

Southern Peninsula Community Support



Supporting marginalised individuals and families experiencing disadvantage within our community.

Newsletter No. 5
Spring 2023

The Impact of Your Care and Compassion

This past financial year has been a year filled with records. Record level of complexity and a record value of assistance given to people in need.

Many have been experiencing financial stress due to the increasing costs of living, choosing to go without heating, skipping meals, facing penalties for paying bills late. They have also been dealing with housing distress, unsure how they will meet their next rent or mortgage payment, while they face the prospect of homelessness.

As people present to SPCS with increasingly complex issues requiring immediate and long-term assistance, our wonderful community of supporters have been the vital difference in the level of care and compassion we've been able to provide.

Together, you dug deep and gave big in support of people experiencing hardship, difficulties or homelessness. Thankfully, we have had a record amount of donations, over \$669k that have kept us going.

Our 2022/23 Year at a Glance



“Without judgement, you swung into action. You organised referrals, ready made meals, groceries (all delivered to my home), and made phone calls to expedite other services that I tried to access for assistance. Your assistance and support has literally been life-changing for me. You have helped keep me afloat during some of the most stressful and challenging times of my life. I dread to think how I would have managed and coped without you. Thank god for SPCS.”

A RECORD FINANCIAL YEAR FOR SPCS AND OUR CLIENTS

When a person contacts Southern Peninsula Community Support they typically ask for some form of emergency relief. It may be food, clothes, a utility bill needing to be paid... They come in the hope of receiving quick support to help alleviate an immediate and pressing problem.

Our experience tells us there's more to the problem than just a need for emergency relief or material aid. If someone needs food, there are often bigger underlying issues that require urgent attention to get to a good outcome.

Because of the SPCS team's experience and expertise they are able to work gently, building trust with each client so as to understand and identify the complex issues they face. Issues such as domestic violence, financial distress, homelessness, social isolation and more.

Every complex case that comes to us, is a case that requires time, patience and compassion. And this team, made up of just 8 staff and over 60 volunteers, has all those qualities in droves. **Every case is unique because the person, couple or family that makes up each case is unique. And every team member delivers a unique response to help alleviate the complex issues.**

With your support and our team's dedication and efforts this past financial year we have provided close to 12,000 client sessions and over \$820,000 of direct assistance, another record.

Delivering this record assistance is possible because of our caring community of volunteers and supporters. Our community, made up of individuals, families, businesses, community organisations, philanthropic entities and government, have really stepped up.

Around 15,500 hours of volunteer contributions equating to \$728,500 in value.

A record \$669,327 raised, an increase of over 50% on the previous financial year.

I thank each and every one of you – our volunteers, staff and supporters. It is because of you we are breaking records to meet the record amount of need our clients are facing.

I don't have to tell you that the cost-of-living crisis and the lack of affordable housing are impacting thousands of people across the Peninsula. As our work continues, I hope you will continue your support of those doing it tough or living rough on the Southern Peninsula.



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

Jeremy Maxwell
Chief Executive Officer

YOU'RE INVITED TO SEE THE DIFFERENCE YOU MAKE

Every Tuesday is your opportunity to come on a tour of Southern Peninsula Community Support where you can see your support in action.

Starting at 9.30am and running for an hour, you'll hear from CEO Jeremy Maxwell and meet various staff and volunteers. You will get to see the different programs we're able to provide because of your support, learn why we are different to other food and material aid organisations and provide us with a chance to thank you over a cup of coffee.

Let us know you'd like to tour SPCS – call 03 5986 1285 or email admin@spscic.org. We look forward to seeing you.



BUILDING CONFIDENCE, STRENGTH AND RESILIENCE TO KEEP FAMILIES TOGETHER

Every day at SPCS we see people facing a complex range of issues, including mental health, financial distress, housing, family violence, disability and many more.

Families with children face all these, along with a range of other challenges specific to families. These can include school refusal, educational disadvantage, lack of access to school resources, learning disabilities, childhood trauma due to family violence, issues around social media and the lack of specialist childhood supports, to name a few.

