

ANNUAL REPORT

2021-2022



FCVic

Financial Counselling
Victoria Inc.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY

FCVic acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the Traditional Owners of the lands on which our organisation is based. We pay our respects to their Elders, past and present, and to the Elders of other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities throughout Victoria and Australia.

We recognise the continuing connection that First Nations communities have to land, water and culture, and acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded.

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ABOUT FCVIC

We are a non-profit organisation whose purpose is to:

- Advocate for vulnerable Victorian consumers who are experiencing financial difficulty
- Support the financial counselling sector through its casework, advocacy and law reform
- Adopt and maintain best industry practice.

Financial counsellors provide free, confidential and independent information, advice, advocacy and support to people experiencing or vulnerable to financial difficulty, to empower them to make informed choices.

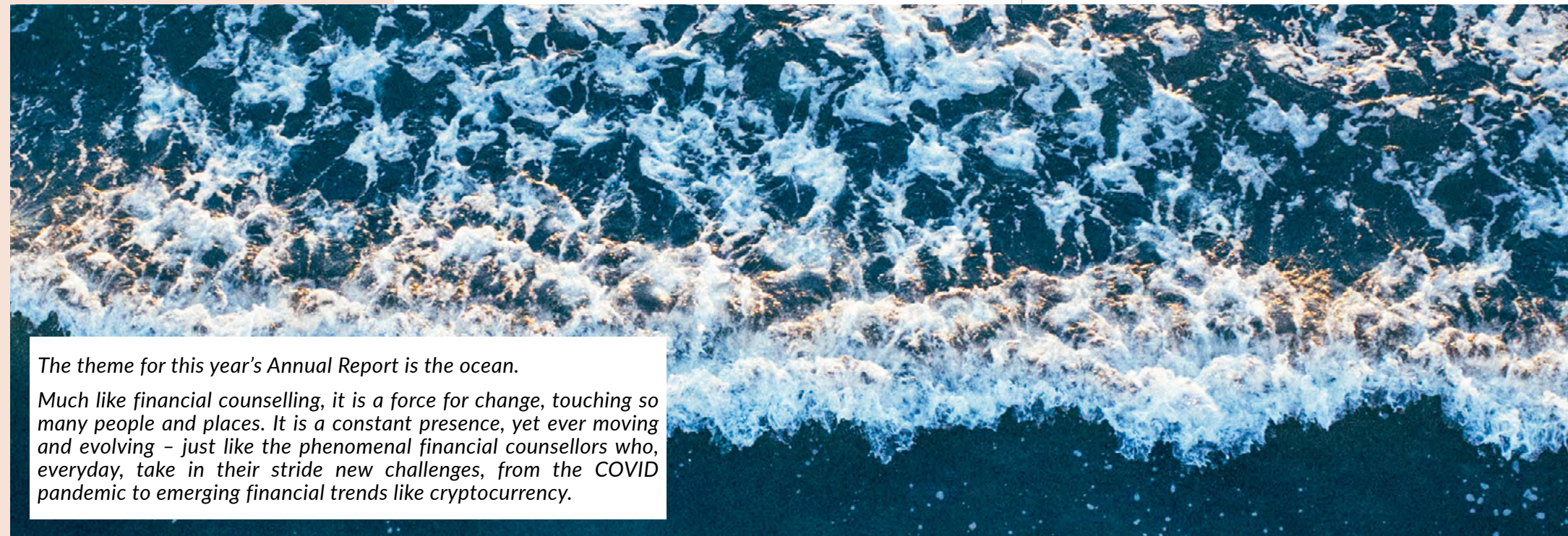
FCVic supports financial counsellors by providing training and professional development, and sets the standards for the profession in Victoria. FCVic also provides a voice for Victorians in financial hardship and works across a range of industries, including banking, utilities and telecommunications.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

The 2021-22 year has certainly been another year to keep us on our toes. The COVID-19 pandemic has continued, with case numbers again reaching high levels. We have seen staff shortages affecting many industries, including farm labourers, and the flow-on of unprecedented stresses on food supply, transport and logistics, among other areas. Many of the disruptions brought on by the pandemic have been amplified by recent disaster events of flooding along the East coast of the country. Each day we are hearing the very sad news of businesses going into administration/insolvency; everyday cost of living battles; mortgage interest rates rising with no end in sight and more. In these uncertain times, we know the role of financial counselling is more vital now than ever before.

As ever, financial counsellors can play a key role in assisting individuals, families and small businesses to limit and reduce financial harm; provide information to prevent matters from escalating; and enhance peoples' overall wellbeing. Our profession takes on all of these challenges, and helps to empower the members of the communities we assist to find ways to get through these tough times. I know the Victorian financial counsellors will continue to do their absolute very best to overcome the current high levels of financial and psychological stresses.

To ensure our sector has a sustainable path to grow in order to meet community need – all while protecting the wellbeing of financial counsellors – FCVic has been advocating the State Government to conduct a review of the Victorian financial counselling sector, and to work with us to develop a clear plan for the future. With a looming election in Victoria, we are keen to engage with all relevant areas of government to see financial counselling more accessible to diverse cohorts, and embedded in a greater range of service settings – including mental/physical health, disability, aged care, alcohol and other drugs. With better service design and investment, we know how much value would be added to communities if the capacity of financial counsellors was increased. We know the work we do can change peoples' lives, and now more than



The theme for this year's Annual Report is the ocean.

Much like financial counselling, it is a force for change, touching so many people and places. It is a constant presence, yet ever moving and evolving – just like the phenomenal financial counsellors who, everyday, take in their stride new challenges, from the COVID pandemic to emerging financial trends like cryptocurrency.

ever this needs to be prioritised through an actionable plan, backed by stable and sustainable funding, to ensure that this important work is supported and enhanced.

For financial counsellors, working across many specialist areas and dealing with complex issues can be challenging at times, but it is equally rewarding to see the difference our work makes in helping people improve their situations and lives. I am always in awe of the amazing work we achieve, and I'm thankful to Sandy and our highly skilled FCVic staff who contribute and support us enormously each and every day.

FCVic's advocacy work is driven predominately through our networks and working groups – connecting financial counsellors, and at times other key stakeholders; and identifying and linking casework issues and trends with policy. I would like to thank all the convenors of our working groups and networks, and every member who has attended meetings or made contributions, as this work is so important to drive systemic change.

To my fellow Board members thank you always for your support and tireless commitment. We certainly have powered through a lot this year and I appreciate your professional skill and wisdom.

Lastly to the FCVic members – thank you for all that you do! The work you do is invaluable to the individuals, families and communities that you assist.



Carly Baker
Chairperson, FCVic



TREASURER'S REPORT

The financial result of Financial Counselling Victoria for 2021-22 – a deficit of \$142,000 – compares favourably with the budget for the year, except for the financial result of the annual conference. The Board agreed that part of the surplus recorded in 2020-21 would be reinvested in a continued high level of member focused activity and, accordingly, the budget for 2021-22 was a deficit. Our core activities of providing services to members performed close to budget, the projects producing valuable outputs for both the sector and our consumers performed better than expected, but not being able to hold our annual conference caused a result that was \$82,000 worse than budgeted.

The balance sheet shows a strong financial position with sufficient cash to cover future operations and our present liabilities.

The FCVic Board has approved a financial plan for 2022-23 that continues the strategy of reinvesting some past surpluses in continuing member focused activity. This will be assisted by an ongoing, but reduced, level of projects income funded by governments. It is planned that the conference will be held in September 2022 and will make a financial contribution to the result.

The management team and a consultant have implemented a much-improved financial reporting process which enables

the Board to better monitor FCVic's financial situation regularly.

During the year there was also a strong focus on risk management with the completion of a revised risk management assessment and strategy. The Board regularly reviews the key risks facing our organisation and, with the assistance of the Finance and Risk Committee, ensures that appropriate mitigation is in place. There is a current focus on cyber risk and crisis management.

I would like to express my appreciation to my fellow members of the Finance and Risk Committee: Mark Phillips and Jenny Wilkins an external board member who brings great expertise in compliance, governance and risk management to FCVic. FCVic is well served by our finance team and external consultant, and I want to thank them also for their efforts.

David Balcome
Treasurer, FCVic



EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

The third year of the pandemic continued to see challenges unfold for the sector, for FCVic, and for our community as a whole.

Financial counsellors have experienced varying requirements come into play from their agencies. They have been required to return to work on site in many places, but some have continued working from home, or in hybrid modes. With new COVID-19 outbreaks over 2021-22, it has been difficult to establish consistent working arrangements, and the uncertainty and disruption has made things difficult for many members. At the same time, the push factors on demand have seen a return to heavy caseloads and wait lists. These factors include: the fall-out from lockdowns and the pandemic; bushfire, storm and flood disaster impacts; inadequate social security supports; expanding use of Buy Now Pay Later; and, cost of living increases, especially around essentials such as food and energy. It is also important to recognise that there is also a 'pull factor' in play, as financial counselling acquires a higher profile, with little in the way of increased capacity.

For FCVic, two attempts to hold our conference during the year – in October and February – were thwarted by COVID-19 outbreaks. Here is hoping that third time is a charm in September 2022, with widespread vaccinations and use of RATs helping to render it a safe event.

In the meantime, over the year we have continued to provide an extensive Continuous Professional Development (CPD) program and support to the sector – establishing new communities of practice groups amongst new graduates, and amongst financial counsellors working in community legal centre settings. We have continued our strong advocacy work around infringements, Centrelink, energy and bankruptcy issues, while contributing to national campaigns to regulate Buy Now Pay Later and payday lending.

Also, we have continued to expand our links to and active presence in a range of sectors through various funded projects – mental health, tenancy, carers, disaster response/recovery, family violence, gambling and small business to name the major ones. What this means in each case is two inter-linked things: firstly, developing an understanding of financial counselling in those sectors amongst organisations and other workers and professionals; secondly, inviting them through interactions and preparing professional development for our sector, to help develop our understanding of their sector. A third element – outreaching to the community with client/potential client interactions/education – also takes place, but the sector relationships are crucial to enabling those opportunities and designing a relevant approach to outreach.

It is important to note the phrase 'developing an understanding' of financial counselling. This is quite deliberately different from the formulation 'raising awareness of financial counselling'. All too often we see a very thin and simple idea of financial counselling as 'helping people with their budgets' used to simultaneously 'see' financial counselling and not see it. Simply raising awareness of financial counselling can risk feeding into that problem. FCVic continued to learn and re-learn a basic lesson through all our work this year: the recognition of what financial counsellors do in all its complexity is tied with understanding its importance and relevance to client groups in different sectors and the community as a whole, and enabling access to it on the part of people who can benefit from it. Those who work off a quick two sentence definition and think they know what financial counselling is are not able to ask the right questions of clients or refer them, let alone realise that financial counselling

is a professional service different from what is provided by lawyers or mental health professionals, and often of as much distinct or even earlier relevance to people as what those professions provide.

Communicating an appropriately nuanced understanding of the profession is difficult and challenging; it is particularly difficult to shift ideas when people already think they know what it is. A key theme of our work in this year has been to develop tools and approaches to this, in a range of different sector contexts.

I want to thank the wonderful team of FCVic staff, who are dedicated and passionate about financial counselling and about supporting our members. They are talented and skilled and do amazing things, and it is a privilege to work with them. Thanks also to the Board, who contribute generously with their time and expertise in ensuring our organisation functions well and accountably and with a focus on its members; a special shout out to Carly Baker as Board Chair who provides the Board with sensitive, compassionate and effective leadership. Last but not least, to all the FCVic members who contribute by convening or simply participating in our networks, working groups and communities of practice.



