

SOUTHERN PENINSULA COMMUNITY SUPPORT

HELP WHERE IT'S NEEDED



Summer 2024-25

Our Volunteers are the backbone of SPCS

It won't be such a happy Christmas for all...

The end of year is a time many of us look forward to, with taking time off work, spending time with family and friends, or escaping on a break.

For people struggling to make ends meet, hit hard by the cost-of-living crisis, the end of year is a time when people and families who don't have enough are starkly reminded of that fact.

Families who want to make Christmas a special time for their children, so they don't feel like they're missing out, find themselves in greater debt buying presents and creating the 'perfect' day. Parents may experience a stressful and emotional toll, feeling unable to give their children a happy Christmas.

Compounding this is the need for parents to find that extra money to purchase stationery, books, laptops and other equipment for the next school year, in November and December.

Additionally, some parents are left with next to no money to feed their family, pay the utility bills or even put petrol in their car to get to work or take the children to school.

"The financial burden of meeting all these demands is creating a super stressful environment for parents who are already financially stretched, and at their wits end to further stretch the already stretched dollar.

"For many, their financial circumstances will mean they're unable to travel to be with family or friends, making the holiday season a very lonely and isolating time for them. And for those who are living rough, it's an extremely challenging time. Many lose their 'home' when the campers arrive, and for those who are already isolated, Christmas highlights that isolation and can be a desperately lonely time."

We are here to provide help when and where it's needed.

Help such as providing a record number of Christmas Hampers to help reduce the Christmas stress, and to ensure children have toys in their Santa sacks. Case management support to help reduce financial distress and emotional stress. And food along with toiletries from our Pantry to provide urgent and immediate relief.

You can help us continue to provide help where it's needed by donating today.

Visit southern-peninsula-community-support.raisely.com

"I had to access help and support and was recommended to see Southern Peninsula Community Support. They came to my aid and were absolutely amazing in all aspects of support - from vouchers / financial help / very detailed advice and giving me contacts for other services that I would have not known about if it wasn't for their support! I would like to thank you all for all you have done for me and my family! I would've been lost without you."

Miranda, SPCS Program Coordinator

THE NEED TO PROVIDE HELP WHERE IT'S NEEDED.

We are in full Christmas mode as desperate families register to make sure they don't miss out on Christmas Hampers and toy bundles.

For those who are struggling this time of the year it's especially hard. There is the constant reminder that the joy of the holiday and Christmas season isn't yours to have. This hits home even harder for families. Presents are needed and the costs of the new school year are dropped on you.

And for those who are homeless, especially those who are living rough, they now face a greater challenge of trying to find a safe space as they're pushed around or even off the foreshore with the influx of tourists and beachgoers flocking to the Southern Peninsula over the next six months.

The past financial year we have seen an increase - not just in the number of people needing help, but the complexity of the problems they are presenting with at our main centre. This current financial year we continue to see more people coming needing help across all areas of our work.

I know you understand how important community is in maximising care and support for those who are struggling. While the challenges are coming thick and fast together, we are making a difference. Last year was the biggest for aid given out in our history, to see the difference we are making check out our 2024 Annual Report here. (Link to 2024 Annual Report)

Low-income families who were only just getting by have now reached their limits. They are routinely skipping

meals, compromising on the quality and nutrition of their food and going without personal care and household products.

This is where we, and you, are so important. We're here to provide help where it's needed. Whether that's emergency relief such as food, toiletries and other pantry items, case management for people on low income or families experiencing challenges and hardship, or outreach and support for those who are facing homelessness or living rough.

It's because of our amazing and wonderful community of supporters we're able to provide support for those doing it tough or living rough.

You help ensure we can provide the support people need. Without your support, the harsh reality is we could only do less, right when more is needed, and that is not a position we want to be in.

I thank the staff, volunteers, board of management and all of our supporters for continuing to ensure we are able to provide people in need with a safe, non-judgmental and caring organisation to come to.



Jeremy Maxwell, CEO



Let us show YOU the difference you make

Every Tuesday, from 9.30am for one hour, join us for a tour of Southern Peninsula Community Support with CEO Jeremy Maxwell, and see the difference you make.

You'll meet staff and volunteers, learn more about our programs and services, and why we're different to other food and material aid organisations.

If you're unable to come to us, we can come to your next service club, business or community organisation meeting to show you, your members and guests the impact you make for those who attend our main centre or programs.

Please call 03 5986 1285 or email admin@spsic.org and let us know how we can show you the difference you make.



THE ONLY ASSERTIVE OUTREACH WORKER ON THE SOUTHERN PENINSULA. CONNECTING ROUGH SLEEPERS TO A NEW START IN LIFE.

Rental rises along with limited housing options have contributed to an increase in the number of people living rough on the Southern Peninsula.