Without one-on-one casework support, families can be left on waiting lists, feeling overwhelmed, often unable to self-identify support options. Without help, they are left to spiral into crisis.

In September 2017 SPCS established the Family Support Service (FSS) to meet a growing need on the Southern Peninsula for intensive support for families with young children.

Tracey, our Family Support Case Worker, works closely with families on the full range of issues they are facing, starting firstly with the issues the parent(s) identify as their greatest concern. She receives referrals from many sources such as schools, Centrelink, Orange Door and internally from our Emergency Relief program.

The majority of parents who come to see Tracey are female caregivers within a single income household, residing in increasingly unaffordable private rentals. Some are survivors of family violence. Some juggle with Centrelink payments and part-time work. **More often than not, they carry the financial burden for their family alone.**

FSS focuses on empowering parents to regain control over their situations, building up their skills and confidence. This means once the family's immediate crises are resolved and their situation stabilised, the parents will feel able to tackle future issues armed with the knowledge and skills they've gained through working with Tracey, creating ongoing positive outcomes for the family.

"My work focuses on helping parents to set goals and work towards them, with the aim of supporting families to achieve positive social, educational and employment outcomes. Families strengthen their ability to face future issues, improve family relationships and they are empowered to continue to work towards a more positive future."

Tracey (pictured below) will continue to work through the problems for as long as the family feels they need support. **As she is linked into all local services, Tracey will refer externally to a very wide range of programs to ensure families are getting all the ongoing support they need to get back on their feet. Families may return to FSS as needed. There is no cut-off or time limit for family support at SPCS.**



DID YOU KNOW ?

One in six Australian children now lives in poverty, with those growing up in households that depend on JobSeeker at much greater risk of becoming homeless and dropping out of school. Young people living in insecure housing have a lower school attendance rate, are not as well rested and can be less able to concentrate. There is a notable link between school disengagement and educational achievement.

HOW SPCS PROVIDES CRUCIAL, COMPLEX AND COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORT

On any given day, SPCS' staff and volunteers provide emergency relief and material aid to people in need. As they collect food and goods from the Pantry, our experienced Emergency Relief volunteer interviewers gently talk with the clients to better understand the issues they face. As trust is built over time, clients begin to share the deep problems they are experiencing. Clients like Penny.

Penny * attended our centre in a very distressed state. She had her youngest child with her, with two older children at school. She had no money and no food in the house for the next few days until her next payment was due.

As Penny sat with one of our interviewers, over an hour and a half she shared that she had separated from her partner eight months earlier. She had full-time care of their children. The costs of moving into a new rental property had exhausted Penny's funds.

Her car had broken down and Penny had not been able to work for the previous three months. She was two months behind in rent and had received a Notice to Vacate. Penny's electricity bill was overdue. Her children needed school uniforms and her youngest child was in need of an assessment for NDIS support. **Penny was really struggling.**

The interviewer worked with the dual focus we apply in our Emergency Relief program: identifying the **immediate needs** and looking at the **more complex and ongoing issues** as well.

We assisted Penny with food, meals and vouchers to ensure the family would be able to eat over the next few days. The interviewer started the application process for a Utility Relief Grant to help with the power bill. Penny was also advised to get a referral from her children's school for assistance with education costs.

To deal with the more complex and ongoing issues, the interviewer referred Penny to our Family Support Service (FSS). Our Family Support case worker, Tracey, undertook a thorough assessment of Penny's situation, discovering that she had not received the previous Family Tax Benefit (FTB) top up payment as Penny had not put in her last tax return.

Immediately, Tracey referred Penny to local housing services to assist with rent arrears, advocating with the Real Estate agent to allow a time extension while assistance was sought. The application for rent arrears was ultimately successful, with a plan for Penny to pay off the small amount remaining.

Tracey then referred Penny to SPCS No Interest Loan Scheme program for her car repairs and followed up on the Utility Relief Grant. Uniform costs were covered through our Education Assistance program and Penny was connected with a local coordinator for NDIS.