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sandy Ross'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Dr Sandy Ross
Executive Officer

OUR PEOPLE

FCVIC BOARD

Chairperson

Carly Baker

Deputy Chair

Bernadette Pasco (until Oct 2021)

Sarah Davidson

Secretary

Max Smart (until Oct 2021)

Narelle Clark

Treasurer

David Balcombe

Board members

Trish Dennis

Lisa Garlick

Tracey Grinter (until Oct 2021)

Jennifer Holdstock

Norm McMurray (until Oct 2021)

Mark Phillips

Michael White

Jenny Wilkins

Board sub-committees

Finance and Risk Committee

(Chair: David Balcombe)

Networks and Working Groups Committee

(Chair: Narelle Clark)

(EO) Performance and Remuneration Committee

(Chair: Carly Baker)

Professional Standards Committee

(Chair: Tracey Grinter; Lisa Garlick)

**FCVIC STAFF AND CONTRACTORS
(ALPHABETICAL BY LAST NAME)**

Robyn Angus

Project Advisor

Katrina Barrett

Project Advisor

Julie Barrow

Family Violence and Professionalisation
Lead

Glenn Bellingham

Finance Systems Advisor

Sandra Blake

Small Business Specialist

Susan Boag

Digital Communications Officer

Helen Brady

Small Business Specialist

Geoff Browne

Small Business Advisor

Vicki Burke

Executive Assistant

James Degenhardt

Systems and Operations Manager

Dr Suzy Goldsmith

Special Projects Lead

Tanja Haeusler

Training Manager

Mel Keenan

Project Support

Donna Letchford (until Aug 2021)

Family Violence Specialist

Joy Mason

Workforce Development Officer

Disaster Recovery Coordinator

Shweta Pathak

Training Officer

Michelle Perry (until May 2022)

Bushfire Community Liaison (East
Gippsland)

Georgia Robenstone

Advocacy and Campaigns Manager

Dr Sandy Ross

Executive Officer

Ron Rowley

Accounts

Bella Walker

Project Officer

Julie Watson

Project Coordinator

2021-2022 AT A GLANCE

PROJECTS

Integrated Services Project – Victorian Government through the Federation of Community Legal Centres – Lead Partner: Social Security Rights Victoria

Disaster Recovery Support Project – Bushfire Recovery Victoria through Consumer Affairs Victoria

Financial Counselling and Carers – Carers Statewide Partnership, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing Grant Round 1 – Partner: Carers Victoria,

Standing Strong – Financial Resilience for Older Carers – Carers Statewide Partnership Grant Round 2, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing – Partners: Alfred Health Carer Services, Southern Migrant and Refugee Centre

Small Business Wellbeing – Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions through Department of Health – Partner: Partners in Wellbeing

Financial Counselling and Mental Health – Department of Health through Consumer Affairs Victoria

On Track with My Money – Department of Health through Consumer Affairs Victoria – Partners: Shepparton Family and Financial Services, Wellways

Stronger than Before: rebuilding resilience for older bushfire residents – Bushfire Recovery Victoria through Department of Families, Fairness and Housing – Partners: Anglicare Victoria, Upper Murray Family Care

Financial Counselling and Tenancy – Consumer Affairs Victoria

Money Talks for Better Ageing – ECSTRA through Australian Multicultural Community Services (lead partner)

Smart Women, Smart Money – Helen MacPherson Smith Trust through Australian Multicultural Community Services (lead partner)

SUBMISSIONS

Senate Inquiry into the purpose, intent and adequacy of the Disability Support Pension

Case for Change to the Diploma of Financial Counselling

Cultural Review of the Adult Custodial Corrections System

Review of the Implementation of the Energy Payment Difficulty Framework by the Essential Services Commission

Disability Act (Vic) Review

Joint submission on ASIC’s proposed use of Product Intervention Power

Joint submission on Bankruptcy Regulation Review

Consultation on the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children

Inquiry into the Support for older Victorians from Migrant and Refugee Backgrounds

CONSULTATIONS & COLLABORATIONS

Community Services Sector Bushfire Recovery Advisory Group

Disaster Legal Help Community of Practice

Economic Abuse Reference Group

Elder Abuse Prevention Project Advisory Group

Elder Abuse Roundtable

Essential Services Commission Community Sector Roundtable

Healthier Wealthier Families Reference Group

RMIT Industry Advisory Committee

Treating Families Fairly Alliance

VCOSS Peaks and Statewide Network Forum

VCOSS Human Services and Health Partnership Implementation Committee

Victorian Disability Advocacy Network

Strategic Plan 2019-2022

At the time of developing this plan, the financial counselling sector is on a journey towards significant expansion and recognition for its importance and value, while at the same time struggling to meet demand and provide practitioners with sustainable work roles. The key strategic challenge for FCVic is to be outward looking and expansionist, while at the same time improving practice standards and protecting practitioners from trauma, stress and burnout.

WHY

Contribute to a fairer society with greater economic inclusion	Empower clients to resolve financial and linked life issues	Reduce indebtedness and hardship, and associated harms to mental health	Improve industry practices and treatment of vulnerable consumers	Achieve systemic reforms to protect and enhance the lives of vulnerable people
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WHAT

Recognition	Professionalism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for sector alongside system advocacy from sector Develop existing and new collaborations with other sectors Reach multiple audiences in community and political sectors through projects, including 'A Day in the Life' Develop and deploy advocacy and training resources focused on building an understanding of role of financial counsellors Gather evidence of impacts of financial counselling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain and develop professional standards Ensure qualifications, training and CPD are up to date, relevant and of a high standard Develop a strong professional culture in the sector Support consistency in professional standards Maintain a dynamic professional identity fitting a diverse and changing sector Play a leadership role in the development of national standards

HOW

Sector sustainability	Governance/ Organisational
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure growth in funding levels and capacity of sector Develop work roles, management and professional supports to ensure workplace wellbeing of financial counsellors Build meaningful career paths for financial counsellors Encourage diversity in the sector, developing networks, communities of practice and integrated service models to reach diverse client groups Balance sector expansion with maintaining professional standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure effective governance and accountable decision making Support members and sector through relevant and engaging organisational structures and advocacy Develop strong member ownership of FCVic through access and engagement Appoint skilled staff, skilled Board members and provide development paths for emerging membership leaders Ensure funding is sustainable/ commensurate with role of peak body

OUR WORK

SPECIAL PROJECTS

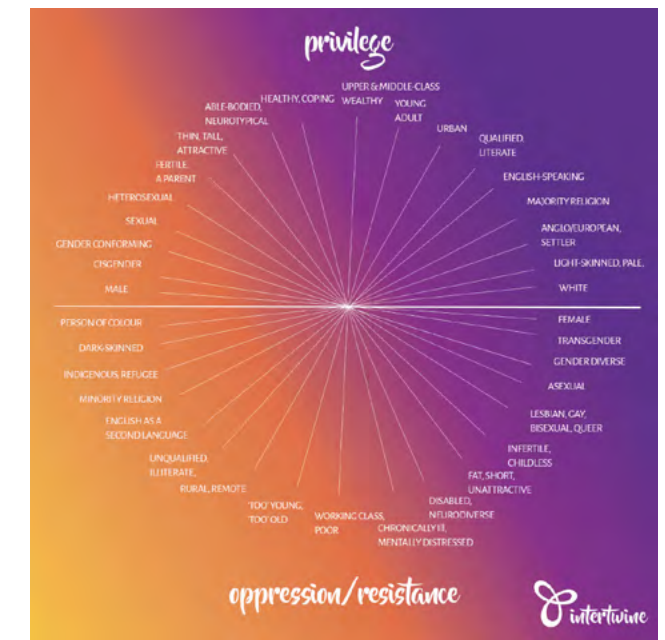
Dr Suzy Goldsmith and Bella Walker

Specific project funding provides FCVic with the opportunity to explore, develop and communicate how financial counselling supports community wellbeing.

Our approach reflects the way financial counsellors work. Our work is person-centred and responsive to need. Being curious, we seek to understand what works and what doesn't for our partner organisations, their workforces and communities. We respond to what we learn and include the voices of all participants – financial counsellors, other service workers, agencies and clients. Together, we create new tools that help our sector to connect and communicate with diverse groups and services.

People in need of financial counselling are often experiencing other forms of disadvantage

This year we have been collaborating with services supporting Victorians who are experiencing various forms of disadvantage. By working together with other sectors, we can better connect to community members with specific lived experience, including unpaid carers, people engaged with mental health and wellbeing supports, older Victorians, diverse communities and small business owners.



Wheel of privileges and oppression by Intertwine.

The privilege wheel illustrates how various aspects of a person's identity and lived experience interact, generating advantage or disadvantage. This is often termed 'intersectionality'.

Through co-design we hear what is important to the communities we work with

The first step in our work is to explore the intersection between what financial counselling can support and what people want to know. To do this we form trusted relationships and initiate an open dialogue about the concerns of the communities we work with and the context of these concerns.

In a major collaboration with Little Dreamers we convened a group of nine young carers (aged 15-25) and asked them:

- Thinking about yourself, or other young carers, how does money figure in your lives?
- What questions do you have about how money or finances work?
- Money – what about it makes young people uncomfortable or stressed?
- What financial systems do young carers navigate? What are the challenges when navigating these systems?
- What would make you more confident when making decisions about money or navigating your own financial situation?

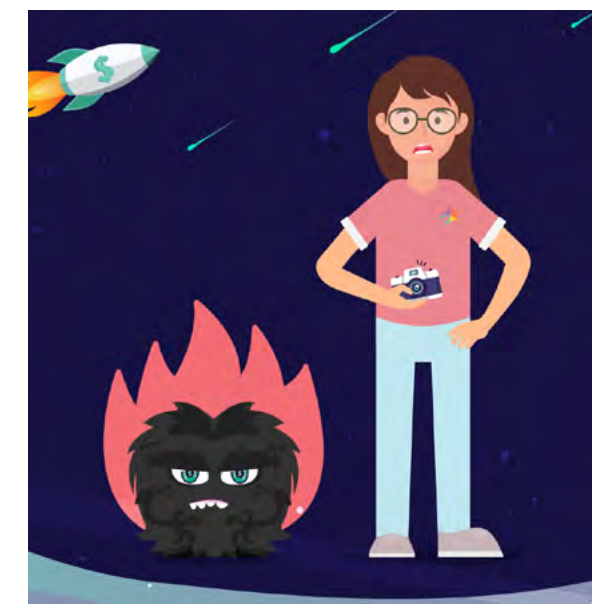
The responses were rich and generous, giving us valuable insights into young carers' questions and concerns. To address these, we developed Money Explorer, an interactive online tool where young carers can explore concepts such as budgeting, debt, savings and money relationships.

In Money Explorer, debts are depicted as asteroids or potential hazards encountered on our travels. As an early step, we developed [a series of seven blog posts on 'Understanding Debt'](#), published on Little Dreamers' online Dreamers Hub. The blog series demystifies debt, credit and contracts through a series of engaging stories told from the perspective of a young carer, Julie.



Julie and her debt monster were useful mascots for our stand at the Young Carers Festival in June, where young carers busied themselves colouring badges of the debt monster or the budget rocket while their accompanying adults could have a chat with our friendly financial counsellors.

We are continuing to develop Money Explorer over the coming year.



Co-design ensures new contributions to professional knowledge are relevant to practice

Opportunities for professional development activities emerge as projects develop, in line with the larger FCVic professional development calendar. Especially when working with external partners or providers, we engage a group of experienced financial counsellors to contribute their experience and participate in panel discussions, ensuring that the material is as relevant as possible to members' casework.

A wide range of topics has been delivered this year, including:

- *'Complex Caseloads: Working productively with people experiencing challenging emotions and behaviours'*, and a complementary session for agency managers: *'Complex Caseloads: Managing risks and supporting staff'*
- After disaster: three sessions delivered by Dr Rob Gordon with relevance to both natural disasters and the challenges wrought by the pandemic
- *'What is the NDIS and how does it work?'*
- *'Working with LGBTIQ+ community members'*
- *'Working with persons using financial elder abuse'*

Team members have also developed a range of PD topics on small business:

- Assisting sole traders in your practice
- *'What does recovery look like for small business owners?'* - a panel session
- A series of in-depth webinars
- Continued development of the Small Business e-Learning Series.

and on elder abuse:

- Identifying financial elder abuse
- Introduction to elder abuse e-Learning
- A series of interactive workshops.

Co-design helps us to reach vulnerable communities who might benefit from financial counselling support

Together with our partner organisation, Carers Victoria, and Merri Health Carer Services, we held open dialogue sessions with representative groups of carer support advisers and coaches. As a result we co-developed the Carer Pathway to financial counselling, which includes both a Conversation Guide, containing suggested phrases to help carer advisers identify carers experiencing financial stress, and a dedicated online warm referral path through to the National Debt Helpline at Consumer Action Law Centre. The Carer Pathway pilot period commenced in May and, while interest is strong, there is a lot still to learn and co-develop in order to streamline carers' access to financial counselling support.

We have continued to partner with Australian Multicultural Community Services this year, gaining very positive feedback from their communities, who have found it beneficial to learn about financial counselling in their own context. Using the *Money Talks for Better Ageing* videos and factsheets in 14 languages, FCVic supported a number of community discussion sessions, culminating in a program completion event online in September. We also co-developed the *Smart Women Smart Money* program with two deliveries in November and February. Program participants committed 90 minutes per week over five weeks to learn the skills required to become Financial Conversation Leaders. An extensive set of factsheets supported their learning, based around three key skills: understanding boundaries, ensuring privacy and confidentiality, and listening and communication strategies.



The Smart Women Smart Money completion celebration included traditional dancing from the Sri Lankan Respite Group in Endeavour Hills.

