

The logo is a dark purple circle containing the text 'SOUTH EAST COMMUNITY LINKS' in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. The text is arranged in three lines: 'SOUTH EAST' on the top line, 'COMMUNITY' on the middle line, and 'LINKS' on the bottom line. The background of the entire page is composed of several horizontal bands of different colors and patterns: a top band of purple with a repeating teal geometric pattern, a band of teal with a repeating green zigzag pattern, a middle band of purple with a repeating dark purple triangle pattern, a band of orange with a repeating purple zigzag pattern, a white band, and a bottom band of teal with a repeating purple triangle pattern.

# SOUTH EAST COMMUNITY LINKS

Every person counts

Annual Report  
2016/17

## A new visual identity for South East Community Links

A significant project in 2017 was the development of a new brand for South East Community Links. Inspired by ideas around people, culture, community and connections, the South East Community Links brand focuses on how we are deeply connected and powerful when we work together.

Graphic patterns are inspired by traditional textiles from around the world to reflect our diversity. A strong, simple brand interacts with a colourful, ever evolving

system of textures and patterns to reflect our flexibility and innovation. Individual photographs reflect our close relationships with clients.

We are particularly proud to present a brand that is genuinely owned by our community. A committed working group of board, staff and community members developed the concepts and designs with Anna Carlile of Viola Design. Our new brand creates a visual identity that reflects who we are as an organisation.

### Vision

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**Every person counts**  
**Every system fair**

#### Purpose

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Achieving better social and economic outcomes for people in our community

#### Goals

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- Increase community and client engagement
- Strengthen our internal capacity and capability
- Achieve outcomes with clients in employment, wellbeing and inclusion
- Develop organisational governance and systems to ensure innovation and sustainability
- Advocate effectively to strengthen our community

#### Services

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- Resettlement
- Youth and family
- Financial resilience
- Community resilience

#### Unique value

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- Trusted by our community
- Diverse teams
- Independent
- Change makers
- Fair & inclusive

#### Values

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- Social & economic inclusion
- Equality
- Compassion
- Dignity
- Choice



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## A year of integration

### A year of integration, closing gaps in service delivery, developing teams and expanding locations.

South East Community Links took another important step towards a sustainable and innovative future in 2016/17. In only our second year since forming the new entity, we welcome this opportunity to present our annual report and to record the year's highlights and events.

We are very pleased to inform our clients and stakeholders that we have achieved a significant turn around in our financial result. South East Community Links is a not for profit service, and we recognise at every turn the importance of sound financial management and good governance. Our 2016/17 surplus adds to the strength of our current operations and contributes to our future plans and aspirations.

Value in our organisation can be found in many places other than the bank account. South East Community Links has gained significant value this year from volunteers and students. Our volunteers provide face to face support to the many members of our community in crisis. Each day we respond to clients from diverse backgrounds, who find themselves struggling to make ends meet. Our students provide technical and specialist expertise, working alongside their supervisors and team leaders. This integrated model of service delivery, combining paid staff, volunteers and students, means at any one time a client is receiving responsive and effective support, in order to move from their current social or economic problem to a place of wellbeing, stability and resilience.

This year we retained all our funding to operate our long standing programs. We have taken on the challenge of developing a new service delivery model where we identify outcomes for clients and aim to create a path to social and economic wellbeing. Our goal is to ensure that our services make a difference in people's lives. While some clients are ready to participate in further learning and development, others require more time to stabilise either their lives or the lives of their dependents. South East Community Links provides the flexibility to meet clients at their stage of readiness.

We offer financial counselling to assist clients to manage economic abuse, rising costs of living and stagnant incomes. We work with young people to secure safe housing, and pathways to education and training. Our settlement services are the first contact migrants and refugees have with their new home on arrival to Australia. We take pride in welcoming refugees and asylum seekers from all over the world. Our community development programs work to build safer families and communities. Every person counts in our eyes.

In 2016/17 we were granted expanded facilities following the departure of the Dandenong Historical Society from the Tom Houlihan Centre. We are grateful to the City of Greater Dandenong for supporting this service development. South East Community Links is perfectly located next to the primary school, the maternal and child health centre and the early childhood centre. More services are now available at Dandenong to meet increasing client needs.



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2016/17 has provided a sound basis on which to prepare for the next year and the years ahead. We know that standing still is not an option and we can expect every aspect of our organisation to be constantly reviewed in the years to come.

South East Community Links is truly grateful for the ongoing support from our various stakeholders, operational partners and funding bodies. In particular, we thank federal, state and local governments. As an organisation working with all levels of government we aim to contribute to national programs, to state priorities and to community participation.

We thank our executive team and managers, staff students and volunteers for their service to the community in Greater Dandenong and beyond.

This year Angela Kyriakopoulos retired from the Board due to work and health issues. We thank Angela for her services to both the Dandenong Community Advisory Bureau and to South East Community Links.

We thank Board colleagues and our Patron Merle Mitchell for giving time freely and for continuing to lead South East Community Links in the best traditions of our founding agencies.



**Rhonda Cumberland**  
CEO



**Ross Hepburn**  
Chairperson





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## Our strategy and client focus

### Our unique value: integrated universal services for maximum impact

During 2016/17, South East Community Links has continued to provide support to community members across a wide range of issues. We have utilised our particular expertise in financial counselling, resettlement, youth, family relationships, financial crisis, education pathways, pre employability needs, family violence and homelessness. We have also prioritised developing the broader capabilities of our staff and volunteers through the implementation of the SECL Capability Framework. Focused, ongoing internal professional development has ensured there are no wrong doors at South East Community Links. Every staff member and volunteer has the skills and knowledge to provide support to every person who visits us. Our services are integrated and available to every client regardless of their entry point.

