have found themselves in a difficult situation, Margaret’s goal is to make people feel comfortable, aware of their entitlements and empowered to make and own their decisions. She provides them with ongoing support while facilitating appropriate referrals to health, community and government services.

“If a client is financially struggling, I go through their payments and look at their costs, in particular their telecommunications, because typically they’re paying hideous amounts on their current plan. I help them maximize grants such as utility relief. All this helps. More so it helps them feel they’re back on track.”

Margaret believes it’s about giving people a chance, advocating on their behalf, building trust with them and having faith that they will take the opportunity to rebuild their lives.

“It just never ceases to amaze me the adversities some people face. And the fact that they still managed to keep moving forward. It’s a real honour to work with people.”

Margaret, we are grateful for your passion, care and hard work to ensure people in the Southern Peninsula receive the support they need, often preventing them from spiralling into a greater crisis.

YOU LITERALLY SAVED MY LIFE...

From time to time, we get the most wonderful feedback from past clients, like Luke. A young man who fell on hard times, found himself homeless with his dog, with very little financial support, Margaret helped him get back on his feet and rediscover his purpose in life.

“When I said you literally saved me, I did mean it. I wanted to let you know that you are the kindest person on this planet. I’ve told several people my story about you, and every single one of them are truly shocked about how much you managed to do for me, how generous, kind, hard-working person you are to be able to achieve what you did for us.

There are no words to explain to you truly, how much you’ve helped, and how thankful I am. You have helped me more than any other person, anyone on Earth. I’ll always remember your kindness.

Without your help I’m not sure mentally, if I would have had the strength to continue trying. You gave me the opportunity, ability, a reason, the motivation to live again, and you reinstated my faith in humanity when I had lost all hope. There is no greater gift than life. And that is exactly what you gave me. Thank you Margaret. Keep up the good work. You really do make a difference. We wouldn’t be here without you. You will forever be in our hearts. You’re a real-life angel.”



GETTING ON WITH IT FOR THE PEOPLE OF THE SOUTHERN PENINSULA

If you've come to our main centre, you've most likely met one of our longest serving volunteers – Marianne. Ready with a warm smile, humorous stories to tell, and a love for sugary hot drinks, Marianne has helped countless people over the years. Her philosophy is simple – “just get on with it” - and getting on with it is exactly what Marianne does for those who come to Southern Peninsula Community Support. This is her story.



“I was born in Holland. My parents were well-known actors. They split up and my sister and I ended up in a children’s home. We had a rough upbringing that probably gave me a good insight into domestic violence.

*At 17 I moved in with my grandmother, who I adored. She was level-headed and grounded. Soon after, I met my husband. He too was level-headed, whereas I was a bit of a rebel. I adored him. When I was nearly 21, he told me he was emigrating to Australia. Six months later I followed him to the other side of the world. **Moving to Australia was when my life truly started. We married and had three beautiful girls.**”*

While her daughters were growing up, Marianne worked as a night nurse, secretary and eventually as a Bereavement and Grief Counsellor with Tobin Brothers, a position which would help her in one of the most difficult times in her life – losing her beloved husband.

It was during her time at Tobin Brothers that Marianne enrolled in a short course on emergency relief. Soon she found herself “getting on with it” through volunteering for various organisations.

One thing people learn very quickly about Marianne is she can’t keep still for long. Her commitment and passion to help people burn bright.

*“For three years I did nothing. I was missing people. I was missing giving something. I moved to Dromana to be with my daughter, and I googled to find out what organisations are in the area that need volunteers. And that’s how I came across Southern Peninsula Community Support! **What I liked was that there was a really warm feeling about this place.***

I sat down to be interviewed. I had all my references along with my pride and joy – a big card filled with beautiful messages from people I had worked with in the past. The interviewer said he wanted to read the card. I started the next day.”

Marianne will tell you that Southern Peninsula Community Support is a place of compassion, care, trust and belief.

*“This place is about trying to find out the cause of a person’s problem. How do we help them get out of the poo they’re in? We spend time with a client. They learn to trust you because you’re willing to listen to them. **They learn that we truly care.***

I love the trust this place gives me. I love the passion everyone has for people because I’ve also got that. It’s the most beautiful place.”

Thank you, Marianne, and all of our wonderful, hardworking, selfless volunteers. Because of you, we’re able to provide the depth of care, support and services vulnerable and marginalised people need.

If you would like to join Marianne and volunteer, please contact us by email admin@spspc.org or call 03 5986 1285. We’d love to hear from you!