Through the year we have continued to develop and share a wide range of resources, including factsheets, tools and flyers. These resources relate to all areas of our work.

Outreach has also been the focus, and we utilise synergies across our project topics as far as possible. Outreach activities this year include: the Small Business Connections series, held in conjunction with local financial counselling agencies during May; a range of webinars for professionals from other sectors; stalls at the North East Mental Health AOD and Wellbeing Service Navigation Event in May; and the Young Carers Festival in June. Some major outreach activities are planned for the coming year - stay tuned!

New partnerships help us to gather evidence for the community benefit afforded by financial counselling

Our mental health project funding has enabled us to pilot a deeper integration of financial counselling with mental health supports. Our pilot *'On Track with My Money'* has been delivered in the Shepparton region by partners Wellways and Shepparton Family and Financial Services from December through June this year. Participants have been drawn from Wellways' services operating with Goulburn Valley Health: the PARC (Prevention and Recovery Care), a short-term residential support with an average stay of 14 days, and the EIPSR (Early Intervention Psychosocial Support Response), which offers in-community support over the short to medium term. Initial findings are very promising - the team at Shepparton Family have made great efforts to connect with participants and the Wellways team and this has resulted in around 25% take-up of the new support. More detailed analysis of the outcomes of the pilot is underway this year.

"The participant feedback has been really positive and the staff have also told me it's going great!"

OUR TEAM MEMBERS THIS YEAR

Non financial counsellors

- Sooz Boag
- Geoff Browne
- Tom Davies
- Suzy Goldsmith
- Mel Keenan
- Shweta Pathak
- Michelle Perry
- Sandy Ross
- Bella Walker
- Julie Watson

FCVic members

- Robyn Angus
- Katrina Barrett
- Sandra Blake
- Helen Brady

Sector guidance

- Mike Kirkness
- Cathy McKenzie
- Kylie McLoughlin
- Jo Middleton
- Vanessa Stanton

DISASTER RECOVERY

James Degenhart

Disasters create financial impacts – this is the message that FcVic has been emphasising in recent years. Barely 18 months after the 2019-20 bushfires ravaged communities across Victoria, the state was hit by damaging storms and flooding in June 2021. In response, the Victorian Government, through Consumer Affairs Victoria, provided funding to five agencies to deliver financial counselling to local residents recovering from the disaster, as well as funding FcVic to continue building sector capacity and supporting recovery efforts. Combined with an extension of funding under the Bushfire Recovery Program, FcVic was able to engage Joy Mason to lead the coordination of our Disaster Recovery work in a meaningful way.

Starting in October 2021 and concluding in February 2022, FcVic delivered seven interactive webinars to other community service workers assisting clients affected by disasters, which explored the role of financial counsellors in disaster recovery. More than 100 representatives from over 25 different organisations across Victoria attended the sessions, which included live Q&A with local financial counsellors.

While the feedback we received was overwhelmingly positive, there is still much work to be done in informing and educating other workers on the importance of financial counselling in disaster recovery. FcVic has spent time redeveloping the webinar content into an online module format to be made available to a broader group of stakeholders, beyond the community services sector, including local government and insurance industry staff.

We have begun to see productive engagement with the insurance industry around several systemic issues that financial counsellors have identified through their casework. Interactions with the Insurance Council of Australia, the Lead Insurance Ombudsman at the Australian Financial Complaints Authority, and a number of insurance companies, have shown that there is a willingness to work together to make improvements for the benefit of consumers. We will continue to build our relationship with the insurance industry in the hopes that we see those improvements come to fruition.

Insurance continues to be one of the greatest training topics of interest for the disaster recovery financial counsellors. With the support and expertise of Consumer Action Law Centre, FcVic was able to facilitate an insurance issues workshop in December 2021, which followed up and discussed the details of an earlier webinar recorded by Consumer Action on insurance issue-spotting following a disaster.

Other professional development activities targeted towards the disaster recovery financial counsellors included:

- a workshop on community engagement and outreach,
- *‘Trauma informed care for disaster first responders’* webinar, delivered by Phoenix Australia
- three training sessions led by Dr Rob Gordon, as part of the *‘Stronger than Before: Rebuilding financial resilience for older bushfire residents’* project

The knowledge and insights that our network of disaster recovery financial counsellors now possess is invaluable, and as such, a focus of FcVic’s work has been to capture and retain as much of that expertise as possible to better prepare the sector to respond to the next disaster event. An initial version of our *Disaster Recovery Financial Counselling Toolkit* was completed in November 2021 and was followed by the release of additional sections in June 2022. It is a significant resource for the sector and will continue to be updated with new knowledge and information.

We continue to grow our list of mentors in this specialist area as a result of the significant upskilling that each of the practitioners have undertaken. None of this work would be possible without the contributions and input from the disaster recovery financial counsellors – they have taught us so much and continue to be open and generous with their knowledge and support.

TRAINING REPORT

Shweta Pathak, Acting Training Manager

After getting a little more freedom in our lives – allowing us to go out beyond our immediate surroundings and make up for lost time, spending time with our loved ones – it would be fair to say that the past 12 months have felt a little more **comfortable**. Most of us are now also very accustomed to Zoom and Teams, and have learned to be a bit more compassionate towards ourselves and others.

In the 2021-22 financial year, FCVic delivered 69 continuous professional development (CPD) sessions. Four of the training sessions were delivered face-to-face, with all other sessions delivered as live webinars. The individual sessions focused on a variety of different topics – for a full list of topics please view **Tables 2 and 3** on pp.26-27. The 69 sessions included five family violence training sessions, delivered and evaluated by Women’s Legal Service Victoria and administered by FCVic.

With the majority of trainings continuing to be delivered online, we have maintained easy access for regionally-based financial counsellors to participate. As a result, the accumulated attendance over the 12-month period totalled 2,514 – a 25% increase on the attendance figures from the last financial year.

FCVic delivered its first face-to-face graduate year training, which received excellent feedback. This training not only aided in the learning and development

of recent graduates, it also provided a valuable networking opportunity for them.

Through the support of the Victorian Government’s Mental Health – COVID-19 Response Package Funding, FCVic was able to coordinate seven deliveries of the highly successful *‘Complex Caseloads – Working productively with clients experiencing challenging emotions & behaviours’* training, delivered by Brett Bridges from Our Curious Minds. These small, workshop style sessions were run over two days and provided in-depth training on supporting clients who present with dysregulated emotions and challenging behaviours. 157 financial counsellors were able to access this training. The feedback from participants has been overwhelmingly positive, and has highlighted the need for ongoing training in this area. An amended, shortened version of this training was also provided to the Agency Managers’ Network.

In addition to the live training sessions delivered throughout the year, FCVic has continued to add learning resources to our CPD Library for members. The CPD Library features recordings and learning materials from most of the live training deliveries, available to access at any time. The CPD Library presently holds 115 unique resources, including learning materials, session recordings and e-learning activities, which cover more than 30 different topics. 370 FCVic members have now accessed the CPD Library to complement or enhance their

professional development – please see **Table 1** on pp.26 for more information.

Among the content on offer from the CPD Library, FCVic has developed several new e-Learning courses, including standalone modules *‘Introduction to Financial Elder Abuse’* and *‘Professional Supervision for New Professional Supervisors’*. The Foundations of Small Business Financial Counselling e-Learning Series continues to engage financial counsellors who are eager to develop their skills in supporting small business owners. The Series has now been made available to financial counsellors in New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia.

Lastly, we wish to recognise the contributions and insights of our partner organisations, and members of our advisory groups:

Sarah Davidson (Financial Counsellor), Donna Johnson (Financial Counsellor), Bronwyn Davis (Financial Counsellor), Cathy McKenzie (Financial Counsellor), Katie Fraser (Consumer Action Law Centre), Su Robertson (Consumer Action Law Centre), Melanie Hallam (Australian Financial Complaints Authority), Melissa Ferguson (Consumer Affairs Victoria), Tony Clarkson (Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation), and Eithne McGettrick (Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation).

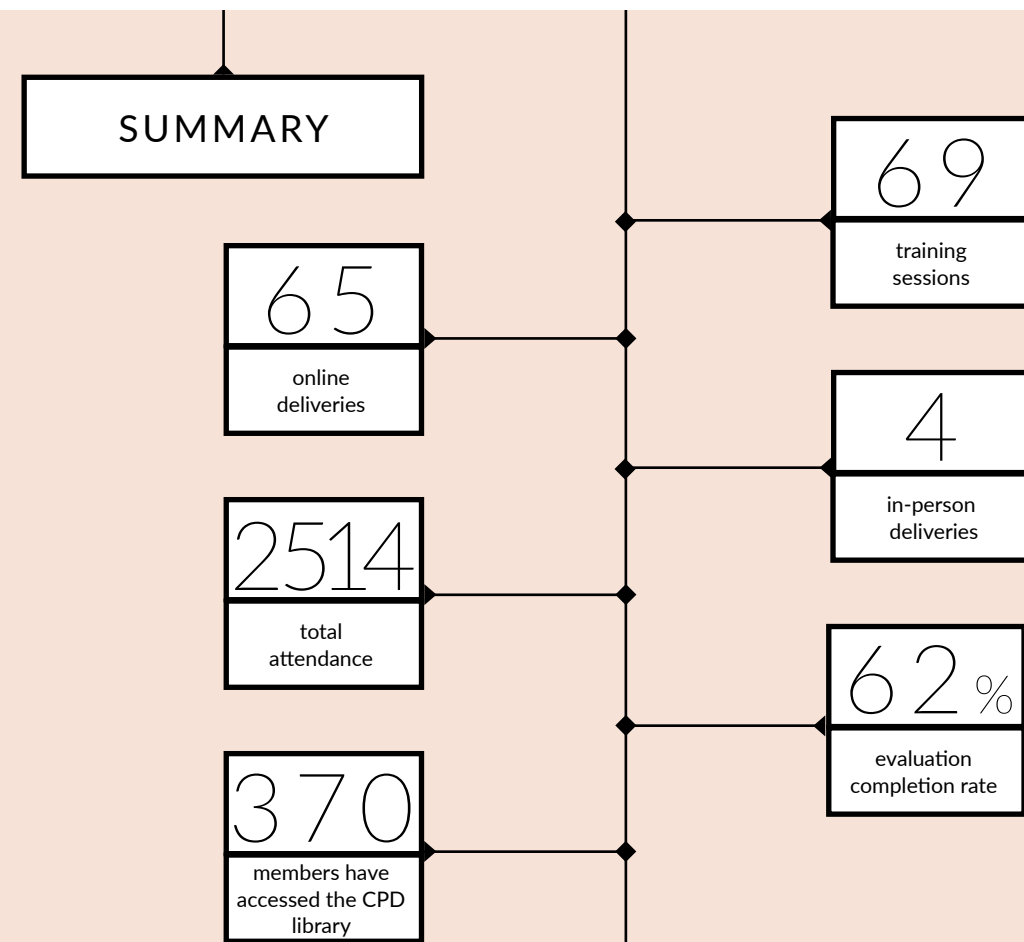


Table 1: CPD Library

370
members have accessed the CPD library

115
number of resources (learning materials, recordings, e-Learnings)

12
number of e-Learnings

Foundations of Small Business Financial Counselling e-Learning Series
most accessed e-Learning

Avoiding the rabbit hole – Strategic empathy
most accessed resource

Table 2: July-December 2021 Topics

Advocacy And Campaigning
Applying Aboriginal Cultural Safety Into FC Practice
Assisting Sole Traders In Your Practice
Avoiding The Rabbit Hole – Strategic Empathy
Changes To The Residential Tenancies Act And Its Protections For Financial Counselling Clients
Small Business In-Depth: Commercial Leases And Small Business Issues
Complex Caseloads: Working Productively With Clients Experiencing Challenging Emotions & Behaviours
Connect With CARE – Suicide Prevention And Intervention Training
Cryptocurrency, CFD & Speculation
Debt Vultures
Ethical Dilemmas – Case Study Discussion
Family Violence Foundation Training For Financial Counsellors
Family Violence Training For Financial Counsellors: Advanced Level Unit
Going For Broke – Talking Bankruptcy
How The TIO Can Help Your Small Business Client
Mentoring Skills For FCs Supervising Students And New Graduates
National Consumer Credit Protection Act & Consumer Protections
Navigating The Aged Care Landscape – Fees And Charges
Navigating The Child Support System
Payday Loans And Consumer Leases
Professional Supervision: For New And Experience Professional Supervisors
Small Business In-Depth: Legal Framework Dive
Small Business In-Depth: Negotiation Options Where Legal Protections Are Limited
Superannuation & Insurance Entitlements
Telco Disputes And Consumer Law
Vicarious Trauma
Working With Refugee And Asylum Seeker Clients