### A deeper understanding of client need: introducing a Common Assessment Framework

At South East Community Links, our clients have the opportunity to experience a genuine relationship of trust with individual workers. The introduction of the SECL Common Assessment Framework has enabled us to develop a shared language across programs. Assessments are undertaken in partnership with every client to further develop our understanding of their unique needs and to ensure we are working to address the multiple of disadvantage. We can then plan the best pathway to sustainable outcomes. Together with our clients, we work towards achieving goals and finding the right opportunities for long term independence.

### Resource realignment: realising the full potential of a successful merger for client benefit

2016/17 saw continued efforts across South East Community Links to realise the full potential of the 2015 merge. The combined service offering within our new

entity has proven to be both attractive and impactful for clients. Realigning the investment of our resources across client facing and business services has seen a new, more efficient and responsive structure within the organisation. These changes have allowed us to invest in strategic priorities such as a new client management system, an increased focus on developing the best tools to capture client outcomes, a move towards mobile technology to improve our work practices and the creation of the Senior Practitioner group.

The Senior Practitioner Group is SECL's response to the challenges of balancing support needs for client facing workers. The high value of client facing expertise and the importance of strong organisational systems helps us to guide and measure our work. As members of SECL's Leadership Group, the Senior Practitioners have been instrumental in leading strategic service capability improvements from the coal face.

### What counts: measuring service outcomes and tracking critical activities

In 2016/17, the community sector has continued to undergo significant change. Funders are rethinking the established approach of funding activities and foreshadowing a move towards purchasing outcomes for community members. We have seen these changes playing out within aged and disability services, presenting many opportunities to learn from these developments.

South East Community Links shares a view that outcomes are what matter most for the individuals and families who access our services. We have undertaken significant projects within our organisation to prepare our staff for these changes. Our strategic and operational planning approach has changed to ensure we are well placed to provide leadership within our sector, and advocacy for our communities, to ensure outcomes are well defined and reflective of the challenges our clients face. We will soon unveil and implement the South East Community Links Outcomes Framework. The Framework provides clear, realistic, critical and aspirational outcome goals for our clients.



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The associated tools will provide the systems we require to best capture, track progress and measure the value of each outcome. Collection, and analysis of, our service activity data enables us to understand the links between activities and outcomes more clearly.

## **Dandenong Pilot: a bridge to social and economic inclusion**

In 2016/17 South East Community Links embarked upon a review of our services to clients with complex needs. Many clients who turn to our organisation for support in Dandenong, Springvale and Noble Park, present with many needs not only the one that is most urgent. Clients who find it difficult to pay their power bills, to buy food, or to register their car often experience multiple economic and social difficulties. Once a personal crisis takes hold it is harder to resolve and therefore the likelihood of the crisis recurring is increased.

Our service delivery goal is to support our clients to solve the immediate crisis and to support our community by preventing the crisis from occurring in the first place.

The Dandenong Pilot responds to the crisis before it deepens, ensures stability, increases resilience and promotes economic and social mobility.

For many years the community sector has advocated for early intervention and prevention services. Organisations continue to promote taking action before the crisis occurs or deepens because early intervention and prevention works.

Our Dandenong Pilot will develop in 2017/18. We will regularly report on our progress and hopefully engage new partners to support our innovative project.

## **Our Services**

South East Community Links is a universal service provider. We have worked consistently over many years to develop the best combination of services to meet the multiple and complex needs of our communities

across Springvale, Dandenong and Noble Park. We deliver our services within an 'opt out' model – we assume that every client has a need for every service available. Clients are not expected to understand our complex program funding environment or ask for the right individual service on a given day. We provide a comprehensive service until we have evidence that they do not require certain types of support – a significant change to the traditional service delivery approach. This is a key component of our strategic imperative to ensure every person has the best possible access to support.

## **Our services include:**

### **Resettlement**

SECL is in a unique position as the only provider of every federal and state funded settlement support service. From our partnership with AMES delivering on arrival support through the Humanitarian Settlement Services program through to the Victorian Department of Multicultural Affairs and Social Cohesion funded Refugee and Asylum Seeker Strategic Partnership program, SECL provides settlement support to migrants, refugees and asylum seekers throughout their settlement journey.

### **Youth & Family Services**

Delivered from our Youth Links site in Noble Park, SECL provides comprehensive support services to young people and their families. Whether responding to homelessness, education and employment issues, fractured family relationships or isolation the team at Youth Links bring the skills and experience to support young people to recover from challenges and develop resilience for the future.

### **Financial Wellbeing**

South East Community Links understands the impact of debt, low fixed incomes and lack of financial literacy for our clients. We are committed to developing the economic capability of every person who accesses our services whether through the Consumer Affairs Victoria or Department of Social Services funded Financial Counselling programs, at intake when



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accessing Emergency Relief or in the course of general case work. SECL is funded to provide financial counselling across the south east and is entrusted with the Financial Counselling Southern Hotline. We support clients to negotiate debts, develop sustainable budgets, understand their rights around money, recover financially after leaving family violence and develop financial literacy for their future.

South East Community Links also supports community members to access low, and no, interest loans through Good Shepherd Microfinance. Microfinance can be used to purchase white goods, computers, air conditioners, cars and any other item that will improve the quality of life and access to opportunities for clients.

### **Intake and crisis response**

South East Community Links, funded by the City of Greater Dandenong, provides a drop in and appointment based intake service at each of our sites. Clients can present with any issue such as financial crisis, family violence, utility disconnections, housing, document help, family relationships, etc. They will be supported to undertake a needs assessment to link them with the right services within SECL and develop a plan to increase their social and economic inclusion. SECL is also funded, in partnership with CISVic, by the Department of Social Services to provide Emergency Relief (ER) across our service sites in Springvale, Noble Park and Dandenong. ER is provided to individuals and families in crisis. ER is provided for food, petrol, car registration, clothing, bill payments to prevent disconnections, medications, school uniforms, school books, etc. ER plays a significant role in preventing individuals and families from losing their economic and social stability during a short term crisis.