THANK YOU FOR BEING PART OF OUR COMMUNITY

Every day we're humbled by the outpouring of compassion and care from the Southern Peninsula community. Between bags of food, toiletries and other essential items, financial donations, philanthropic gifts and grants, volunteering, repairing bicycles, and so much more, you all deeply care for those who are struggling in our community. **We're so grateful for your support.**

Fresh food thanks to Beau, Jude & Sage

The siblings saved their pocket money to buy food from the supermarket for the people we look after. And if that wasn't enough, they added fruit fresh from their fruit trees. Our hearts are full of love for them.

Back to School got a little easier

The start of a new school year can bring excitement and worry. For many parents, children heading back to school is a time of worry. The costs of uniforms, books, and other items can be challenging. Our gratitude goes to the **Payton Foundation** who boosted our back-to-school program by providing a \$12,000 grant to help families in the Southern Peninsula.

A flurry of generosity

The **Rosebud RSL Women's Auxiliary** donated \$2,000 in support of our Family Support Service, putting a big smile on our faces! During the year the Auxiliary organises events including raffles, stalls and Bingo to raise money for charity. Last year they selected SPCS. A huge thanks to all the ladies involved.

Late last year Hollie from **Community Bank Southern Peninsula** brought food items, children's gifts, basic toiletries and financial donations the staff had been collecting from customers at their branches. They are great supporters who have supported our work for many years. We are grateful to them and their customers.

We also give thanks to the **Blairgowrie Senior Citizens** who donated \$2,000 for Emergency Relief, the **Uniting Church Op Shop in Dromana** who raised \$6,000 in support of our work, **Dromana Primary School and Dromana Pre-School** who donated lots of beautiful gifts for kids along with toiletries, and **Lee who with his wife and two sons** delivered a number of practical gifts to be distributed to people sleeping rough in our community.



There are so many more generous, wonderful people, businesses and groups who support our work. We wish we could list all of you. To keep up to date with the latest news and events along with the support we receive from our community join us on Facebook.

 /SouthernPeninsulaCommunitySupport

WE'RE MAKING AN EVEN BIGGER SPLaSh THANKS TO YOU

With over 100 guests in attendance, on Tuesday 21 February, we launched our wonderful new SPLaSh mobile shower and laundry van. This van will build on our existing program providing rough sleepers with a stronger sense of dignity, growing trust and connection through something as simple as a hot shower, clean clothes and food to eat.

Our enormous thanks go to the Lions Clubs who came together under the leadership of Mark Holland and the Flinders District Lions to raise the funds to purchase the van.

We would like to acknowledge the Lions movement - Flinders District Lions and a number of their individual members, the Australian Lions Foundation, Lions Clubs International Foundation, the Lions Clubs of McCrae, Dromana and Rye.

Our deep gratitude also goes to the Rye Op Shop who has been a major supporter of SPLaSh, along with all the wonderful organisations and people who support this essential program.

Lastly, thank you Mazda Mornington for providing a BT-50 4WD ute so that we can tow the van to where it will be used.

This combined and selfless support truly demonstrates the compassion and generosity of our community who come together for the most marginalised in the Southern Peninsula. Thank you.



CLASSIC CARS FOR A GREAT CAUSE

It is estimated there are around 1,000 people sleeping rough or otherwise homeless on the Peninsula. Our SPLaSh and Southern Peninsula Homeless Connections (SPHC) programs are helping to give rough sleepers a stronger sense of dignity, a person to talk with, and connections to help them into some form of stable accommodation and connect to further supports to work on other issues.

With no government funding for rough sleepers on the Peninsula, we are grateful for every type of support we receive. Last November, the Rotary Club of Sorrento held their Point Nepean Heritage Motor Show, nominating SPCS as the recipient of funds raised on the day. By end of the day, the Club had raised a whopping \$18,000 to go towards our SPLaSh program! That's special, with over \$120k in food and material given out through the program during the year these funds go a long way to guaranteeing the quality and continuity of what we provide.

We know how much hard work goes into making an event like this a success, so we are incredibly grateful to everyone who volunteered their time to make it happen.



If you or your organisation would like to support our SPLaSh or SPHC programs please contact us. Email ceo@spscic.org or call 03 5986 1285.



MORNINGTON PENINSULA FOUNDATION – WHY THEY MAKE YOUR DONATION GO FURTHER

Mornington Peninsula Foundation's (MPF) philosophy is simple - pull together significant donors to challenge old practices by funding new or innovative programs that directly help vulnerable people on the Peninsula.