Table 3: January-June 2022 Topics

Accidents Happen – Supporting Clients With Motor Accident Debts	NDIS Matters And Consumer Law
Assisting Sole Traders In Your Practice	Professional Supervision – Keeping It Fresh
Buy Now Pay Later	Rebuilding Resilience: The Path To Recovery Post-Disaster
Centrelink Payments	Scams
Communicating With Compassion	Small Business In-Depth: Small Business Insolvency – A Focus On Tax Issues
Complex Caseloads - Working Productively With Clients Experiencing Challenging Emotions & Behaviours	Small Business In-Depth: Franchises And The Code Of Conduct
Convenor Skills Training	Small Business In-Depth: Trust Structures And Insolvency
Ethical Dilemmas In Casework	Supporting Clients With Fines
Family Law	Telephone Financial Counselling Skills
Family Violence – Leaderclass (Online)	The Regulators: Making Complaints To Help Your Clients And For Systemic Change
Family Violence Foundation Training For Financial Counsellors	Trauma Informed Care For Disaster First Responders
Family Violence Training For Financial Counsellors: Advanced Level Unit	Trauma Informed Care: Supporting Clients Impacted By Trauma
Gambling Skill Set - Refresher	What Does Recovery Look Like For Small Business Owners?
Graduate Year Training– Bankruptcy	What Is The NDIS And How Does It Work?
Graduate Year Workshop 'Double' Block	Working With LGBTIQA+ Community Members
Identifying Financial Elder Abuse	Working With Persons Using Financial Elder Abuse
Looking After Our Clients And Ourselves In The Aftermath Of Disaster	

CONVENORS NETWORK REPORT

Georgia Robenstone, FCVic and Narelle Clark, Convenor

The Convenors Network has continued to meet every two months throughout the year via Zoom. We have tried to balance convenors' needs in terms of having enough time to discuss and unpack issues, while (mostly) preventing the meetings from running overtime. Our regular meetings have also given convenors a chance to check in with each other, give and receive support – or simply vent!

Information sharing via updates from networks and working groups has remained the central focus of the network and has often led to connections being identified across different regions and advocacy issues. This is a crucial element in keeping the FCVic advocacy 'ecosystem' healthy and functioning, and we would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the commitment and dedication to systemic change by convenors.

Based on training needs identified in meetings, FCVic Convenors Training was developed and delivered by experienced leadership consultant Meriel O'Sullivan in April. This session was focused on planning and running meetings effectively. Further training on minute-taking is currently in development.

WORKING GROUPS

Working groups connect financial counsellors with FCVic's advocacy work, linking casework and policy. The groups consist of FCVic members, however, relevant professionals are regularly involved on an invitational basis.

Not only can group members make a difference to systemic issues, but working groups offer the chance to develop new skills and gain valuable experience, not to mention excellent networking opportunities with other financial counsellors, industry and government representatives.

At the end of the 2021-22 year, there were five FCVic working groups, each of which operates within their own terms of reference. These groups are:

- Bankruptcy
- Centrelink
- Gambling Issues
- Infringements (joint working group)
- Utilities Working Group



BANKRUPTCY WORKING GROUP

Carmel Vivian, Convenor

The Bankruptcy Working Group met via Zoom again this year, and by doing so has increased the attendance of members. The reduced time constraint has meant that metro and regional/rural financial counsellors can all attend.

The Working Group held five meetings in total for the year – two of which were held with the Australian Financial Security Authority (AFSA), and enabled us to raise issues that directly affect us and our clients. AFSA has also allocated a liaison officer for financial counsellors. This gives us the opportunity to highlight issues that can't be dealt with through the Customer Service Unit. AFSA also invited financial counsellors to attend two professional development sessions. The first was Basic Level Training and the second session was on Technical Issues. FCVic also gave input into the Vulnerability Framework for AFSA's 2022-2023 compliance program.

The number of bankruptcies has not reached pre-COVID levels, but they are steadily increasing. The small business financial counsellors are seeing an increase in discussion around bankruptcies, as are other financial counsellors working in the sector – interest rate increases and mortgage stress being some of the reasons given.

The Working Group is looking forward to another year of building our relationship with AFSA, and other related interest groups. If any FCVic member would like to join the group, please contact myself or FCVic.

CENTRELINK WORKING GROUP

Liz Stary, Convenor

The start of this financial year we were privileged and delighted to host Senator Rachel Siewert from Western Australia, who at the time was Co-Deputy Leader of the Australian Greens and Party Room Whip, and in her final week in Parliament before retiring. Senator Siewert spent 16 years in Parliament advocating for people experiencing disadvantage, with a particular interest in Centrelink and Social Security. The Senator imparted her knowledge and wisdom on issues regarding the Disability Support Pension, Jobseeker Allowance, Robodebt and the Cashless Welfare card.



As we moved into the end of 2021, we participated in the long-awaited Senate inquiry into the 'Purpose, Intent and Adequacy of the Disability Support Pension'. The Centrelink Working Group, together with FCVic, provided a submission and attended the Senate Hearing. [The final recommendations released earlier this year can be read here.](#)

In 2022, we have spent considerable time working on our advocacy around the Jobseeker Allowance and issued a survey for financial counsellors to assist clients in identifying the poverty issues this meagre allowance creates. We had the Senior Policy Advisor for Bill Shorten (the then Shadow Minister of Government Services) attend our meeting before the 2022 Federal election. This work is not yet finished, and we hope to use the information and stories received in influencing the government to 'Raise the Rate'.

Thank you for the contributions and wisdom of our partner organisations and people including financial counsellors, Victoria Legal Aid, Social Security Rights Victoria, Consumer Action Law Centre, Berrill & Watson Lawyers, Council for Single Mothers and their Children, Community Information & Support Victoria (CISVic) and Financial Counselling Australia.

GAMBLING ISSUES WORKING GROUP*Pam Mutton, Convenor*

It has been an eventful 12 months which saw the handing down of the findings of the Crown Royal Commission into the Operator and Licence undertaken by The Hon. Ray Finkelstein AO QC.

The streamed sessions made interesting viewing and for several watchers interrupted their day.

The fall out of the Royal Commission has seen Crown Resorts sold to Blackstone for an almost obscene amount. It will be a “watch this space” on how the new owners manage the Casino and deliver on reforms.

With the growth in online gambling, we invited the newly established Victorian Gambling and Casino Control Commission (VGCCC) to assist in gaining an understanding of the complaint processes and how best to support clients who feel the providers have breached the regulations and or their internal Responsible Service of Gambling policies.

We also had a presentation from the Australian Communications and Media Authority on how the National Self-Exclusion Register would operate. Members are excited about the Register and looking forward to helping clients understand the processes and benefits of the Register.

A small sub-committee of the working group has been looking at banks and their decision processes where gambling is an issue; the care and consideration provided to clients and their families impacted by gambling related harms.

More recently the issue of advertising has been raised with a further small group looking at the regulations governing what is and is not appropriate advertising placement.

It is hoped that the working group will, over the coming 12 months, engage more with regulators and others to both improve the casework advocacy on behalf of clients and seek to expand the avenues for systemic advocacy on behalf of our clients.

INFRINGEMENTS WORKING GROUP*Co-Convenors: Hannah Lewis (Justice Connect), Shifrah Blustein (WEstjustice), Jo Parkin (Uniting AOD & MH) and Sam Levey (Carlton Fitzroy Financial Counselling Service)*

The Infringements Working Group (IWG) is a joint-working group of Financial Counselling Victoria, the Federation of Community Legal Centres and Victoria Legal Aid. The IWG involves almost 40 member organisations. It works closely with the State Government and other key stakeholders to highlight the challenges faced by vulnerable people trying to navigate the complex infringement system.

The IWG continues to advocate for improvements to this fixed penalty system based on the experience of IWG member clients, who have often experienced homelessness, family violence, addiction, and poor mental and physical health.

IWG members have successfully advocated for a significantly improved enforcement review (special circumstances) test, the establishment of a Work and Development Permit (WDP) Community of Practice, the inclusion of most types of court-ordered activity to also be eligible as WDP activity, improved payment arrangement guidelines, more options available to toll-fine recipients, fairer and more consistent application of the Family Violence Scheme, and the commencement of a concession-based scheme for COVID-19 fines.

IWG advocacy continues in many areas. These include improvements to the WDP scheme, establishment of binding enforcement review (special circumstances), amendment and acceptance of the FCA Authorisation Form, expansion of concession-based infringements and the identification and removal of all unenforceable infringements from the Fines Victoria system.

After several years of reduced Fines Victoria and Sherriff enforcement activity, due to many issues, including COVID-19, we anticipate an increase in enforcement activity. We are keen to hear the experiences of our clients and financial counsellors to inform IWG advocacy.

IWG is a very active working group, so please get in touch with Jo or Sam if you wish to become involved, as it is a great way to make a difference at a systemic level and an opportunity to learn and network. The co-convenors are grateful to all the financial counsellors who have added value to the IWG over the past years.

UTILITIES WORKING GROUP*Heather Neilson, Convenor*

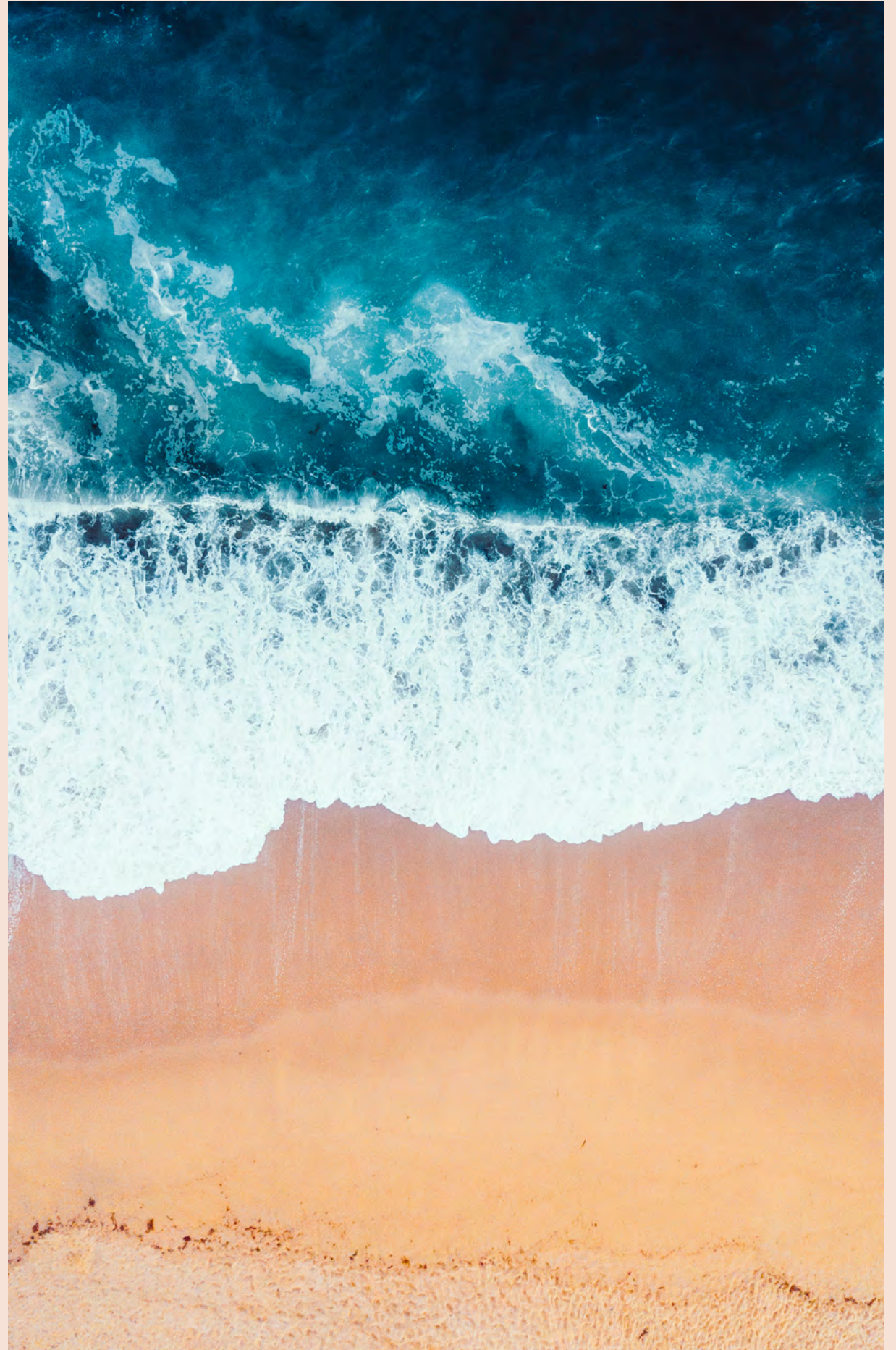
Utility matters have been highlighted in the media often over the past 12 months. The increase in the cost-of-living expenses, energy shortages, the role of fossil fuels and climate change have all received headlines.