### **Client facing workers: our most important asset**

South East Community Links continues to hold a significant place within our local communities. Over 80% of our new clients are referred by a family member or friend due to their own positive experiences of accessing our services. The ongoing quality and impact of our service delivery can only be credited to our skilled and passionate staff, volunteers and students. They continue to rise to the challenges of increasing need and complexity in our client work.

On behalf of SECL, I extend my deepest thanks to our service managers Esther Ndirangu, Kathleen West and Kay Dilger and their committed teams of staff, volunteers and students.



**Denise Goldfinch,**  
GM Service & Strategy





## @17

This year we recognised young people aged seventeen in the year 2017. We used our special project to focus on the challenges young people face and recorded a list of barriers to education, employment, wellbeing and inclusion.

In several of our programs, we worked with vulnerable young people who have dropped out of school and ironically with those who are not eligible to participate in training and learning programs due to visa limitations. In every case, we could identify the potential of young people in our community.

We will continue to advocate for increased resources to prevent young vulnerable adults from further disengaging with families, schools and communities.

Many clients will turn eighteen in the year 2018. Our aim is to support young people through these developing years and to encourage them in all ways possible to remain optimistic and future focussed.



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# Organisational development

## Our governance in action

South East Community Links established five Board Committees to monitor the implementation of our strategic plan, with a particular focus on achieving the turn around in our financial position as indicated in this report.

The Finance and Audit Committee worked to review operating expenses aiming to reduce corporate service costs. The Committee identified several ongoing savings opportunities created as a result of the merger in the previous year.

The Governance and Risk Committee revised and approved a new governance policy and reporting framework. The Committee led and guided the Board evaluation conducted later in 2017.

The Human Resources Committee monitored people and culture matters related to the merge and other change management processes. As expected, many staffing issues arise when organisations merge to form a new entity. This Committee ensured a dedicated focus on staff, student and volunteer welfare.

The Services Development Committee was established to monitor innovation projects commencing at SECL in 2016/17. These include the Dandenong Pilot and the Family Violence D\$VERS\$TY project supported by the late Fiona Richardson, Minister for Family Violence.

The Building and Facilities Committee has identified a number of challenges affecting the current Springvale site and has held constructive discussions with the City of Greater Dandenong about future opportunities. South East Community Links wishes to thank Rob Davies for chairing this Committee and for providing his unique expertise.

## Managing our risks, promoting health and wellbeing and developing our workforce

In March, South East Community Links successfully achieved accreditation in all areas of operations. Our organisation was reviewed from the top down, including governance policies and procedures, service delivery, people management, and client feedback.

Risk management has been a focus at Board, executive and management levels. South East Community Links continues to develop our risk management approach. We have trained all staff in identifying risks in their programs areas. We report a low serious incident frequency rate and low staff absenteeism.

Our staff performance development system has been reviewed and now incorporates a capability and behavioural framework. Our staff training and professional development program has supported staff to train in family violence, financial inclusion, integrated service delivery, integrated assessment outcome reporting and indigenous culture – all key focus areas in our strategic and operational plans. In addition, we continue to ensure a safe and healthy workforce through regular training, with an emphasis this year on infection control, manual handling and ergonomics.

We have invested resources in a new phone system at Dandenong, Springvale and Noble Park with assistance from our Federal MPs through the Stronger Communities program. We have also developed a comprehensive client data system, building a network of service information to report on service delivery and performance across our organisation. One of our amalgamation challenges was collating different data sets from different programs. This continues to be an area of improvement identified by SECL management and, as a result of the new system, next year we will be able to provide more in-depth and comprehensive reports on the work we do and outcomes achieved.



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## Students

A part of our organisational development strategy is to attract highly capable students from surrounding tertiary institutions. This year our key partners in the student and training program are: RMIT, Deakin University, Homes Glen TAFE, Victoria University, Monash University and Federation University. This year we had nearly 30 students undertake placements.

## Volunteer Strategy

Our volunteer strategy supports volunteers in all areas of our organisation. We aim to recruit volunteers as we aim to recruit paid staff. As part of this we have successfully overhauled our on-boarding and induction processes so there is alignment across all workers - paid, volunteer and student.

Our volunteer strategy has delivered key results this year. Our volunteer feedback remains very positive. We have continued to attract highly skilled volunteers. A highlight this year was winning the South East Volunteer award for our strategy.

We aim to continue to develop our highly capable and trained volunteer workforce. We understand that volunteers are often first responders to clients and therefore it is essential that they are equipped with resources and information to perform their role. This year we benefited from the contributions of volunteers in human resources, administration, intake, settlement, emergency relief, case work, L2P, homework and microfinance services.

## Facilities

During the past year we have been fortunate to gain more space at our Dandenong site at the Tom Houlahan Centre with the Dandenong and District Historical Society moving to Clow Street. This will allow us to expand our service offering at our Dandenong site and, with the assistance of the City of Greater Dandenong, plans are being developed for some renovations that will facilitate this.



**Jinny McGrath**

General Manager  
Organisational Development



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## Service performance

In 2016/17 South East Community Links continued to reach the most vulnerable members of our communities with essential services and financial support. This has been a year of increased demand for services and growing complexity of client issues. Common presenting issues included financial crisis, family violence, utility disconnections, unemployment and housing insecurity. Over the past year, SECL has been able to work more intensively with individuals and families thanks to a significant increase in funding from state and federal governments.