For over five years, MPF has been providing core funding for the Southern Peninsula Laundry and Shower (SPLaSh), Family Support Service (FSS) and Southern Peninsula Homeless Connections (SPHC) programs. Their funding has covered 70-90% of the costs allowing us to commit to the running of each program with skilled staff and the right resources. **MPF's support has been essential as we receive no government funding for these three programs.**

MPF has also worked with us to build better data collection tools and develop our analytical skills so we can use the evidence of our success to inform government, supporters and to better manage the programs. On top of this, a number of their generous donors have gone one step further with additional one-off donations, such as a \$7,000 donation to provide mobile phones to people so they could keep in contact with support agencies during the COVID lockdowns.

Typically, MPF supports programs for 1 to 3 years. Yet, they have gone above and beyond, helping us get through the Covid pandemic and then working with donors to take over that core funding role. This includes facilitating another 2-year commitment with The Ross Trust for FSS and a 3-year commitment from the Rye Op Shop and MPF for SPLaSh. MPF are also working with us to find another ongoing donor to support SPHC's third year.

So how can our supporters, that is YOU, also help?

With the cost of living increasing, more people are struggling, and more help is needed. Every financial donation we receive will help us purchase food and material aid, cover the running costs of programs as well as part of the wages of the staff who run these vital and life-changing programs. Our staff are integral to ensuring these programs continue and grow to meet the increasing demands for our help.

Your donation, no matter how big or small, will make a difference. To give, please visit our-people-our-community.raisely.com or call 03 5986 1285 during business hours.



Yes, I'm here to help those in my community who are struggling and doing it tough! I want them to know I care.

Name _____
Title First Name Surname

Address _____

Suburb _____

State _____ Postcode _____

Mobile _____

Email _____

Please accept my tax-deductible donation of:

\$15 \$20 \$35 \$50 My choice _____

I would like to donate \$ _____ monthly.

I authorise Southern Peninsula Community Support to make automatic monthly deductions from my credit card (details as below) until further notice.

Payment details

My cheque / money order is enclosed (payable to Southern Peninsula Community Support)

OR please debit my: VISA MasterCard AMEX

Card number _____

Name on card _____

Expiry date ____ / ____

Donations \$2 and over are tax deductible.

**You can post your donation to:
PO Box 91, Rosebud 3939**

**Donate online at:
support-your-community-appeal.raisely.com**

I would like to find out more about:

Leaving a gift in my Will to the Southern Peninsula Community Support **OR**

I have already included the Southern Peninsula Community Support in my Will



Southern Peninsula Community Support
878 Point Nepean Road Rosebud VIC 3939
P: 03 5986 1285 | E: admin@spcsic.org

Southern Peninsula Community Support is committed to protecting your privacy. We collect your personal information so that we can contact you regarding your donations to us and the programs that you may be interested in. To review our Privacy Policy please visit www.spcsic.org. If you prefer not to receive mail from us, please let us know by writing on this coupon and returning it in the reply-paid envelope provided.

YOU CAN CHANGE THE LIVES OF THE MOST VULNERABLE IN OUR COMMUNITY. BECOME A MONTHLY DONOR TODAY.

When you choose to become a monthly donor, you will be doing so much more for the most vulnerable and marginalised in our community.

For as little as \$9 a month (that's just 30 cents a day) you can help provide:

- Fresh food or a pantry basics pack so vulnerable people can eat nutritious food
- Material aid such as personal hygiene kits, linen, tents, pet food, baby bundles
- Complex case management that provides intensive support to stabilise people's circumstances.
- Our SPLaSh program with the financial resources to run all year
- Our Homeless Connections program with brokerage to cover start-over costs when housing people who are homeless.

Rachel has seen the growing crisis in the Southern Peninsula, with families struggling and at risk of homelessness. Being a local she wanted to help. She became a Regular Giver.

"I have seen the hurt and destruction Covid has created over the past few years. I've seen the impact this horrible virus has had on the livelihoods of so many people and families in the Southern Peninsula. Rents have increased, housing affordability is next to zero. I was seeing people lose everything. It is so unfair.

I wanted to support an organisation that was on the ground, understands the needs of the community and is providing practical support for those who are hurting.

That's why I became a Regular Giver for Southern Peninsula Community Support. By giving a monthly donation I feel that I can help someone who's lost or is close to losing everything they once had."

Please join Rachel and become a Regular Giver. You'll change the life of a person or family who's doing it tough in our community. Complete the donation form on the reverse side and mail it back to:



Emma (Independent Support Worker) emailed us:

"I came in with a client a while ago and was blown away by the support, care and compassion that was offered to her by all the staff.

I wanted to help in some small way, so I put a call out to friends and family for toiletry and pantry staples donations!!!"

Zara, Billy and Emma

Monthly Giving

Southern Peninsula Community Support
PO Box 91 ROSEBUD VIC 3939

You can also email admin@spsic.org or call 03 5986 1285.