Financial counsellors have reported that when advocating for those clients impacted by family violence, they have been met with unnecessary challenges in the energy space. These factors have influenced the work of financial counsellors and have made our involvement in utilities advocacy more significant.

The Utilities Working Group (UWG) has worked on improving communication with utility retailers to help make retailer contact easier for financial counsellors. This is an ongoing issue and the UWG is grateful to financial counsellors who have already flagged concerns about retailer behaviour with FCVic. The difficulty of contacting electricity and gas retailers and the need for appropriate client solutions has been a recurring theme in financial counsellors' feedback. Discussion about the need for an increase in the Utilities Relief Grant (URG) payment of \$650, and the inflexibility of its application is frequently raised at meetings.

We would like to thank Cynthia Gebert for her excellent work as the Ombudsman at Energy and Water Ombudsman Victoria (EWOV), and we welcome the opportunity to work with the incoming Ombudsman, Catherine Wolthuizen.

My thanks to the tireless work of financial counsellors, and the FCVic staff including Sandy Ross, Georgia Robenstone and James Degenhardt.

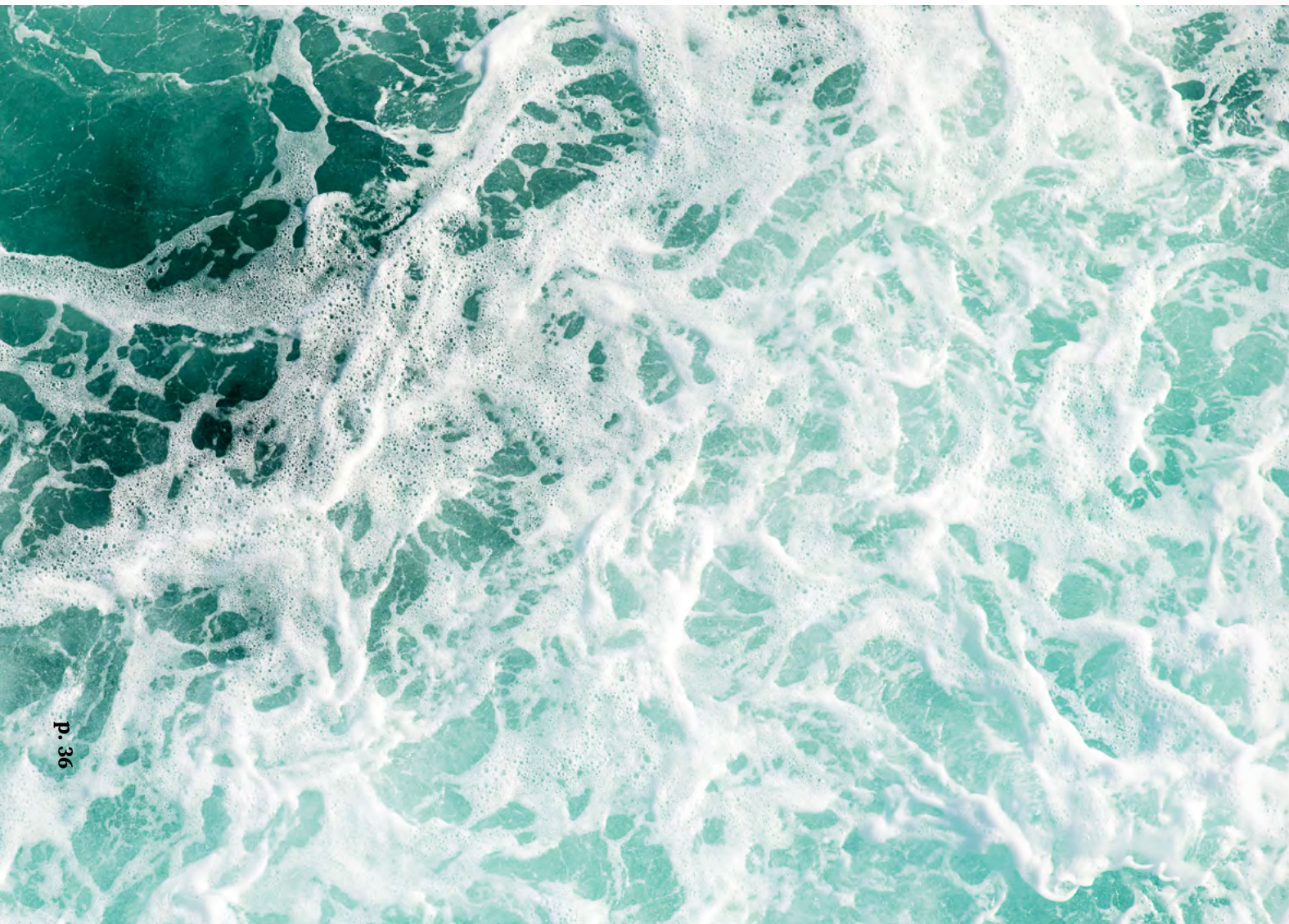


REGIONAL NETWORKS

Regional Networks are a way for financial counsellors to discuss casework related matters emerging that are particular to the geographical area; undertake professional development; and debrief with their peers.

The Regional Networks are:

- Eastern metro
- Metro West
- Northern metro
- Southern metro
- Gippsland
- Hume
- Western regional



EASTERN METRO NETWORK

Kylie McLoughlin, Convenor

The Eastern Metro Network has held four meetings over the last 12 months. The meetings are predominantly attended by Anglicare Victoria and EACH, with representation by Salvation Army, Deakin University, Tenants Victoria and Cancer Council Victoria.

We have maintained online meetings as many staff continue to work from home most of the time, and this is now seen as being time efficient and manageable.

More recently agencies have noted that intake is starting to return to pre-COVID levels, therefore increasing the workload of financial counsellors. It has also been noted that clients are becoming more complex, having multiple financial issues, and co-morbidities that impact their ability to stay engaged.

The meetings tended to be about networking and discussing what is happening in our region, and despite the network goal of having a regular guest speaker, only two guest speakers attended; one from Good Shepherd Financial Independence Hub; and Julie from FCVic to share her role in relation to Mental Wellbeing.

Sadly, we have seen a decline in the number of financial counsellors and agencies attend over the last year and would happily welcome all those in the inner and outer eastern region to join us in the 2022-23 financial year ahead.

WESTERN METRO NETWORK

Peter Undy, Convenor

It's that time again. The year has flown by, sitting here writing this still not fully working from the office and COVID issues still front and centre of a lot of clients issues. Which means that online connectivity between teams and broader circles continues to be important moving forward.

Our meetings have ranged from six members to 18 over the past year. All meetings have been very vibrant, but we still have not even contemplated a face to face meeting. All members seem to be happy to continue meeting via Zoom. We discussed workloads, problems, and how complicated issues have become even harder.

One thing that shows is the resolve of all to continue the battle with the issues both old and new, all the while supporting each other as best we can.

I would like to thank Marina Stojanoski as Secretary, who has stood up and done a fantastic job getting guest speakers, and stepping up as chair as required. The running and coordination of the network by Georgia Robenstone at FCVic has been a great assistance - she is a rock for us. Thank you both.

NORTHERN METRO NETWORK*Anouk Ceppi-Thomas, Convenor*

On Wurundjeri land, the Northern Metro Network (NMN) has continued to meet regularly online. Thank you to financial counsellors Carmel, Cathy, David, Jenny, Kedar and Mona who have kindly given their time to host and organise a network meeting or attended Conveners' Network meetings on behalf of our group. Thank you to all the financial counsellors who have actively attended and contributed to the network from the following agencies in alphabetical order: Anglicare Victoria, Banyule Community Health Services, Better Place Australia, Cancer Council Victoria, Carlton Fitzroy Financial Counselling Services, Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand, Holmesglen Tafe, SSRV, Sunbury and Cobaw Community Health Centre, The Salvation Army, Uniting Vic Tas and VincentCare.

Thank you to our wonderful guest speakers:

- David Balcombe - financial counsellor and FcVic Board Member (Treasurer)
- Barbara Van Den Vlekkert - CEO Broadmeadows Disability Services
- Joanna Middleton and Olivia Brown - Financial Coaches, Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand (Financial Independence Hub)

This year productive discussions have been held on topics that have impacted our clients' lives the most such as:

- No increase of the JobSeeker rate which continues to be way out of line with the increase in daily living costs. People on visas and/or with no income or on income support continue to struggle to make ends meet and cannot cover basic necessities. Increase in rental arrears, with emergency relief not always being sustainable as Centrelink payments are not enough.
- Mortgage stress, property settlement issues and loans which were on hardship arrangement during COVID now needing to be repaid.
- Lack of free legal advice regarding family violence, property settlement.
- Increase of clients in family violence circumstances, on NDIS or/and with mental health issues.

In short, the NMN has continued to 'ride the waves' of COVID. Financial counsellors continue to work from home offering over the phone appointments, while some have continued to work in the office all along or have returned – sporadically or for good – to best accommodate their clients' needs and requests. Financial counsellors have admirably adjusted to changes in their respective agencies, in state-wide programs, intake line, new programs, implementing the new MARAM, following the ongoing changes in COVID protocols, learning new hardship policies, small business training and so forth. All have tested every financial counsellor's stamina and determination. It is maybe for these reasons that attending network meetings online has seen a small decline this year, as the online platform has taken away from the social component of our network.

Bluntly, a network meeting online is just another meeting. To counter this, we have decided that hybrid network meetings need to restart as this will surely bring back the joy of meeting again in person for those who wish to. We will be able to have that chat and that cup of tea to regain the balance between giving generously of our time to the big cause of systemic change, and responding to our own needs as human beings, building relationships and interactions so our network will reset and bloom.

A special thanks to FcVic – especially Georgia, James, Bella, and Sandy – for their valuable input.

Thank you again to all for your hard work that has shaped our network this year. Always a pleasure to see you.

SOUTHERN METRO NETWORK*Jenny McGowan, Convenor*

The Southern Metro Network met four times this year – the first three were on Zoom and one in person.

It was a real pleasure to meet up with both experienced and newer members in person, rather than on the screen. The discussions were so much easier and lively. We hope to have a mix of both in the future as Zoom is sometimes easier and more convenient with travel and time constraints.

This year our guests have been some of our local Centrelink representatives (Community Engagement Officers, Financial Information Service Officers, Social Worker & Multicultural Officer) and representatives from Social Security Rights Victoria, Good Shepard (Financial Independence Hub), Mortgage Stress Victoria & Peninsula Community Legal Centre (Work & Development Permit Scheme).

Our meetings continue to be a good place to discuss cases or issues that are causing concern or need a bit of fresh eyes, and also to share some of the wins we have from creditors that often play the hard game.

GIPPSLAND REGIONAL NETWORK*Georgia Robenstone, FCVic*

The Gippsland Regional Network met three times in the reporting period, continuing to meet via video due to changed working arrangements and the ongoing impacts of the pandemic. While online meetings are convenient, members look forward to seeing each other in person again soon.

The bushfires, storms, and floods in 2020 and 2021 continue to drive demand for financial counsellors in parts of Gippsland. In generalist services, the increased fuel, food and utility costs are putting enormous stress on clients, and cases are becoming more complex across the board with a particular uptick in family violence clients. Network meetings provide an opportunity for financial counsellors to debrief and receive support outside of their workplace.

Guest speakers at network meetings in the last 12 months have included Bronwyn Behan from Gippsland Legal Assistance Forum (GLAF) and Dante D'Amelio, a Wellness Support Officer from Rural Financial Counselling Service Gippsland. Dante's presentation at the June meeting was sensitive and insightful, exploring potential barriers to financial counselling clients completing tasks and ways to navigate these barriers as a practitioner.

HUME REGIONAL NETWORK*Michele Padbury, Chair*

With the COVID pandemic being the gift that keeps on giving, the Network maintained its schedule of Zoom quarterly meetings. COVID continued to loom large, casting a shadow over agencies, workers, and how clients received assistance.

Thanks to the generosity of the Network members who continued to provide information and support to each other at meetings and beyond, and were generous in sharing their knowledge and expertise. A big thanks to our star minute takers Geraldine Jackson and Oliver Wong. Thanks also to Claire Raeburn for deftly facilitating the Network.

Guest presenters this year included Panthera (Elisha Rathod and Simon Offord); ANZ (Maree Andrews, Keith Porter and Ed Tawil); and Good Shepherd (Jo Middleton and Olivia Brown).