**13,725**

How many hours our  
volunteers have worked



**4,921**

How many individual  
clients we have  
supported



**27,859**

How many client  
contacts there  
have been



**5%**

Percentage of homeless  
SECL clients



**\$139,607**

How much Emergency  
Relief we have provided



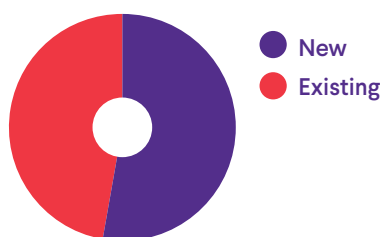
**\$528,058**

Value of microfinance  
loans provided

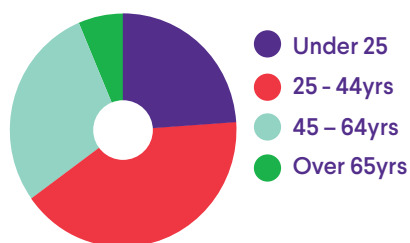


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### Client assisted new/existing



### Client age groups

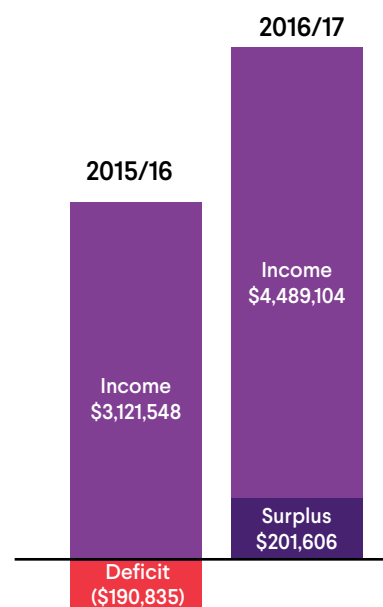


### Top 5 languages other than English

1. Dari
2. Burmese
3. Arabic
4. Hazaraghi
5. Tamil

### Top 5 countries of birth other than Australia

1. Afghanistan
2. Burma (Myanmar)
3. Sudan
4. Sri Lanka
5. New Zealand



Income increased  
44% from 2015/16  
to 2016/17



66

How many suburbs  
our clients live in



72

How many languages  
our clients speak



101

How many countries  
our clients come from







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## Change Maker Award

### Sarah Qumbri is the winner of the 2017 South East Community Links Change Maker Award.

Sarah came to Australia as an asylum seeker with her mother and siblings in 2009. After months on Christmas Island, the family arrived in Melbourne in 2010. Sarah first came to SECL in 2014 through a sports program for recently arrived refugees. She quickly emerged as a leader and was invited to join SECL's Youth Leadership Group. The Youth Leadership Group provided Sarah with a safe space to explore all her feelings and life experiences. Over the next 18 months, Sarah continued to develop and display her leadership skills. She also developed a strong interest in making a difference in the broader community.

It is no surprise that as someone who came to Australia by boat without knowing how to swim, Sarah's passion is to become a swimming teacher. In 2016 she seized the opportunity provided to her through the Sarah Myer Foundation to develop and deliver a swimming program. She identified a gap and wanted to provide swimming classes that targeted only females, as she believed that male's presence most likely decreased women's involvement. The six week program was very successful and Sarah was awarded a scholarship to become a qualified swimming instructor.

Before long Sarah was selected for a Life Guard program SECL was running with Life Saving Victoria. This was a 5 day program that saw Sarah successfully qualify to become a Beach Lifeguard. Sarah's story captured broad public interest and inspired so many people in the community that SBS News released a short documentary on Sarah's story and journey.

Most recently Sarah has become a Peer Educator, delivering workshops in schools through SECL's Building Safer Communities for Women project. She is also a regular Life Guard at Bon Beach. Through access to opportunities, Sarah is on the path to fulfilling her dreams.





## Developing our people

**Kumar Narayanaswami came from Sri Lanka seeking asylum in Australia in 2010. After spending eighteen months in a detention centre, he was released in 2012 to begin his new life in Melbourne.**

He first came to South East Community Links as a crisis client in need of help. He was provided with humanitarian casework support and food vouchers, and soon began volunteering with our settlement team and the Capacity Building and Participation Program Strategic Partnership. Being a volunteer helped him keep busy and maintain stability as he recovered from post traumatic stress and physical injuries sustained during the Sri Lankan civil war.

Kumar, who worked for the International Society of the Red Cross in Sri Lanka, built upon his community engagement skills volunteering alongside SECL staff. Eventually he was offered a paid position at SECL as a case manager supporting asylum seekers. Since that day he has been working with SECL, as well as joining several local Tamil organisations as a volunteer.

In recognition of his contributions to the community and his ability to overcome so many challenges in his life, Kumar was recently selected for a Higher

Education Scholarship from the Men of Malvern to study community development. He is very excited to commence his study next year.

Kumar feels so much gratitude towards Australia; the people who provided him shelter and a new life without fear. Through SECL and Men of Malvern, he has not only been able to work in a job he loves, but also to fulfil his lifelong dream of formal education.

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**South East Community Links provides ongoing support to asylum seekers and refugees across the south east of Melbourne through a range of state and federal government funded programs.**

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**In 2016/17, SECL supported 1,468 people in their settlement journey through individual case work and group based capability sessions.**

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## Building futures

**Many young people are attempting to complete years 10, 11 and 12 soon after their arrival in Australia with limited English after disrupted education prior to arrival. Our Homework Club, staffed by committed volunteers, supported over 60 young people with ongoing education support this year.**

In 2015 at 18 years of age Ariel embarked upon her new life in Australia alone, after parting with her family and fleeing Burma. There was no time to waste; she began studying English at Noble Park English Language School and soon enrolled at Wellington Secondary College. Despite her shyness and limited English, it didn't take Ariel long to discover the opportunities that would see her flourish and find connection with her peers and her local community.

Over the past 2 years Ariel has worked closely with youth workers from South East Community Links to develop her confidence, self-esteem and communication skills. The Homework Program has enabled her to continue her studies and she has been an active member of SECL's Youth Leadership and our Young Women's Leadership Program with Monash

Youth Services. These programs have boosted her confidence to make new friendships, develop career goals and follow her passion for music and performing. Her shyness did not stop her from singing her way through large crowds at the Clayton Community Festival, City of Monash Refugee Week Celebration and other various community events. Ariel's strong sense of self and enthusiasm for life is reflected in her motto that guides her along her path "Always remember where you come from, always hold onto things that made you stronger and not weak from your past. Do not forget your upbringing and your values as you can help others when they are in need of help. We all deserve a better life. No one deserves to be poor. Always put yourselves in other people's shoes".