In response, **Southern Peninsula Homeless Connections** was established in November 2020 to actively help people impacted by homelessness or rough sleeping.

Behind this vital program has been a dynamic force. Kara, who is the only assertive outreach worker for the entire Peninsula area, goes to where the people live – on the foreshore, in their cars, behind local shops.

Wherever there's a rough sleeper Kara focuses on forming connections, building trust and ultimately helping them to get back into mainstream housing services and other case management services.

“The majority of our clients have a mistrust of services. It can take a long time to gain their trust. At times, it can take years.”

Together with Bill from Bolton Clarke, they cover the area of Safety Beach to Point Nepean, checking every camp along the coastline, parks, shop entrances, spare blocks and many other places where people who are rough sleeping may stay.

“For this program to be effective, for us to find and help rough sleepers, we've formed strong working relationships with Mornington Peninsula Shire, Rosebud Police, and other support services. When trust is built, clients will come to our main centre or SPLaSh. They may be referred by our Emergency Relief team or through the Shire.”

The Homeless Connections program works on a housing first model, driven by the needs of the client.

“This allows us to really support the client at the stage they are at, with no expectations on which way they direct the support. Of course, we have boundaries and limitations, but they are broad. This flexibility makes the program extremely effective in terms of client support.”

Over the years, Kara, with support from Bill, SPLaSh and the main centre, has helped more than 350 homeless or rough sleepers. One of them is Chad.

Once a professional surfer, Chad was rough sleeping on the foreshore for a couple of years. As Chad says, *“It's extremely tough when it rains for days on end. Once you're wet, you stay wet. You can't get dry. You can't get warm. Trying to find yourself a spot out of the wind is pretty hard. It's hard going.”*

The support Chad received from Kara, SPLaSh and Southern Peninsula Community Support enabled him to receive help including medical costs, veterinary care of his beloved dog, outdoor gear for sleeping, cooking and keeping dry. It also enabled Kara to create a connection and build trust with Chad, focused on helping him find a place to call his own.

Fast forward two years and Chad now has a home, a new puppy and, through our No Interest Loan scheme, a car. As he says in the 'In Our Backyard' podcast: *“without them, who knows...I wouldn't have survived.”*



You can listen to the full podcast, 'Makes You Feel Half Human' with Kara & Chad by visiting podcasts.apple.com/au/podcast/in-our-backyard/id1760436092.

DEDICATING THEIR TIME, SKILLS AND LIFE EXPERIENCES

While SPCS is staffed by a small group of mostly part-time staff, there over 70 dedicated and hard-working volunteers who bring their own set of skills, lived experiences and compassion so as to make a real change in people's lives. Without this selfless group, we would not be able to provide our programs and services to the community. Meet two of our wonderful volunteers – Tracey and Christine.

Providing financial counselling and support to those in crisis

As a Financial Counsellor for 16 years and with vast experience in public health, Tracey not only got the sea-change she dreamt of when she moved to the Peninsula but also joined our fantastic team of volunteers.

“I’m really excited to have joined this wonderful organisation as a volunteer Financial Counsellor. I had met SPCS’s CEO, Jeremy, whilst I was doing some contract work in disaster recovery, and said I was interested in lending a hand at SPCS. I see SPCS as a large, busy, empathic and welcoming service. Hearing from staff and volunteers about the range of practical assistance and personal support they provide to people in vulnerable situations, the skills, experience and dedication of the team is apparent.

*I had been a Financial Counsellor for 16 years before moving into health roles and never lost the passion for the work. **As I had previous experience working in community support services, I understood the incredible work that happens, and the extent of need in the community these organisations respond to.** And as I’ve also maintained close contact with several financial counsellors over the years, I wasn’t surprised about the current level of need.*

Most of the clients I’ve seen have had complex sets of issues, associated with debilitating circumstances that have had extreme financial impacts on them. Clients are on low incomes or social security, so being in a financial predicament is a consequence of poverty.

I’ve seen people go without nutritious food, medication, and essential services, or face imprisonment for non-payment of infringements. They may be in chronic poor health situations, experiencing trauma, or an unforeseen critical event. They may have very little social support outside of services, have low literacy, low knowledge of services, or needs that our service systems don’t provide for.

Sometimes, people run up high interest credit products to pay for necessities or fall behind with rates and their mortgage to the point their house is at risk of possession.

My role serves to assist clients to move from an unmanageable situation to one where they have greater control and less stress. *As I’m in the office one day a week, I’ll see 3 to 4 clients. This allows for the often-considerable follow-up that needs to happen to get access to entitlements - that they’re often unaware of or have to fight to get - to help them get back on track. Depending on the complexity, a first appointment can be over 2 hours spent with the client, to get the full picture, prepare a financial statement of position and put holds in place.*

Financial counselling involves a lot of advocacy work, to give people breathing space on payment of commitments, help protect their assets, help them with challenging forms so they can get additional support or dispute unfavourable decisions.