Several Network members also sat on various working groups, allowing great two-way communication, with regular reports back to Network. We checked in with agency changes, industry updates, and had space to pose questions on ethical issues and technical matters.

We appreciate the support and contributions made to our Network meetings by the ever-reliable team at FCVic.

WESTERN REGIONAL NETWORK*Georgia Robenstone, FCVic*

The Western Regional Network rotated the responsibility of hosting meetings again this year, with four agencies hosting a meeting each over the year. Thank you to Bethany, CAFS, Anglicare Bendigo, and Cultura (formerly Diversitat) for taking this on, and to the members who have taken minutes of meetings throughout the year.

Hybrid meetings enabled people to attend via Zoom and in person/on site where possible. Post-meeting lunches with colleagues were a special treat for those able to attend them after not seeing each other for long periods due to COVID.

Guest speakers at network meetings have included Jo Middleton and Olivia Brown from Financial Independence Hub at Good Shepherd ANZ, and Dermott Williams from Social Security Rights Victoria. Kim Arthur from within the network also presented on her work in Storm and Flood Recovery.

Overall, agencies in the region have experienced high demand for financial counselling, with common themes being BNPL and pay day loans, utility debts, and generally more complex cases.

OTHER NETWORKS

FCVic facilitates a number of networks and communities of practice for specialist groups to meet and share experiences related to their roles:

- Agency Managers' Network
- Family Violence Network
- Prisons Network
- New Financial Counsellor Community of Practice
- Small Business Network
- Disaster Recovery Network
- Elder Abuse Community of Practice

AGENCY MANAGERS' NETWORK

Kay Dilger, Convenor

It's been another year of COVID-19 related disruption, so that remained a hot topic for the Agency Managers Network. Themes of 'how to best support teams?', 'what does work-from-home or work-from-work look like as we emerge from the pandemic lockdowns?', and 'when is demand going to spike, and how do services respond?' were present at almost every meeting.

We welcomed a large number of new managers to the Network, with most meetings attended by more than 30 representatives, which means the network remains relevant and useful to organisations.

The year certainly flew by. Other highlights included:

- Collaborative discussion around student placements, with representatives from RMIT, ICAN Learn, Australian Institute of Professional Counsellors and Eva Burrows College (Sep 2021)
- Dr Anna Price, Researcher at the Centre for Community Child Health, speaking about the Healthier Wealthier Families Pilot Project, linking clients of maternal and child health nurses to financial counselling services (Nov 2021)
- Two change management workshop sessions, run by Yumi Stamet from Purpose at Work (Feb & Mar 2022)

As we look ahead to what the 2022-23 financial year may bring there is a sense of hope for the future despite the gloomy global economic outlook and the cost of living crisis here. Agencies welcome the upcoming review by Consumer Affairs Victoria, and the work being done by Financial Counselling Australia, both aimed at ensuring financial counselling is secured into the future with more financial counsellors to meet demand.

FAMILY VIOLENCE NETWORK

Julie Barrow, FCVic

Family Violence Network meetings continue to be held by Zoom every two months. Guest speakers over the past 12 months included:

- Vic Roads Family Violence Assistance team
- Gabby Sundstrom, Thriving Communities Partnership (TCP) – One Stop, One Story Hub
- Anna Matina, Uniting Vic/Tas – Escaping Violence Federal government package
- Carolyn Bond, Economic Abuse Reference Group (EARG) – credit reporting changes and advocacy
- Pamela Taylor-Barnett, Social Security Rights Victoria – Family Violence and Social Security
- Julia Davis, Financial Rights Legal Centre (NSW) – follow up on the credit reporting changes to begin 1st July 2022
- Elena Campbell, RMIT University – Future-proofing safety focus groups.

At each meeting we also receive updates from regular contributors Carolyn Bond (EARG) and Jane Evans (Department of Justice and Community Safety).

The meetings provide a focus on credit issues and dealing with creditors in relation to family violence. Identifying systemic issues during the meetings then

feeds into the work of FCVic and the EARG in their advocacy work.

The Network's group email system provides opportunities for members to share knowledge and resources and is very active.

FCVic has continued to provide Network members with Family Violence Financial Counselling Group Supervision for members with six sessions run over the reporting period. These sessions book out quickly and we are working to build capacity to provide more over the next 12 months.

During the reporting period, FCVic in collaboration with the Family Violence Network and with input from external key stakeholders (EARG, Safe & Equal, FCA), submitted their response to the draft National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032. A further letter advocating for the inclusion of economic abuse and social security issues as part of the next National Plan was sent to the Minister for Social Services, Hon. Amanda Rishworth and cc'd to Hon. Bill Shorten MP, Hon. Julie Collins MP, Hon. Justine Elliot MP and Hon. Katy Gallagher, Senator.

MARAM training developed by Family Safety Victoria, specific to financial counselling, will be rolled out by Women's Legal Service Victoria from July 2022 with perpetrator training for financial counsellors due to roll out by early 2023.

PRISONS NETWORK

Kaye Norris & Colin Handreck, Co-Convenors

The Prisons Network is for financial counsellors who engage in delivering service to prisoners. The objective is to deliver a consistent and sustainable financial counselling service to prisoners situated in prisons throughout Victoria. Meetings are bi-monthly and are regularly attended by 8-10 financial counsellors.

Guest speakers have been invited to the meetings to help enhance service delivery to prisoners, including: VACRO, NSW financial counsellors, and the Acting Director Offender Services and Reintegration at Corrections Victoria. The Acting Director is keen to attend future meetings and has invited members to attend the Corrections: Assessment and Transition Coordinators Forum in August 2022. This is a great opportunity for future collaboration.

A future focus is to embed financial counselling in the triage process in order to screen for presenting issues that a financial counsellor can assist with. We look forward to working with the Transition and Reintegration Unit, Department of Justice and Community Safety, on this.

Financial counsellors have continued to provide remote services to the prisons over the past 12 months and this seems to have worked quite efficiently.

Credit file applications continue to be inconsistent – we are hopeful to be able to work towards a sustainable solution with the credit reporting bureaus.

Members of the group provided input to FCVic's submissions into the Victorian Government's Cultural Review of the Adult Corrections System, and AUSTRAC's consultation on 'guidance to assist customers who don't have conventional forms of identification'.

NEW FINANCIAL COUNSELLORS' COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

Joy Mason, FCVic

As an illustration of FCVic's ongoing commitment to support new financial counsellors, it has been my privilege to facilitate a monthly Community of Practice (CoP) for newly graduated financial counsellors over the course of the previous eight months.

It has been both exciting and enlivening to observe the growth of this group of emerging financial counsellors and to be a part of their ongoing development as we all grapple with the extent of the knowledge and expertise that financial counsellors must obtain in their chosen area of work.

We have welcomed some speakers to the group, including some FCVic staff who have been attending to enlighten the new financial counsellors on their roles and how these responsibilities intersect with and support both new graduates and the overall member base.

In our discussions and learning in the CoP space, we have been privileged to be supported and mentored by Annette Devereaux who has provided a depth of wisdom and experience from her many years as a financial counsellor

and professional supervisor. The group members are grateful for the challenges that Annette's observations provide, and we express our gratitude for the time and expertise offered.

A CoP has numerous roles to play, and in the new financial counsellor space the main goals of this group are to support each other, gain stronger networks and to ask questions around role and responsibilities. Because it is a peer support network, the members decide on subjects, speakers to attend and take responsibility to provide input.

The many financial counsellors who make up this wonderful group have been generous in their sharing, shown immense respect to each other and the facilitators, and joined in celebrating progress and wins.

We would encourage any new graduates in their first two years post-graduation to attend this supportive CoP, and anyone can opt in by requesting FCVic to add them to the mailing list.

SMALL BUSINESS NETWORK

Geoff Browne, FCVic

The initial meeting of the Small Business Network was held on 7 April 2022, and the second meeting was held in June. The sessions were attended by around 30 financial counsellors with an interest in small business clients and small business issues. More than 60 members have registered to receive information about the network.

The establishment of the Network reflected the changes to the ASIC licencing exemption for financial counselling agencies in 2020, which made clear that financial counsellors can assist small business owners as well as individuals in financial difficulty. The need for assistance to small business owners has been particularly apparent over the past 2-3 years, as a result of natural disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic.

The inaugural chair/convenor of the network was David Balcombe. The Network's Terms of Reference call for the Chair/Convenor, and the minute taker, to rotate every three months.

The initial meeting reviewed the Terms of Reference, discussed a number of current issues/cases, and identified potential systemic issues for consideration by subsequent meetings.

The June meeting included a presentation from a Rural Financial Counsellor, followed by discussion. It also discussed predatory lending to small business, and the lack of uniformity in 'recovery' of small business since the COVID lockdowns, which many creditors seem unwilling to accept.

DISASTER RECOVERY NETWORK

James Degenhardt, FcVic

The first meeting of the Disaster Recovery Network was held in November 2021 and was attended by financial counsellors from both the Bushfire Recovery and Storm and Flood Recovery Support Programs, along with other interested members.

Since the first meeting, the Network has met a further four times, and provides an opportunity for casework reflection, information and resource sharing, and professional development. The group has also contributed valuable input into the sector’s advocacy efforts in the insurance industry, as well as guiding the development of key resources, including FcVic’s *Disaster Recovery Toolkit*.

We were pleased to be able to offer the Network a special delivery of ‘*Trauma informed care for disaster first responders*’ – a webinar presented by Phoenix Australia – in January 2022.

In February 2022, a representative from the Insurance Council Australia (ICA) met with the Disaster Recovery Network, to answer questions regarding the role of the ICA and criteria for catastrophe declarations.

The group brings together a wide cross section of FcVic members who have each brought their own unique insights and experiences. We appreciate the time and contributions of all the members of the Network, and we’re grateful to those who have nominated themselves as mentors available to others in relation to disaster recovery financial counselling.



FINANCIAL REPORT

FINANCIAL COUNSELLING VICTORIA INC
ABN 89 498 543 075

GENERAL PURPOSE FINANCIAL REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022

FINANCIAL COUNSELLING VICTORIA INC
ABN 89 498 543 075

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FINANCIAL COUNSELLING VICTORIA INC
ABN 89 498 543 075
BOARD REPORT

Your Board members present the special purpose financial report on the entity for the financial year ended 30 June 2022.

Board Members

The names of Board members throughout the year and at the date of this report are:

Name	Portfolio	
Carly Baker	Chairperson	Elected 13 October 2021
	Chairperson	Appointed 19 February 2021 (Casual Vacancy)
	Board Member	Elected 9 October 2019
Sarah Davidson	Deputy Chairperson	Appointed 4 November 2021
	Board Member	Elected 14 October 2020
David Balcombe	Treasurer	Appointed 19 November 2019
	Board Member	Elected 9 October 2019
Narelle Clark	Secretary	Appointed 4 Novmeber 2021
	Board Member	Elected 14 October 2020
Jennifer Wilkins	Co-opted Board Member	Appointed 1 July 2021
Jennifer Holdstock	Co-opted Board Member	Appointed 20 May 2020
Mark Phillips	Board Member	Elected 13 October 2021
Lisa Garlick	Board Member	Elected 13 October 2021
Trish Dennis	Board Member	Appointed 4 November 2021 (Casual Vacancy)
Michael White	Board Member	Appointed 4 November 2021 (Casual Vacancy)
Bernadette Pasco	Retired	Retired 13 October 2021
	Deputy Chairperson	Appointed 19 February 2021
	Board Member	Elected 14 October 2020
Colin Harte	Retired	Retired 13 October 2021
	Board Member	Appointed 19 February 2021 (Casual Vacancy)
Max Smart	Retired	Retired 13 October 2021
	Secretary	Appointed 5 November 2020
	Board Member	Elected 9 October 2019
Tracey Grinter	Retired	Retired 13 October 2021
	Board Member	Elected 9 October 2019

Principal Activities

The principal activity of the entity during the financial year was:

Financial Counselling Victoria Inc (FCVic) as the peak body for financial counsellors in Victoria and FCVic provides resources and support to financial counsellors working to assist vulnerable Victorians experiencing financial difficulty. FCVic works with government, banks, utilities, debt collection and other stakeholders to improve their responses to vulnerable consumers experiencing financial hardship.

Significant Changes

No significant changes in the nature of the entity's activity occurred during the financial year.

Operating Results

The deficit for the year attributable to the entity amounted to \$141,985 (2021: \$120,095 surplus).

Governance

Under the FCVic Constitution, the Board is the governance body for the organisation. The Board is elected by and from the FCVic membership and reports to the members through an Annual Report and at the Annual General Meeting each year.