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## Strategic partnerships

The 2016/17 financial year saw the introduction of Family Violence Financial Counselling funded by the Victorian Government through Consumer Affairs Victoria as part of their commitment to addressing family violence following the Royal Commission. As part of this initiative SECL formed a partnership with Windermere Family Services to increase access to financial counselling to assist people impacted by family violence begin their financial recovery. One example of this collaboration is Francine.

At 34, Francine found herself living in a refuge with her 9 year old daughter. She had escaped a violent relationship after suffering silently for many years. Her mental health had declined. She had lost hope for her future. She was also left with almost \$15,000 in fines and over \$5,000 in debt relating to the rental property she had shared with her abusive ex partner.

Francine had been using most of her small income to make fortnightly payments on the debts, but this was making it impossible to make ends meet. Her case worker at Windermere Family Services referred Francine to SECL for financial counselling. She was given information about the debt waivers available for people leaving family violence. For the first time, Francine felt she had the support and options to navigate her way out of debt.

With support from her financial counsellor at SECL, her case worker at Windermere and her GP Francine has been able to successfully apply for debt waivers and infringement revocations. She is finally free from debt and can now begin to recover and build a new life with her daughter.

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**South East Community Links is committed to reducing the economic abuse of women. We have developed a unique training program to increase the capacity of every SECL worker to identify, and respond to, economic abuse within our community.**

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**679 people were provided with 1900 services through South East Community Links Financial Counselling and Capability support program.**

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## Responding to Family Violence

### General services as first responders

Every day South East Community Links responds to complex cases of family violence. Our organisation is a perfect example of a general service experiencing a high demand for family violence support and information.

Our main clients are women and children. Clients are usually young, under age thirty. Our families, as reflected throughout our report, come from many different cultural backgrounds.

In our experience, women from CALD backgrounds rely on social support to escape family violence more than they rely on reporting to police. The support they need is money, safe housing, food and clothes for children. Many

require intensive assistance to fully understand their rights and entitlements, as English is often a second third or fourth language. A growing and serious family violence issue is violence which takes the form of economic abuse. As our clients are vulnerable and dependent on others, they can be easy targets for having assets and savings taken from them through coercive and deceitful means.

With funding received from the Department of Premier and Cabinet, and with the support of the late Minister Fiona Richardson, South East Community Link is increasing its capability to respond to family violence in our community.

We have developed an economic abuse first response training program for all staff, students and volunteers. This training will form part of a research project conducted with RMIT in 2017/18.



## Community Champion Award

In 2017, the Carlton Football Club awarded the South East Community Links Youth Leadership Group their Community Champion Award. The award was given in recognition of the important role our young leaders play in the local community by raising awareness of youth issues, creating programs for young people in need of support and developing their leadership skills for the future.

40 members of the Youth Leadership Group were invited to run out onto the MCG with the Carlton players. 100 South East Community Links staff, volunteers and their families attended the game.

We thank the Carlton Football Club for acknowledging our young leaders and providing a wonderful night out for South East Community Links.

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Across 2016/17 our Youth Leadership Group developed the leadership capability of 28 young people through training, skill development, mentoring and volunteering opportunities.

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These young leaders engaged a further 780+ young people in a range of youth focussed community engagement and capacity building activities across the south east region of Melbourne.

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## SECL wins Volunteer Program of the Year

South East Community Links provides rewarding volunteering opportunities for local community members across all areas of our organisation including client facing work, human resource management, administration, training, event planning and community development programs. Through our program volunteers find new friends, social connections, paid work and a deep sense of pride in the work they do to support our most vulnerable community members.

South East Community Links was the proud recipient of the South East Volunteers 2016 Volunteer Program of the Year.

The award was given in recognition of South East Community Link's outstanding volunteer program across our three sites. The adjudicators were particularly impressed with SECL's work to ensure volunteers are included in all aspects of our organisation, the diversity of volunteer roles available and our investment in volunteer development.

South East Community Links believes volunteers are as vital to the success of our organisation as paid staff. We do not distinguish between paid staff and unpaid staff, including volunteers in professional development, strategic planning, continuous improvement, change projects, new opportunities, etc.

We thank South East Volunteers for acknowledging South East Community Links volunteer program.

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**Over 100 volunteers dedicated their time and energy across a range of program areas at South East Community Links in 2016/17.**

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**46 of these volunteers provided driving assistance to 74 learner drivers as part of our Vic Roads City of Kingston and Monash L2P program, with 24 learner drivers successfully obtaining their P-plates during 2016-17.**

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## Employment pathways

The south eastern region of Melbourne has the highest rate of youth unemployment in the state, with 17.1% of 15 to 24 year olds unemployed (ABS 2017). South East Community Links works to develop innovative employment pathways and support for disengaged young people. Strategic partnerships, scholarships, volunteering opportunities and pre employability programs give young people like David the glimmer of hope they need.

In 2014, David stopped going to school. He was in year 9. In the following weeks and months he did his best to find a job, any job. One year on, David found himself living in the sanctuary of his room playing video games. He'd had a very difficult time in the lead up to withdrawing from school and after months of knock backs from every job he applied for, David had lost all of his confidence.

When David's mother, Maria, walked into Youth Links she wasn't sure what to expect. She was worried about her son and needed support to help him get back on track. She talked to a youth and family support worker about David and agreed to bring him to Youth Links the next day. David was surprised when he met the Youth Links worker and she asked him about his dreams for his future. What was his dream job? What did he love doing? What did he want his life to be like? It soon became obvious that David wanted to work with cars.

South East Community Links had just started a pilot project with Toyota and Kangan Institute in the south east to help them fill their high number of vacancies across dealerships. David attended an introduction session and learnt about the apprenticeship pathway that was available. David signed up immediately. Youth Links provided support to complete the applications and, after he was accepted, provided his uniform and safety boots. His worker kept in touch with David to make sure he was getting the support he needed during a significant transition.