Our support didn't stop there. Tracey booked Penny into the SPCS Tax Help program to assist with submitting her tax return so as to receive the FTB payment, which Penny used to pay the rent arrears. Finally, Tracey and Penny worked on some longer-term strategies to manage finances going forward, resulting in Penny being able to negotiate better plans for her electricity and mobile phone.

Penny had been good at budgeting and managing finances but as her income reduced and bills piled up, things spiraled out of her control. Her mental health deteriorated, and she felt unable to cope as she and her children faced homelessness. **With wraparound support from SPCS Penny was able to regain control of her situation, get back to work and get everything on track again.**



* Names and identifying details have been changed to protect client's privacy

“THE LIFE WE HAVE NOW IS ALL I COULD HAVE DREAMED OF...”

Hearing from our clients on the difference we've made for them is the reason we continue our work in helping those who are vulnerable and in hardship. In 2012, a young mum came to SPCS in the hope we could help her escape the turmoil she and her children were facing because of domestic violence. Years later, she wrote to Tracey sharing the difference FSS made for her and her children.

“I could not have foreseen the challenges that we would have faced...”

Due to domestic violence from my then husband, our family was placed in contact with several services where I was given my initial contact with SPCS and its service FSS.

The versatility of FSS has meant that our family could seek support in one place with links to mental health outreach, legal advice, housing crisis, to financial assistance with educational and essential supplies that gave us the means to keep going.

The face-to-face contacts and the engaged brainstorming of obstacles along with the ongoing encouragement has given me the confidence to persevere for myself and my boys. As a result, through hard work we have all gained qualifications, financial security through employment, and most importantly a strong resilient family as a core.

Although life hasn't always been predictable with unforeseen circumstances along the way, this service of family support has been our security and the one place I can seek all the knowledge needed to steer us back on track, and extremely beneficial to all we are and how we have continued to grow.

Looking back... the life we have now is all I could have only dreamed about back then, and with full optimism I look forward to all we can achieve in the years to come.”

It's stories like these and the generous support we receive from our wonderful community that give us the strength and determination to keep on going.



The back seat of the car now represents all the rooms in my home since we had to leave it. That's where Mum and I sleep; it's storage; for our household contents that we managed to bring with us; it's my change table; my playpen; it's food storage and prep; and it's where we get washed. The nice people from SPLaSh help with food, showers and washing our clothes. The family worker talks to Mum about the future and has found a great playgroup for me to join. I miss my cot and all my toys.

OUR IMPACT AT A GLANCE

In the last financial year, FSS has assisted 109 families through a 3-day casework model, incorporating 227 children within those families. More than half of clients we have helped are aged 25 to 44, requiring an average of 3-4 sessions of support.

FSS has provided immediate assistance and support, such as emergency relief and material aid totalling more than \$11,200. We have also provided over \$10,100 towards rental applications to keep families together and housed. In the year, we also assisted with 15 State School relief applications and total Education Assistance program for the centre of \$19,022.

As more families experience difficulties and hardship, we expect the number seeking help from FSS will increase this financial year.

THANK YOU FOR BEING PART OF OUR COMMUNITY

Between bags of food, toiletries and other essential items, financial donations, philanthropic gifts and grants, or volunteering, every day our wonderful community of supporters demonstrate how much they care for those who are struggling on the Southern Peninsula. **We're so grateful for your support.**

Made with goodness and heart

We are over the moon for the most generous support of RACV Cape Schanck Resort. Since mid-June, chefs have taken turns to cook and deliver frozen ready to eat meals, every week. In fact, the number of frozen meals have been increasing with one delivery of more than 430 meals! It's wonderful to see our freezers full of healthy delicious meals we can provide to those in need. RACV Cape Schanck Resort epitomise our wonderful community, helping to meet needs as they arise. They have also provided laptops and are seeking ways to do more. Our deepest thanks to everyone at RACV Cape Schanck Resort for selflessly helping people in need on the Southern Peninsula. **Thank you from the bottom of our stomachs!**



Young Superstars

How cool is this? The Sorrento Foundation year classes (what most of us call Prep!) celebrate their first 100 days of learning by bringing in items - one per day - to donate to those who are doing it tough in the community. This year they are donating to SPCS and have focused on toiletries, for which we are very grateful! The class captains, Maddie and Harvey, and all the Foundation students were so proud to hand over this amazing collection of items to support our Emergency Relief program. Superstars!