The purpose of the FCVic Board, as set out in the Constitution and Board Charter, is to govern the organisation so that it meets its Constitutional objects and purpose while acting ethically and prudently, and complying with all its legal obligations. The Board is responsible for setting strategy, monitoring and oversight of the organisation. The Board adopts a Budget each year for the organisation and ensures the independent audit of these financial statements. The Board also conducts a rigorous risk identification and management process which is updated periodically.

FINANCIAL COUNSELLING VICTORIA INC
ABN 89 498 543 075
BOARD REPORT

In 2019 the Board approved a Strategic Plan for the period 2019-2022. The Strategic Plan's objectives are:

- Contribute to a fairer society with greater economic inclusion
- Empower clients to resolve financial and linked life issues
- Reduce indebtedness and hardship, and associated harms to mental health
- Improve industry practices and treatment of vulnerable consumers
- Achieve systemic reforms to protect and enhance the lives of vulnerable people

The board meets on a monthly schedule approximately ten times per year, including a meeting with a focus on strategic planning and review. The Board also meets additionally outside the schedule on an ad hoc basis to deal with short-term matters in Special Board meetings.

During the reporting period there were four ongoing or standing Committees of the Board with each Committee chaired by a nominated Board member.

- Finance & Risk Committee (F&R – Chair, David Balcombe)
- Performance & Remuneration Committee (PARC – Chair, Carly Baker)
- Professional Standards Committee (PSC – Tracey Grinter, Lisa Garlick from 4 November 2021)
- Working Groups and Networks Committee (WG&N – Chair, Narelle Clark)

The Board attendances for the period 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022 were as follows:

Board Member	Board		Special Board		PSC		F&R		PARC		WG&N	
	E	A	E	A	E	A	E	A	E	A	E	A
Carly Baker	10	10	1	1					5	5		
Sarah Davidson	10	9	1	1	16	14						
Narelle Clark	10	8	1	1							5	5
David Balcombe	10	10	1	1			12	12	5	4		
Jennifer Holdstock	10	9	1	1					5	5		
Jennifer Wilkins	10	9	1	1			8	8	5	5		
Lisa Garlick	7	7	0	0	10	9						
Mark Phillips	7	6	0	0			8	6				
Michael White	7	7	0	0	10	9						
Trish Dennis	7	5	0	0							3	2
Tracey Grinter	3	3	1	1	6	6						
Colin Harte	3	3	1	1							2	2
Bernadette Pasco	3	3	1	1	4	4						
Max Smart	3	3	1	1	6	6						

E = Eligible/ A = Attended


Significant Changes in State of Affairs

A matter has continued to evolve since 30 June 2022 that has significantly affected, or may significantly affect:

- the entity's operations in future financial years, or
- the results of those operations in future financial years, or
- the entity's state of affairs in future financial years.

The COVID19 pandemic may induce significant changes in the state of affairs of the Association during the financial period ended 30 June 2023. The Board will take all necessary measures to preserve capital and shepherd the Association through this uncertain period.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Members of the Board.

Chairperson 
Carly Baker

Treasurer 
David Balcombe

Dated this 25th day of August 2022

FINANCIAL COUNSELLING VICTORIA INC
ABN 89 498 543 075
INCOME STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022

	Note	2022 \$	2021 \$
REVENUE			
Grant funding income - Victorian State Government		491,832	403,972
COVID Response Project income	2	693,918	705,149
Conference income		-	115,201
Membership income		78,048	81,049
Other income	2	15,096	94,738
Project income	2	439,933	151,939
Interest received		2,183	2,150
TOTAL REVENUE		1,721,011	1,554,198
EXPENDITURE			
Administration expenses		36,687	70,129
Communication expenses		17,274	937
Conference expenses		27,809	76,633
Core salaries and associated costs		688,293	560,262
Depreciation		-	12,002
Facilities and equipment expenses		16,907	995
Finance charges on lease liability		6,108	7,439
Project expenses		397,158	68,178
Project salaries and associated costs		649,375	614,143
Right of use asset - amortisation		23,385	23,385
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		1,862,995	1,434,103
Net surplus/(deficit) attributable to the Association		(141,985)	120,095

FINANCIAL COUNSELLING VICTORIA INC
ABN 89 498 543 075
STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022

	2022 \$	2021 \$
Net surplus/(deficit) attributable to the Association	(141,985)	120,095
Other comprehensive income for the year	-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year	<u>(141,985)</u>	<u>120,095</u>
Total comprehensive income attributable to the Association	(141,985)	120,095

The income statement is to be read in conjunction with the audit report and the notes to the financial statements.

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FINANCIAL COUNSELLING VICTORIA INC
ABN 89 498 543 075
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30 JUNE 2022

	Note	2022 \$	2021 \$
ASSETS			
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash and cash equivalents	3	1,293,845	1,283,273
Account and other receivables	4	67,796	76,207
Other current assets	4	87,283	31,946
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		1,448,924	1,391,426
NON CURRENT ASSETS			
Property, plant and equipment	5	-	-
Intangible assets	6	70,154	93,539
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS		70,154	93,539
TOTAL ASSETS		1,519,078	1,484,965
LIABILITIES			
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Accounts and other payables	7	133,688	123,204
Income received in advance	8	926,607	770,173
Provisions	9	135,692	104,715
Lease liabilities - leased premises	10	24,405	21,796
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		1,220,392	1,019,888
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Provisions	9	-	-
Lease liabilities - leased premises	10	57,538	81,944
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		57,538	81,944
TOTAL LIABILITIES		1,277,930	1,101,832
NET ASSETS		241,148	383,133
EQUITY			
Accumulated funds		241,148	383,133
TOTAL EQUITY		241,148	383,133

The statement of financial position is to be read in conjunction with the audit report and the notes to the financial statements.

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FINANCIAL COUNSELLING VICTORIA INC
ABN 89 498 543 075
STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022

	Accumulated funds \$	Total \$
Balance as at 1 July 2020	263,038	263,038
Surplus/(deficit) attributable to the Association	120,095	120,095
Balance as at 30 June 2021	<u>383,133</u>	<u>383,133</u>
Surplus/(deficit) attributable to the Association	(141,985)	(141,985)
Balance as at 30 June 2022	<u>241,148</u>	<u>241,148</u>

The statement of changes in equity is to be read in conjunction with the audit report and the notes to the financial statements.

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FINANCIAL COUNSELLING VICTORIA INC
ABN 89 498 543 075
STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022

	Note	2022 \$	2021 \$
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES			
Receipts from grant and COVID response project funding		1,342,184	1,585,661
Receipts from other income		541,488	399,867
Payments to employees		(1,299,534)	(1,132,821)
Payments to suppliers and others		(548,133)	(154,547)
Interest paid		(6,108)	(7,439)
Interest received		2,470	3,059
Net cash generated from/(used in) operating activities	11	<u>32,368</u>	<u>693,780</u>
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES			
Payment for property, plant and equipment		-	(12,002)
Net cash (used in)/provided by investing activities		<u>-</u>	<u>(12,002)</u>
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES			
Repayment of lease liability - leased premises		(21,796)	(19,391)
Net cash used in financing activities		<u>(21,796)</u>	<u>(19,391)</u>
Net increase/(decrease) in cash held		10,572	662,387
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of financial year		1,283,273	620,886
Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year	11	<u>1,293,845</u>	<u>1,283,273</u>

The statement of cash flows is to be read in conjunction with the audit report and the notes to the financial statements.

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FINANCIAL COUNSELLING VICTORIA INC
ABN 89 498 543 075
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022

Note 1. Statement of Significant Accounting Policies

This financial report includes the financial statements and notes of the Financial Counselling Victoria Inc, an incorporated association, which is incorporated in Victoria under the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012.

Basis of preparation

The financial statements comply with the recognition and measurement requirements of Australian Accounting Standards, the presentation requirements in those Standards as modified by AASB 1060 General Purpose Financial Statements - Simplified Disclosures for For-Profit and Not-for-Profit Tier 2 Entities (AASB 1060) and the disclosure requirements in AASB 1060. Accordingly, the financial statements comply with Australian Accounting Standards – Simplified Disclosures. The association is a not-for-profit association for financial reporting purposes under Australian Accounting Standards.

Australian Accounting Standards set out accounting policies that the AASB has concluded would result in financial statements containing relevant and reliable information about transactions, events and conditions. Material accounting policies adopted in the preparation of the financial statements are presented below and have been consistently applied unless stated otherwise.

The financial statements, except for the cash flow information, have been prepared on an accruals basis and are based on historical costs, modified, where applicable, by the measurement at fair value of selected non-current assets, financial assets and financial liabilities. The amounts presented in the financial statements have been rounded to the nearest dollar.

Accounting Policies

a. Income Tax

The Association is exempt from paying income tax under the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997*.

b. Property, Plant and Equipment

Each class of property, plant and equipment is carried at cost or fair value as indicated less, where applicable, any accumulated depreciation and any impairment losses.

Plant and Equipment

Plant and equipment are measured on the cost basis and are therefore carried at cost less accumulated depreciation and any accumulated impairment losses. In the event the carrying amount of plant and equipment is greater than its estimated recoverable amount, the carrying amount is written down immediately to its estimated recoverable amount and impairment losses recognised either in profit or loss or as a revaluation decrease if the impairment losses relate to a revalued asset. A formal assessment of recoverable amount is made when impairment indicators are present.

Subsequent costs are included in the asset's carrying amount or recognised as a separate asset, as appropriate, only when it is probable that future economic benefits associated with the item will flow to the Association and the cost of the item can be measured reliably. All other repairs and maintenance are charged to the income statement during the financial period in which they are incurred.

FINANCIAL COUNSELLING VICTORIA INC
ABN 89 498 543 075
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022

Note 1. Statement of Significant Accounting Policies (continued)

b. Property, Plant and Equipment (continued)

Depreciation

The depreciable amount of all fixed assets, including buildings and capitalised lease assets, is depreciated on a straight-line basis over the asset's useful life commencing from the time the asset is held ready for use. Leasehold improvements are depreciated over the shorter of either the unexpired period of the lease or the estimated useful lives of the improvements.

The asset's residual values and useful lives are reviewed and adjusted, if appropriate, at each balance date.

Gains and losses on disposals are determined by comparing proceeds with the carrying amount. These gains and losses are included in the comprehensive income statement.

c. Leases

At inception of a contract, the Company assesses whether a lease exists.

Lessee Accounting

The non-lease components included in the lease agreement have been separated and are recognised as an expense as incurred.

At the lease commencement, the Company recognises a right-of-use asset and associated lease liability for the lease term. The lease term includes extension periods where the Company believes it is reasonably certain that the option will be exercised.

The right-of-use asset is measured using the cost model where cost on initial recognition comprises of the lease liability, initial direct costs, prepaid lease payments, estimated cost of removal and restoration less any lease incentives received.

The right-of-use asset is depreciated over the lease term on a straight line basis and assessed for impairment in accordance with the impairment of assets accounting policy

The lease liability is initially measured at the present value of the remaining lease payments at the commencement of the lease. The discount rate is the rate implicit in the lease, however where this cannot be readily determined then the Company's incremental borrowing rate is used.

Subsequent to initial recognition, the lease liability is measured at amortised cost using the effective interest rate method. The lease liability is remeasured whether there is a lease modification, change in estimate of the lease term or index upon which the lease payments are based (e.g. CPI) or a change in the Company's assessment of lease term.

Where the lease liability is remeasured, the right-of-use asset is adjusted to reflect the remeasurement or is recorded in profit or loss if the carrying amount of the right-of-use asset has been reduced to zero.

FINANCIAL COUNSELLING VICTORIA INC
ABN 89 498 543 075
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022

Statement of Significant Accounting Policies (continued)

d. Financial Instruments

Financial instruments are recognised initially on the date that the Company becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

On initial recognition, all financial instruments are measured at fair value plus transaction costs.

Financial Assets

Classification

On initial recognition, the Company classifies its financial assets as measured at amortised cost.

Financial assets are not reclassified subsequent to their initial recognition unless the Company changes its business model for managing financial assets.

The Company's financial assets measured at amortised cost comprise trade and other receivables and cash and cash equivalents.

Subsequent to initial recognition, these assets are carried at amortised cost using the effective interest rate method less provision for impairment.

Interest income, foreign exchange gains or losses and impairment are recognised in profit or loss. Gain or loss on derecognition is recognised in profit or loss.

Impairment of financial assets

Impairment of financial assets is recognised on an expected credit loss (ECL) basis.

Impairment of trade receivables have been determined using the simplified approach in AASB 9 which uses an estimation of lifetime expected credit losses. The Company has determined the probability of non-payment of the receivable and multiplied this by the amount of the expected loss arising from default.