David is now undertaking his apprenticeship with Toyota Cranbourne. He is a valued member of their team and loves his job. David is very grateful to Toyota and Youth Links for believing in him. He has never been happier.





## Social and economic inclusion

### Youth Links provides a safe and supportive place for young people in the south east of Melbourne.

When Mathew and Jessica came to Youth Links four years ago, they felt lost and had nowhere to turn. In their late teens, Mathew and Jessica had no family support and were struggling to make ends meet. They were desperate for work and a safe place to live. Physical and mental health issues had made finding a job very hard, particularly with no references.

Soon after coming to Youth Links, Jessica found out she was pregnant. This created a new urgency for securing employment and housing. Their youth worker, Di, arranged for employment and housing support programs on site. Before long, Mathew was employed at Ford and they had rented a bungalow close to public transport. Di worked with them to put together a budget, find furniture and get ready to welcome their son. After Noah arrived, Jessica relied on Di for support as she adjusted to life with a baby. As time went on, they found their feet and independence but continued to visit Youth Links from time to time.

Four years on, with two boys and a girl on the way, Mathew and Jessica recently moved to Queensland where Mathew is starting a new job. They wrote a letter to Di and the team at Youth Links to say farewell.

*'To Di - Thank you for everything you have done. You will forever be known to our children as Nannie. You will always hold a massive spot in our hearts – for giving us hope when we had none, for making us feel loved when we didn't and for letting us know that people believed in us even when we didn't believe in ourselves. When we had nowhere to turn you were there at every corner, no matter how hard it was. You are the hardest goodbye to say. We wish you nothing but the best. We are so lucky to have been given this gift, the gift of meeting you.'*



Every person counts

## Financial reports

### Income and Expenditure for the year ended 30 June 2017

	2017 \$	2016 \$
<b>Income</b>		
Grants received	3,869,871	2,808,897
Other income received	684,165	283,386
Interest received	35,068	29,265
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,589,104</b>	<b>3,121,548</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Employee and contractor benefits expense	3,022,016	2,596,341
Client support expenses	651,147	184,180
Consultancy expenses	129,358	74,814
Occupancy expenses	62,223	46,582
Amalgamation expenses	50,500	95,874
Depreciation expenses	49,868	33,708
Other expenses	422,386	280,884
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,387,498</b>	<b>3,312,383</b>
<b>Current year surplus / (deficit)</b>	<b>201,606</b>	<b>(190,835)</b>
Retained surplus brought to account upon amalgamation of associations	-	997,802
<b>Retained surplus at the beginning of the financial year</b>	<b>806,967</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Retained surplus at the end of the financial year</b>	<b>1,008,573</b>	<b>806,967</b>



Every person counts

## Assets and Liabilities as at 30 June 2017

	2017 \$	2016 \$
<b>Assets</b>		
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Cash On Hand	1,503,062	1,780,245
Accounts Receivable And Other Debtors	121,774	170,893
Food Vouchers On Hand	-	13,182
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>1,624,836</b>	<b>1,964,320</b>
<b>Non-Current Assets</b>		
Property, Plant And Equipment	139,424	168,658
<b>Total Non-Current Assets</b>	<b>139,424</b>	<b>168,658</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>1,764,260</b>	<b>2,132,978</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>		
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Accounts Payable And Other Payables	267,230	474,844
Provisions	343,472	375,862
Grants Received In Advance	144,985	207,782
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>755,687</b>	<b>1,058,488</b>
<b>Non-Current Liabilities</b>		
Provisions	-	267,523
<b>Total Non-Current Liabilities</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>267,523</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>755,687</b>	<b>1,326,011</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>1,008,573</b>	<b>806,967</b>
<b>Members' Fund</b>		
Retained Surplus	1,008,573	806,967
<b>Total Members' Funds</b>	<b>1,008,573</b>	<b>806,967</b>



Every person counts

## Cash Flows as at 30 June 2017

	2017 \$	2016 \$
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>		
Receipts from operating activities	4,905,011	3,151,386
Gifts and donations received	24,732	39,177
Interest received	32,672	29,295
Payments to suppliers and employees	(5,218,964)	(3,591,894)
<b>Net cash used in operating activities</b>	<b>(256,549)</b>	<b>(372,036)</b>
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>		
Payment for property, plant and equipment	(20,634)	(40,118)
<b>Net cash used in investing activities</b>	<b>(20,634)</b>	<b>(40,118)</b>
<b>Cash flows from financing activities</b>		
<b>Net cash provided by financing activities</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-</b>
Net decrease in cash held	(277,183)	(412,154)
Cash on hand upon amalgamation of associations	-	2,192,399
Cash on hand at beginning of financial year	1,780,245	-
<b>Cash on hand at end of financial year</b>	<b>1,503,062</b>	<b>1,780,245</b>



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**SOUTH EAST COMMUNITY LINKS INC.**  
**ABN 72 451 442 319**

**STATEMENT BY MEMBERS OF THE BOARD**

The board has determined that the association is not a reporting entity and that this special purpose financial report should be prepared in accordance with the accounting policies outlined in Note 1 to the financial statements.

In accordance with a resolution of the board of South East Community Links Inc., the members of the board declare that the financial statements as set out on pages 4 to 14:

1. present a true and fair view of the financial position of South East Community Links Inc. as at 30 June 2017 and its performance for the period ended on that date in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements and the requirements of the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (Vic)* and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 (Cth)*; and
2. at the date of this statement there are reasonable grounds to believe that South East Community Links Inc. will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

This statement is signed for and on behalf of the board by:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Ross Hepburn**  
Chairperson

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Chris James**  
Treasurer

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Dr Rhonda Cumberland**  
Chief Executive Officer

Dated this 24th day of October 2017





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hmh  
ADVISORY



**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT  
TO THE MEMBERS OF  
SOUTH EAST COMMUNITY LINKS INC.  
ABN 72 451 442 319**

**Report on the Audit of the Financial Report**

**Opinion**

We have audited the financial report of South East Community Links Inc. (the Association), which comprises the assets and liabilities statement as at 30 June 2017, the income and expenditure statement and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies, and the statement by the members of the board.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial report of South East Community Links Inc. is in accordance with Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*, including:

- (i) giving a true and fair view of the association's financial position as at 30 June 2017 and of its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended; and
- (ii) complying with Australian Accounting Standards to the extent described in Note 1 and Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013*.