My role is to provide options to empower the client, so they make the choice about their course of direction. *Some clients can self-advocate once they know their rights and entitlements. Others are completely overwhelmed and want me to deal with their creditors and keep them in the loop. For many, the level of financial literacy required to seek their entitlements is too highbrow – a systemic problem.*

Getting wins for clients is gratifying and making system change is immensely gratifying!”



Tracey

Providing help at tax time and all year round

Not all of our volunteers are retired. Christine, who runs Tax Help one day a week, July - October, also runs her own businesses including an accounting firm. Following in the footsteps of her migrant parents, Christine believes it's important to give back and help those who are struggling.

"I've always liked to give a day a week to volunteering. I've been doing that for years now. And as a tax accountant with more than 35 years' experience, I get great joy in solving complex problems and resolving complex issues for clients. Over the years I've gained amazing experience in forensic accounting, litigation support, taxation compliance, business services consulting, and all the non-exciting area of audits.

My husband and I moved to the Peninsula in 2012 as he had grown up here. Over the years I've noticed more and more people in need. One day I checked Facebook and saw SPCS was needing a volunteer for the Tax Help program. So I contacted them.

The Tax Help program assists people with the lodgement of their taxation returns and is free for people with income levels under \$60,000. So, I was expecting to help do basic tax returns. What I found were people experiencing challenges, financial hardship, and a fear of lodging their tax returns. As a qualified accountant, I knew I could alleviate their fears, stresses and confusions that tax can create.

During Tax Help, in one day, I may see 7 individuals and spend about 45 minutes assisting each one. Other times, it can be up to 3 hours, depending on the complexity of their problems. I like to spend time with the client, get to know them and help them walk out lighter and happier.

I am able to resolve issues quickly, take away the stress of the unknown and meet tax compliance. Dealing with clients with empathy, tenderness and understanding is of the utmost importance.

Confidentiality is important too, along with a no judgement attitude, as the paths travelled by some clients have been difficult, challenging and long.

I assist in setting up the ATO account in their MyGov services, resolve outstanding taxation returns, update contact details, ensure bank details are updated. I also call the ATO on their behalf to better understand and advocate for a resolution to outstanding matters.

Recently, I helped a client who had lost her husband, and because of loneliness found herself scammed out of thousands of dollars. She didn't know what to do and was very scared of incurring a large tax debt. Instead, we were able to resolve the tax liability issue with a refund, found lost superannuation, and for good

measure, found some other lost monies! A great and positive result.

I assist anyone from any background, from simple to extremely complex matters. I feel satisfied seeing most people who have come in tend to leave happier, feeling better that they have dealt with their affairs and their tax matters have been sorted. This is rewarding for me.

The Tax Help program really changes people's lives. If this program wasn't here, then a lot of vulnerable people would avoid tax compliance completely. This would create worse problems for them in the future, especially needing to meet compliance for Centrelink and social services payments to support themselves and their families."



Christine

You may be surprised at the breadth of skills needed to run an organisation like ours. Volunteers are instrumental to the success of every single one of our programs. If you have never thought of volunteering, you may have the very skills we need. Visit spcsic.org/volunteering to find out more.

THANK YOU FOR BEING PART OF OUR COMMUNITY

Every day, our wonderful community of supporters demonstrate how much they care for those who are doing it tough or living rough on the Southern Peninsula with bags of food, toiletries and other essential items, financial donations, monthly gifts, philanthropic gifts and grants, or volunteering.

A huge shoutout to the lovely members of the **Country Women's Association including Mornington Peninsula Group, Rosebud and Peninsula Belles**. Together they've donated material aid for programs such as SPLaSh and Homeless Connections (sleeping bags, laundry powder, toiletries, even 1,000 wooden spoons for our brekky bowls) and financial donations. Your generosity is inspiring, helping to make a real impact in our community.

Southern Peninsula Women's Action Network (SWAN) is made up of a wonderful group of women from the Peninsula who care about social justice issues and supporting women facing homelessness and domestic violence. Their support of our programs through material aid and financial donations are helping to provide women and families with the help they need. Thank you very much to the members of SWAN.

Enchanted Adventures certainly know how to make anyone's day, with a bundle of free passes to their park. The passes were provided to families who otherwise could not afford such a fun day out, experiencing adventures such as tree surfing. Thank you Lyle and team for making a lot of families very happy!

Every person at **RACV Cape Schanck**, who makes and delivers frozen meals to us weekly, is an angel. We seem to run out of meals either the night before or the morning of the next delivery, so these angels save the week every time! Our thanks to the amazing staff, management, chefs and kitchen hands who make and deliver these nutritious meals.