The amount of the impairment is recorded in a separate allowance account with the loss being recognised in finance expense. Once the receivable is determined to be uncollectable then the gross carrying amount is written off against the associated allowance.

Where the Company renegotiates the terms of trade receivables due from certain customers, the new expected cash flows are discounted at the original effective interest rate and any resulting difference to the carrying value is recognised in profit or loss.

Other financial assets measured at amortised cost

Impairment of other financial assets measured at amortised cost are determined using the expected credit loss model in AASB 9. On initial recognition of the asset, an estimate of the expected credit losses for the next 12 months is recognised. Where the asset has experienced significant increase in credit risk then the lifetime losses are estimated and recognised.

Financial Liabilities

The Company measures all financial liabilities initially at fair value less transaction costs, subsequently financial liabilities are measured at amortised cost using the effective interest rate method.

The financial liabilities of the Company comprise trade payables, bank and other loans and lease liabilities.

FINANCIAL COUNSELLING VICTORIA INC
ABN 89 498 543 075
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022

Note 1. Statement of Significant Accounting Policies (continued)

e. Impairment of Assets

At the end of each reporting period, the association assesses whether there is any indication that an asset may be impaired. If such an indication exists, an impairment test is carried out on the asset by comparing the recoverable amount of the asset, being the higher of the asset's fair value less costs to sell and value in use, to the asset's carrying amount. Any excess of the asset's carrying amount over its recoverable amount is recognised immediately in profit or loss, unless the asset is carried at a revalued amount in accordance with another Standard (e.g. in accordance with the revaluation model in AASB 116). Any impairment loss of a revalued asset is treated as a revaluation decrease in accordance with that other Standard.

Where it is not possible to estimate the recoverable amount of an individual asset, the association estimates the recoverable amount of the cash-generating unit to which the asset belongs.

f. Employee Entitlements

Provision is made for the association's liability for employee benefits arising from services rendered by employees to the end of the reporting period. Employee benefits that are expected to be settled within one year have been measured at the amounts expected to be paid when the liability is settled. Employee benefits payable later than one year have been measured at the present value of the estimated future cash outflows to be made for those benefits. In determining the liability, consideration is given to employee wage increases and the probability that the employee may not satisfy any vesting requirements. Those cash outflows are discounted using market yields on national government bonds with terms to maturity that match the expected timing of cash flows.

g. Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand, deposits held at-call with banks, other short-term highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts are shown within borrowings in current liabilities in the statement of financial position.

h. Revenue and Other Income

Revenue is measured at the fair value of the consideration received or receivable.

Revenue is brought to account when received and to the extent that it relates to the subsequent period it is disclosed as a liability.

Revenue from the rendering of a service is recognised upon the delivery of the service to the customers.

All revenue is stated net of the amount of goods and services tax (GST).

AASB 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers

The Association applies AASB 15 & AASB 1058, depending on the specific conditions of the contract.

AASB 15 involves the use of a five-step recognition model for recognising revenue, the steps are:

- Step 1 – Identify the contract with the customer
- Step 2 – Identify the sufficiently specific performance obligations to be satisfied
- Step 3 – Measure the expected consideration
- Step 4 – Allocate that consideration to each of the performance obligations in the contract
- Step 5 – Recognise revenue

FINANCIAL COUNSELLING VICTORIA INC
ABN 89 498 543 075
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022

Note 1. Statement of Significant Accounting Policies (continued)

AASB 1058 Income of Not-for-Profit Entities

AASB 1058 measures income by reference to the fair value of the asset received. The asset received, which could be a financial or non-financial asset, is initially measured at fair value when the consideration paid for the asset is significantly less than fair value, and that difference is principally to enable the entity to further its objectives. Otherwise, assets acquired are recognised at cost.

Where the asset has been measured at fair value, AASB 1058 requires that elements of other Accounting Standards are identified before accounting for the residual component. These standards are:

- AASB 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers
- AASB 16 Leases
- AASB 137 Provisions, Contingent Liabilities & Contingent Assets
- AASB 9 Financial Instruments

Interest Revenue

Interest revenue is recognised when the association obtains control over the funds which is generally at the time of receipt.

Donations

Donation income is recognised when the association obtains control over the funds which is generally at the time of receipt.

i. Goods and Services Tax (GST)

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of GST, except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO).

Receivables and payables are stated inclusive of the amount of GST receivable or payable. The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the ATO is included with other receivables or payables in the statement of financial position.

j. Comparative Figures

When required by Accounting Standards, comparative figures have been adjusted to conform to changes in presentation for the current financial year.

k. Account and Other Payables

Trade and other payables represent the liabilities for goods and services received by the association during the reporting period that remain unpaid at the end of the reporting period. The balance is recognised as a current liability with the amounts normally paid within 30 days of recognition of the liability.

l. Provisions

Provisions are recognised when the Association has a legal or constructive obligation, as a result of past events, for which it is probable that an outflow of economic benefits will result and that outflow can be reliably measured.

Provisions are measured at the best estimate of the amounts required to settle the obligation at the end of the reporting period.

FINANCIAL COUNSELLING VICTORIA INC
ABN 89 498 543 075
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022

Note 1. Statement of Significant Accounting Policies (continued)

n. Economic Dependence

The association is dependent on the Department of Justice for the majority of its revenue used to operate the business. At the date of this report the Board has no reason to believe the Department will not continue to support the association.

o. Key Estimates

(i) Impairment

The association assesses impairment at the end of each reporting period by evaluation of conditions and events specific to the association that may be indicative of impairment triggers. Recoverable amounts of relevant assets are reassessed using value-in-use calculations which incorporate various key assumptions.

p. Key Judgements

(i) Provision for Impairment of Receivables

Included in trade receivables and other receivables at the end of the reporting period are amounts receivable from members in relation to unpaid memberships. The Board has made no provision for impairment due to doubtful debts.

(ii) Income in Advance

Revenue is brought to account when received and to the extent that it relates to the subsequent period it is disclosed as a liability under unexpended grant funding or income received in advance.

q. New, Revised or Amending Accounting Standards and Interpretations Adopted

The Association has adopted all of the new, revised or amending Accounting Standards and Interpretations issued by the AASB that are mandatory for the current reporting period. The adoption of these Accounting Standards and Interpretations did not have any significant impact on the financial performance or position of the Association.

Any new, revised or amending Accounting Standards or Interpretations that are not yet mandatory have not been early adopted.

New Accounting Standards for Application in Future Periods

The AASB has issued a number of new and amended Accounting Standards that have mandatory application dates for future reporting periods, some of which are relevant to the Association. The Board Members have elected not to early adopt any of the new and amended pronouncements.

FINANCIAL COUNSELLING VICTORIA INC
ABN 89 498 543 075
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022

	2022 \$	2021 \$
Note 2. COVID Response Project income, Project and Other Income		
COVID Response Project income		
Mental Health Pilot Program	174,500	10,386
Mental Health Program	69,600	138,300
Tenants Rights	7,250	25,000
Workforce Development	34,537	105,463
Small Business	408,031	406,000
Energy	-	20,000
	<u>693,918</u>	<u>705,149</u>
Other Income		
COVID-19 Government Assistance Payments	-	82,243
Donation income	-	1,500
Sundry income	15,096	10,996
	<u>15,096</u>	<u>94,739</u>
Project Income		
Carers Vic	257,866	60,000
Bush Fire	3,000	20,000
Bush Fire Elder Abuse	90,000	-
Elder Abuse	-	51,000
Disaster Recovery Response	76,667	-
Other Projects	12,400	20,939
	<u>439,933</u>	<u>151,939</u>
Note 3. Cash and Cash Equivalents		
Cash on hand	166	166
Cash at bank	47,027	165,993
Cash on deposit	1,246,652	1,117,114
	<u>1,293,845</u>	<u>1,283,273</u>
Note 4. Account and Other Receivables		
Accounts receivables	76,046	76,207
Less provision for doubtful debts	(8,250)	-
	<u>67,796</u>	<u>76,207</u>
Prepayments	83,668	28,043
Accrued interest income	562	849
Security deposit	3,054	3,054
Other receivables	-	-
	<u>87,283</u>	<u>31,946</u>
	<u>155,079</u>	<u>108,153</u>

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FINANCIAL COUNSELLING VICTORIA INC
ABN 89 498 543 075
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022

	2022 \$	2021 \$
Note 5. Property, Plant and Equipment		
Computer equipment - at cost	16,667	16,667
Less accumulated depreciation	(16,667)	(16,667)
	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Office fitout - at cost	35,916	35,916
Less accumulated depreciation	(35,916)	(35,916)
	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Total property, plant and equipment	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Note 6. Intangible Assets		
Right of use asset - leased premises		
At cost	140,309	140,309
Accumulated amortisation	(70,155)	(46,770)
	<u>70,154</u>	<u>93,539</u>
Note 7. Accounts and Other Payables		
Accounts payable	-	-
Other payables	88,101	50,732
Net GST payable	18,199	52,242
PAYG withholding tax payable	16,404	11,850
Superannuation payable	10,983	8,380
	<u>133,688</u>	<u>123,204</u>
Note 8. Amounts Received in Advance		
Conference revenue	263,013	86,640
Unexpended grant funding	663,594	683,533
	<u>926,607</u>	<u>770,173</u>
Note 9. Provisions		
Current		
Annual leave	90,314	71,407
Long service leave	25,378	18,308
Personal/carers leave	20,000	15,000
	<u>135,692</u>	<u>104,715</u>
Non-current		
Long service leave	-	-
	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>

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FINANCIAL COUNSELLING VICTORIA INC
ABN 89 498 543 075
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022

	2022 \$	2021 \$
Note 10. Leasing Commitments		
Current		
Lease liability - leased premises	24,405	21,796
	<u>24,405</u>	<u>21,796</u>
Non-current		
Lease liability - leased premises	57,538	81,944
	<u>57,538</u>	<u>81,944</u>
Note 11. Notes to the Statement of Cash Flows		
Reconciliation of Cash Flow from Operations with Profit from Ordinary Activities after Income Tax		
Net surplus/(deficit) attributable to the Association	(141,985)	120,095
Non-cash flow items:		
Depreciation	-	12,002
Amortisation on right of use asset - leased premises	23,385	23,385
Changes in assets and liabilities:		
- (Increase)/decrease in accounts and other receivables	(46,926)	(42,151)
- Increase/(decrease) in accounts and other payables	10,484	71,708
- Increase/(decrease) in income received in advance	156,434	476,540
- Increase/(decrease) in provisions	30,977	32,201
	<u>32,368</u>	<u>693,780</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year		
Cash on hand	166	166
Cash at bank	47,027	165,993
Cash on deposit	1,246,652	1,117,114
	<u>1,293,845</u>	<u>1,283,273</u>

FINANCIAL COUNSELLING VICTORIA INC
ABN 89 498 543 075
STATEMENT BY MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

In the opinion of the Board, the financial report as set out on pages 2 to 15, satisfy the requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 and:

- 1 a. comply with Australian Accounting Standards applicable to the association; and
b. give a true and fair view of the financial position of Financial Counselling Victoria Inc as at 30 June 2022 and its performance for the year ended on that date.
- 2 At the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that Financial Counselling Victoria Inc will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

This declaration is signed in accordance with subsection 60.15(2) of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013.

Chairperson



Carly Baker

Treasurer



David Balcombe

Dated this

25th day of August 2022

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FINANCIAL COUNSELLING VICTORIA INC
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INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS

Opinion

I have audited the accompanying financial report of Financial Counselling Victoria Inc (the Association), which comprises the balance sheet as at 30 June 2022, and the income statement, statement of changes in equity and cash flow statement for the year ended on that date, a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory notes and the statement by the members of the Board.

In my opinion, the financial report of the Association is in accordance with the *Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission Act 2012* and the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012*, including:

- i. giving a true and fair view of the Association's financial position as at 30 June 2022 and of its performance for the year ended; and
- ii. complying with Australian Accounting Standards as per Note 1, *the Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission Act 2012* and the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012*.

Basis for Opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report section of our report. I am independent of the Association in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (the Code) that are relevant to my audit of the financial report in Australia. I have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Report

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with the financial reporting requirements of the applicable legislation and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, management is responsible for assessing the Association's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters relating to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Entity or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Association's financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards, I exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. I also:

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- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the registered entity's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the responsible entities.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the responsible entities use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the registered entity's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. My conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of my auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the registered entity to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal controls that I identify during my audit.

Auditor: **Frederik Ryk Ludolf Eksteen** ASIC Registration Number: 421448

Address: **Collins & Co Audit Pty Ltd
127 Paisley Street
FOOTSCRAY VIC 3011**

Signature:

Date: **25 August 2022**

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Financial Counselling Victoria acknowledges the support of the Victorian Government.