**Basis of Accounting**

Without modifying our opinion, we draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared for the purpose of fulfilling the financial reporting responsibilities under the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose. Our opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

**Basis for Opinion**

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

We confirm that the independence declaration required by the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*, which has been given to the board of the Association, would be in the same terms if given to the board as at the time of this auditor's report.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

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#### **Information Other than the Financial Report and Auditor's Report Thereon**

The board is responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Association's annual report for the year ended 30 June 2017, but does not include the financial report and our auditor's report thereon.

Our opinion on the financial report does not cover the other information and accordingly we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial report, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial report or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

#### **Responsibilities of the Board for the Financial Report**

The board of the Association are responsible for the preparation of the special purpose financial report that gives a true and fair view in accordance with the relevant Australian Accounting Standards in accordance with the *Australian Charities and Not-for Profits Commission Regulations 2013* and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* and for such internal control as the board determines is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the special purpose financial report, the board are responsible for assessing the Association's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the board intend to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

#### **Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report**

Our 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 the 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 this financial report.



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

- 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 our 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 Association's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the board.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the directors' 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 Association's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Association 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.

We 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 control that we identify during our audit.

We also provide the those charged with governance with a statement that we have complied with relevant ethical requirements regarding independence, and to communicate with them all relationships and other matters that may reasonably be thought to bear on our independence, and where applicable, related safeguards.

**HAINES MUIR HILL**  
Chartered Accountants  
888 Doncaster Road  
Doncaster East, Victoria

**Kristian Lunardello**  
Partner

Dated on this 25<sup>th</sup> day of October 2017





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## Our people

### Board Of Directors

Ross Hepburn  
(Chairperson)  
Deborah Remfry  
(Deputy Chairperson)  
Christopher James  
(Treasurer)  
Julie Klok  
(Secretary)  
Jan Cormack  
Hang Vo  
Kristen Wallwork  
Jeanette Ward  
Angela Kyriakopoulos  
Rhonda Cumberland  
(CEO)  
Garrett Teters  
(Staff Representative)  
Merle Mitchell  
(Patron)

### Leadership Group

Dr. Rhonda Cumberland  
Jinny McGrath  
Denise Goldfinch  
Esther Ndirangu  
Kay Dilger

Michelle Rowland  
Martin Sykes  
Kathleen West  
Zoe Canaider  
Rachna Bowman  
Mathews Joseph  
Garrett Teters  
Marlena Kupczyk  
Robyn Fricsons  
Kylie Riha-Jones

### Staff

Amanda Siswoya  
Ben Hannah  
Danielle Kastl  
Glenn Ravenscroft  
Robert Watling  
Anisa Zahidee  
Di Tauteka  
Divya Mohan  
Giota Angelides  
Junior Adilson  
Mel Tyson  
Norma Goyenechea  
Andrea Shepherd  
Anthony Yeo

Dharshie Ratnasingham  
Hayat Doughan  
Heather Raux  
Jantina Kraal  
Joanne Mitsikas  
Julia Di Giovine  
Kaylene Dunkley  
Kumar Narayanaswami  
Lorraine D'silva  
Lyn Haden  
Mary Karas  
Michelle Whitlock  
Prema Kodikarage  
Rosemary Campbell  
Sita Namaratne  
Soe Soe Moe  
Sonya Paetow  
Stephanie Boissezon  
Terry Gordon  
Zorica Kovacic

### Volunteers

Karen Anderson  
Loretta Austin  
Nella Babic  
Penny Bacon

Ajab Bagga  
Rhonda Bale  
Joan Boyd  
Annette Charles  
Lina Di Tocco  
Val Harmon  
Monika Holda  
Jeannine Virginie  
Bill Irvin Irvin  
Janine Johnson  
Danielle Kastl  
Julie Klok  
Nagu Kulkarni  
Sarah Lannin  
Kamal Makaram  
Sithy Marikar  
Trinh Nguyen  
Glenn Ravenscroft  
Barbara Thurley  
Margaret Traill  
Abby Summers  
Jacques Tomson  
Anoja Dharmapala  
Zubair Murtaza  
Beverley (Bev) Deworsop