☆ ☆ ☆



A true partner for our Pantry

Our Fresh Food program is busier than it's been for many years as we experience more people in need. Our program supports close to 200 people every week. Our walk-up program, which runs every Monday morning, help around 70 to 80 people while food through our emergency relief program helps about 100 people. Some Mondays we simply do not have enough fresh food to meet demand. Community Bank Southern Peninsula really are about community. For many years they have provided financial grants towards our Fresh Food program. Without their wonderful generosity, we could not run this vital program. Thank you - you truly are community.



Our volunteers ROCK

Every day we are in awe of our wonderful volunteers, who are a very special bunch. They're hardworking, dedicated and passionate about what they do, and they're also very warm and funny. They make the main centre a fabulous place to be. Every volunteer provides incredible service to the people in our community who are doing it really tough (tougher than ever right now) and they do it with kindness, compassion and care. We have so much gratitude for these amazing human beings who show up week after week to devote their time and energy to their community. We thank YOU from the bottom of our hearts.



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. [facebook.com/spcsic](https://www.facebook.com/spcsic)

CHANGING LIVES ON THE SOUTHERN PENINSULA

OUR GRATITUDE TO PAYTON FOUNDATION

Established in 2011, the Payton Foundation's mission is to change lives. And their wonderful and generous support ensures we are able to do exactly that for the individuals and families we help.

Over the last year, the Payton Foundation and their donors have supported our Education Assistance program, Family Support Service and Homeless Connection program.

This vital funding towards the Education Assistance program enables struggling families to cover school costs such as uniforms and books. Knowing they have this financial support enables families to focus on putting food on the table, paying rent, mortgage or an overdue utility bill.

They have also generously supported our Family Support Service and Homeless Connections Outreach Worker along with providing funds to help us purchase frozen meals to give to individuals and families in need.

In July, members of the Payton Foundation visited Southern Peninsula Community Support for a special tour.

"Hearing stories of families seeking support to avoid homelessness really hits home when our kids are with us. Every parent wants to ensure their child is happy and healthy." Jason Pater, Payton Foundation

We are so very grateful to the Payton Foundation and their donors for their most wonderful support and particularly for the care and thoughtfulness they and their donors show for the people we support.



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:
ICarefortheSouthernPeninsula.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