Putting a call out to their community, **Rosebud Junior Football Club's** President, Anthony, dropped by with a heap of toiletries in support of our pantry program. A fantastic top up to provide people who are struggling to get by in our community. Thank you to everyone who got involved – whether you helped organise the drive or donated, your support makes a real difference.

You get a cabbage. And you get a cabbage. Boy did we get cabbages – 60 of these nutritious vegetables, in fact! After hearing our CEO talk at a Food for All event, **John and Joyce** grew and donated their cabbages to us. They've now inspired more village residents to also grow and donate vegies to SPCS. We can't wait. Huge thank you John and Joyce - you are inspirational!

Hosted by **Sunday Lemonade** in secret locations across the Mornington Peninsula, **Ninch Nights** not only provides musicians a chance to share their songs and stories with eager audiences, but also helps raise vital funds, with 'a chunk of profits going to support our work. Search Ninch Nights on Facebook to learn more!



We wish we could list you all. Follow us to see more about our wonderful community of supporters - [facebook.com/SPCSIC](https://www.facebook.com/SPCSIC)

BE IN IT TO WIN IT! THANKS TO SORRENTO BEACHSIDE VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE.

This summer, the Visitor Information Centre will be holding a raffle with lots of fantastic and drool-worthy prizes on offer. Proceeds from their raffle will go towards our programs. Double win we hear you say! Tickets will be available soon to purchase. Raffle drawn at the end of Summer.

CAROLLING IN SUPPORT OF THOSE DOING IT TOUGH - 6 DECEMBER 5.30PM - 9.30PM.

After a five-year break, the beloved Sorrento Christmas Carols happened on Friday 6 December, thanks to the Sorrento Chamber of Commerce! There were performances by local choirs and bands, special guest entertainers, a festive Christmas Market, dazzling fireworks and of course Santa's grand arrival on a CFA truck! A wonderful evening full of community spirit, holiday cheer and festive fun, with proceeds going to support the work of SPCS!



OUR 2024 ANNUAL REPORT IS AVAILABLE

Jam-packed with stories you'll read how the SPCS team – made up of dedicated staff and volunteers – continued delivering vital services such as Emergency Relief, Low Income Support, Family Support, Shower and Laundry, Homeless Connections and more. You'll read quotes from individuals and families, who share how they're better able to cope and manage because of the help they've received. **And you'll read how it's because of YOU we are able to provide help where it's needed.** Visit raiselysite.com to get your copy today.



SHOUTOUT TO OUR PANTRY CALL OUT LEGENDS!

We have been blown away by the generosity of many in our community who, in response to our monthly Pantry Call Out asks, drop into the main centre with lots of amazing pantry items to help those who are doing it tough or living rough. Toiletries, tinned food, sleeping bags, coats. Just like **A Good Little Thing** who dropped by with toilet paper and warm socks (to name a couple of items).

You can join our monthly Pantry Call Out email list – just send us an email at ceo@spsic.org.

OR join our Facebook community – facebook.com/spsic – and keep up to date with the latest news, events and pantry items we need.



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 _____

Address _____
Title First Name Surname

Suburb _____

State _____ Postcode _____

Mobile _____

Email _____

Please accept my tax-deductible donation of:

\$15 \$31 \$46 \$77 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.



SCAN TO DONATE

You can post your donation to:

PO Box 91, Rosebud 3939

Donate online at:

southern-peninsula-community-support.raisely.com/

I would like to find out more about:

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

I have already included Southern Peninsula Community Support in my Will



Southern Peninsula Community Support
878 Point Nepean Road Rosebud VIC 3939
P: 03 5986 1285 | E: admin@spsic.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.spsic.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 LIVES. BECOME A MONTHLY GIVER TODAY.

When you choose to become a monthly giver, you will be doing so much more for people who are doing it tough or living rough on the Southern Peninsula. For as little as \$9 a month (just 30 cents a day) your monthly gifts will 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 wanted to help, so she became a Monthly Giver.

"Rents have increased, housing affordability is next to zero. I am seeing people lose everything. It is so unfair. I want to support an organisation that's 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 Monthly Giver for Southern Peninsula Community Support. 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 Monthly Giver. You'll change the life of a person or family who's doing it tough or living rough on the Southern Peninsula.

MAIL YOUR COMPLETED DONATION FORM TO:

Southern Peninsula Community Support, PO Box 91 ROSEBUD VIC 3939

EMAIL OR CALL:

admin@spsic.org or call us on 03 5986 1285

VISIT:

southern-peninsula-community-support.raisely.com and select **Monthly** to begin your monthly giving now



HELP WHERE IT'S NEEDED