Every person counts

Erica Moulang	Sally Zou	Harry Stevens	Rebecca Stewart
Sarah Berchy	Shane Brunning	Harry Savva	Nick Olver
Barbara Scanlan	Shirleen Van Dort	Jason Thomas	Tahli Walsh
Alexis Phang	Thomas Spiker	Mark Rodrigues	Yvonne Maringa
Deborah Hart	Tiara (Airan) Tang	Dawn Marks	Beatrice Tran
Franca Bywater	Vicky Holmes	Hugh Foster	Meixi Liao
Joanne Hall	Michael Kimchi	Jess Mckenna	Muzammal Bilal
Dale Patman	David Jefferies	Robert Needham	Sandeep Kaur
Rayanne Krayem	Ralph Wildenberg	Graham Jones	Mandeep Kaur
Albert Loh	Noel Bolden	Carl Carter	Jackosborn
Andrew Ross	Peter Fellows	Paul Chare	Jennifer Hoffner
Anthony Yeo	Mo Yee Lok	Joan Connell	Janelle Phillips
Benjamin Cirona	Ian Gabriel	Robert De Biase	Suling Liu
Bhagya Etta	Carol Jaffit	James Dillon	Gagandeep Kaur
Briget Calica	Barry Clearwater	Mick Fagan	Chelsea Fisher
Catherine Sharpe	Ruth Kennedy	Robert Gagnon	Deborah Welsh
Cheryl Brockwell	Shashi Kochhar	Julie Harry	Dongfang Xu
Dany Ban	John Morter	Catherine Joyce	My Ngoc Tran
Darren Stevens	John Phillips	Kenny Kuo	Suhaina Binte Samsi
Eva (Zhenglia) Ge	Edward Perkins	Ameet Narulla	Zaina Nehme
Frances Emerson	Steve Kons	Roger Nathanielsz	Tiara Tang
Hao Mai	Viraj Vandabona	Lawrence Oliver	Dale Patman
Indumathy Madhavan	Alan Hunter	Michelle Rowland	Aaron Rajamani
Lauren Hall	Lakshmi Ramakrishnan	Paul Ryan	Laura Menzies
Louise Tinney	Ari Arivalagan	Patrick Tang	Kawsar Harun
Ma De Na Be	Claire Rodier	Greg Tate	Mel Tyson
Mary Karas	Richard Leggatt	Jim Tsaparas	Shukrullah Shukrullah
Moe Oo	Margaret Battams	Geoff Worthington	Caitlyn Machaya
Mohamed Mohamed	Lynda Pitts	Barbara Van Ernst	Christopher Julian
Nilofer Nezami	Garry Hall	<b>Students</b>	Lauren Hall
Prema Kodikarage	Lawrie Oliver	Carly Bennetts	Steven Hatton
Raz Balian	Anne Maria Cooper	Jasmine Prentic	Tom Spiker





Every person counts

## Our funders and valued partners

South East Community Links operates in an area of high need with families and individuals seeking support in many cases to address intergenerational problems. Federal, state and local governments aim to ensure their policies and programs reach people in high need in order to increase overall social and economic inclusion. Every government aims for high employment, high school retention rates, child safety and other universally shared objectives that reflect a prosperous and diverse community.

South East Community Links plays an important role, bringing government programs and support to people who are often the most economically vulnerable and socially excluded. Our 'on the ground presence' and diverse services and programs are easily accessible to the the client groups funders are trying to reach. This is the vital point of connection between South East Community Links and our funding partners. In this spirit, we want to thank our current funders and hopefully spark an interest in new funding opportunities to achieve our common goals.

Department of Social Services	Newsboys Foundation	South Eastern Local Learning & Employment Network	Macpherson & Kelley Foundation
Department of Premier and Cabinet – Multicultural Affairs & Social Cohesion	Good Shepherd Microfinance	Launch Housing	South East Business Network
Department of Justice – Consumer Affairs Victoria	Noble Park English Language School	Springvale Monash Legal Service	KOGO
Department of Health & Human Services	Gary & Warren Smith	Springvale Learning and Activities Centre	Inner Wheel Club Narre Warren
Victoria Legal Aid	VicRoads	Springvale Neighbourhood House	International Order of Old Bastards
City of Greater Dandenong	AMES Australia	Windermere Family Services	Lions Club of Dandenong
City of Kingston	CISVic	WAYSS	Rob Davies
City of Monash	Moses Booshi Lily Scholarship Fund	Telstra	Anna Hall
City of Casey	Sarah Myer Foundation	Mission Australia	Clare Shearman
Helen Machpherson Smith Trust	Sang Pool Scholarship Fund	In Touch	Rob Gagnon
Lord Mayor's Charitable Trust	Men of Malvern	Australia Post	
	Southern Migrant & Refugee Centre	Dandenong Magistrates Court	
	Monash Health		

# Acknowledgments

ACMI Museum	Dandenong High School	Lifesaving Victoria	Self Help Addiction Resource Centre (SHARC)
ADRA	Dandenong Oasis	Lions Club of Wheeler's Hill	Second Bite
Ashwood Secondary College	Deakin University	Melbourne University	Skills Plus
Ashwood-Mount Waverley Lions Club	Eastern Emergency Relief	MFB	South East Volunteers
Australia-Burma Society	ERHMA	Monash Oakleigh Community Support & Information Service	South Oakleigh Secondary College
Australian Football League	Foodbank	Monash Oakleigh Legal Service	St Kilda Mums
Australian Multicultural Foundation	Foundation House	Monash Youth and Family Services	Strengthening Clayton and Clarinda Community Project
Avocare	FCRC	Monash University	Taskforce
Benevolent Society – Springvale and Dandenong	FCA	Mt Hotham Day Dreaming Resort	The Afghan Australian Women and Youth Association
Berwick Neighborhood House	Gamblers Help Southern	Narre Warren P-12 South Secondary College	The Association of Hazaras in Victoria
Cardinia Shire Council	Glen Waverley Secondary College	New Hope Foundation	Victoria Police
Centre for Multicultural Youth	Hampton Park Community Centre	Noble Park Aquatic Centre	Victorian Immigrant and Refugee Women's Coalition
Centrelink Community Engagement team	Hampton Park Secondary College	Noble Park Secondary Collage	Wellington Secondary College
Cheltenham Police Station	Hands on Learning	Oakleigh Police Station	Youth Foundations – Narre Warren South and Hampton Park
Chisholm Tafe – Dandenong	Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies	Paddy's Community Soup Kitchen	YMCA Victoria
City of Casey Youth Services	Headspace Dandenong	Red Cross	Youth Law
Cranbourne Secondary College	Holmesglen TAFE	RILC - Refugee Immigration Legal Centre	Young Worker Center
Cranbourne East Secondary College	Immigration Museum	RMIT	YSAS
Coles Springvale	Kangan Institute – ACE -Docklands	Salesian College	
Cricket Victoria	Keysborough Secondary Collage	Salvation Army Dandenong	
	Keysborough Learning Centre	Samoan Advisory Council Victoria	
	Kingston Youth and Family Services		
	KMART Wishing Tree		
	Leadership Victoria		

**South East  
Community Links**  
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**Dandenong**  
186 Foster Street East  
Dandenong 3175  
T: (03) 9791 8344