SP23NEWS



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

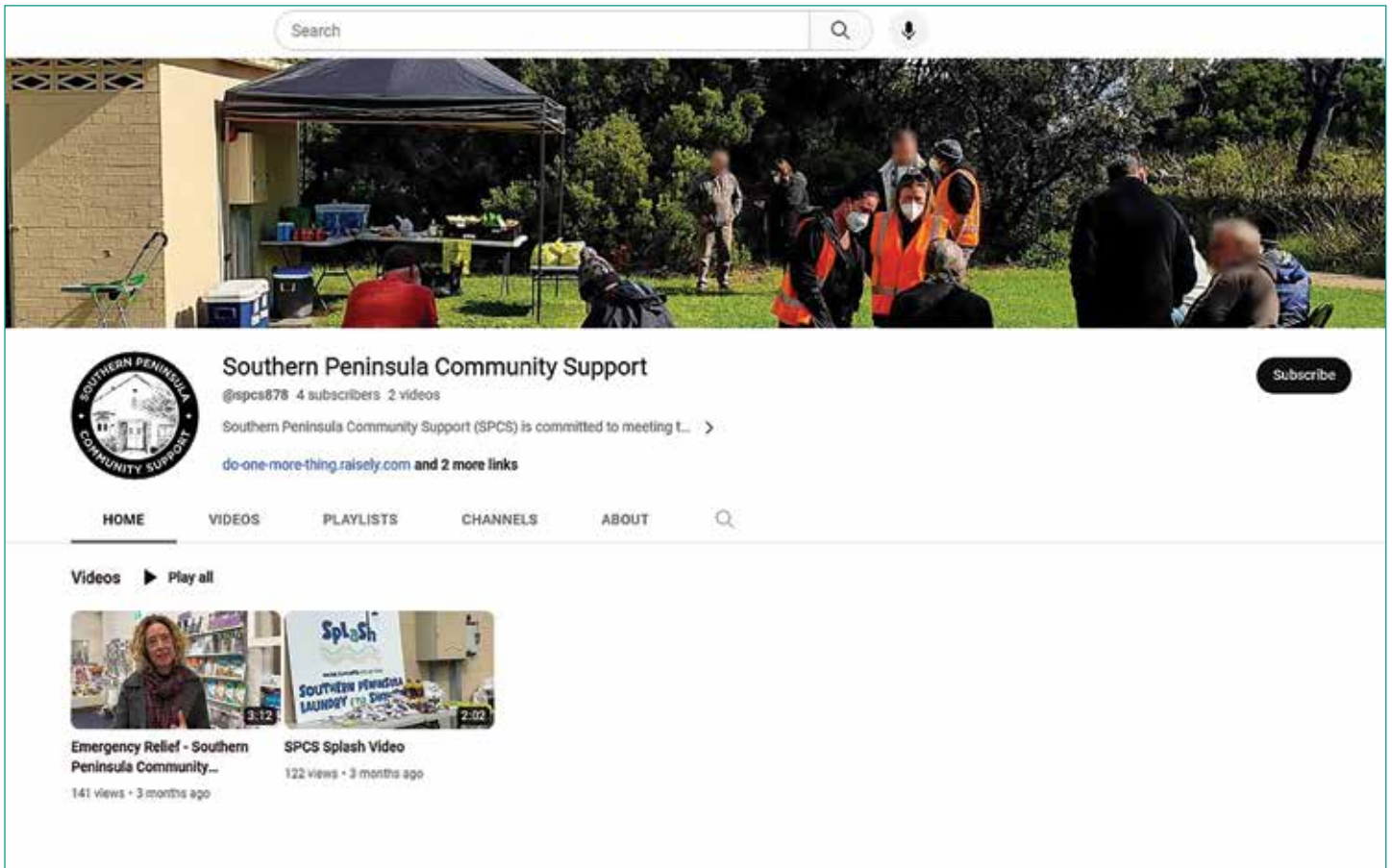
Southern Peninsula Community Support is committed to protecting your privacy. We collect your personal information so that we can contact you regarding your donations to us and the programs that you may be interested in. To review our Privacy Policy please visit www.spscic.org. If you prefer not to receive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

SEE WHAT MAKES US DIFFERENT

Southern Peninsula Community Support assists vulnerable individuals and families who are experiencing disadvantage on the Southern Peninsula. Whether it's a need for food or material aid, dealing with homelessness or housing distress, low-income support, or family support, we gently and patiently build trust with those who contact us – to better understand their situation, the difficulties and challenges they are facing.

Typically, food or material aid is just the tip. By gently talking with them we can identify the deeper problems that are causing them distress and work with them to address their situation.

To see why and how we're different from other organisations check out our Emergency Relief and SPLaSh videos on our YouTube channel. Simply scan the QR code with your smartphone and press on the button that pops up!



JOIN OUR PANTRY CALL OUT EMAIL LIST

Usually, we ask for food and material aid on our Facebook page. This doesn't work for everyone. So one of our amazing supporters, Kim, made a suggestion. Having lived on the Southern Peninsula most of her life, Kim knew of our work, however, as she was not on social media, Kim was unable to see what we may need. She wanted to make a difference and asked if we could email her to let her know what items our clients need.

We thought this was such a terrific idea that we have created our 'Pantry Call Out' email. And we're inviting you to join our growing list. Each email we send contains a list of essential items needed – ranging from food, toiletries and other items. To join our list, simply let us know by emailing ceo@spsic.org.



SOUTHERN PENINSULA COMMUNITY SUPPORT

878 Point Nepean Road Rosebud VIC 3939 | P: 03 5986 1285 | E: admin@spsic.org | W: spsic.org