



Annual Report 2020–21

SOUTH EAST
COMMUNITY
LINKS

Our Vision and Mission



VISION

Every person counts
Every system fair



MISSION

Achieve better social and
economic outcomes for
people in our community





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Acknowledgment to Country

South East Community Links acknowledges and respects the traditional custodians of this land, honouring their living culture and elders past, present and future.

Chairperson's report

We're now into year two of the COVID-19 pandemic, and many of our clients feel isolated and afraid. They feel disconnected, and some are going through more hardship this year than they did last year as many of the Australian Government's support programs have ended, such as Job Seeker.

I'm very proud of our work to alleviate our clients' hardship during this time. SECL has stayed open continuously, with our staff working from home. In early 2021 we were able to open the Springvale and Dandenong offices to supply people with emergency relief, goods and financial support. We've brought in a vaccine program and kept our No Interest Loans Scheme going. We've had extra funding from the Australian and Victorian Governments to provide homeless youth with housing support services.

It's been evident that some government COVID-19 communication is challenging for people with English as a second language who can't access information and news on a computer or listen to the TV news. So in this environment, we've extended our reach and services.

Our financial position has been strong. Our revenue reached \$5 million for the second year running, and we returned a small surplus. But, most importantly, we made sure everyone's jobs were secure during the pandemic and kept everyone employed.

I'd like to thank the new CEO, Peter McNamara, for putting his shoulder to the wheel in tough times. He's brought the management, staff, volunteers and students with him on the journey. As a result, there's an increased sense of urgency to get on with the job, and we've certainly improved and extended our advocacy in Peter's short time with us.

Since the end of the financial year, the sad news has arrived of the passing of our patron, Merle Mitchell AM. Merle was one of the inaugural committee members when the Springvale Community Aid and Advice Bureau was formed 50 years ago. She then became the first director of the organisation, a position she held until December 1995. Since her retirement, Merle continued her unwavering interest in not only our organisation but in many other community groups throughout Dandenong. About ten years ago, I had the privilege of appointing her as patron of the organisation. Merle didn't want to accept; she wanted me to go for someone like the Prime Minister instead. I suggested that we didn't want a figurehead; we wanted a patron who understood our organisation and our community and would give the board frank and fearless advice. Merle has continued to do that right through. In recent times, her lifelong inclination for advocacy for the disadvantaged again came to the fore. She became a strong advocate for improvements to the aged care and nursing home system.

I would like to thank Board members Sarah Loh and Robert Davies, who have resigned since the end of this reporting period. Sarah and Rob have both made excellent and considerable contributions to SECL. As deputy chair for the past couple of years, Sarah has been a keen advocate for strong governance and helped us navigate through the challenges of the pandemic. Rob's significant contribution to our community has spanned more than two decades – he served ten years on our Board and previously ran the Dandenong Development Board. SECL has grown to deliver a broader range of support services to an ever-increasing number of clients on Rob's watch.

Finally, thank you to the staff and Directors of the Board for your incredible and tireless work in pretty difficult times this year.

Ross G Hepburn, Chairperson



CEO's report

During an unprecedented period in history, SECL has remained true to our vision of 'every person counts, every system fair' by continuing to address the unmet needs of our community, made even more urgent in the second year of the pandemic.

I want to acknowledge the enormous commitment and resilience shown by our team of staff, volunteers and students, who ensured services remained open, all whilst managing the personal challenges arising from COVID-19. As an essential service provider, we kept our doors open for emergency relief and critical supports, with remaining services operating remotely. SECL's unique position as a multi-disciplinary service provider became even more important. We saw first-hand rising anxiety levels and the growing urgency for services such as **emergency relief**, family violence prevention, youth connections and financial crisis advice.

As part of the response to COVID-19, SECL was contracted by the Victorian Government to run a vaccination information program to address fears and misinformation and keep people safe. We employed five bicultural workers to support the South Sudanese, Afghan, Burmese, Vietnamese, and Tamil communities, resulting in more than 3000 people receiving vital information and becoming vaccinated. ABC Radio National and Channel 9 news even showcased our innovative approach towards group vaccinations. We also adopted learnings from COVID-19 to improve integration across teams, resulting in improved communication, connections and most importantly, greater client outcomes. This integration was vital when responding to COVID-19 and then the Afghan humanitarian crisis, as we supported our existing Afghan community and prepared for new arrivals in the region.

Being truly community-led means listening to the community and responding to their needs. I am delighted to report the outstanding results from the staff and client surveys. The staff survey had a 95 per cent response rate, with 96 per cent of staff saying they were very satisfied/satisfied working at SECL. Importantly, clients rated our services 4.7 out of 5, with 94 per cent saying they would recommend SECL as a trusted place for support and information.

Under the Board's direction and through listening to the needs of the community, we developed a new strategic plan to 'triple our impact by 2025'. This will be achieved by: 1) Placing the community at the heart of our work, 2) Ensuring evidenced-based impact, 3) Continuing to forge partnerships, 4) Advocating with the community for positive change, and 5) Further strengthening our foundations. I look forward to reporting back on our progress and impact in the coming year.

In 2021, we were saddened by the passing of our founder and patron, Merle Mitchell AM. Merle lived the vision of 'every person counts, and every system fair'. Her local and national advocacy for vulnerable people impacted millions of lives, and Merle will be sadly missed.

I'd like to thank the Chair and Board of Directors for their ongoing support and commitment. They embrace the vision and values whilst providing essential governance oversight. Thanks again to our fantastic team, funders, partners, and community. I am continually inspired by your commitment to improving the social, health and economic outcomes for vulnerable people. Thank you!

Peter McNamara, CEO



Merle Mitchell AM

We are profoundly saddened by the loss of our cherished patron, Merle Mitchell AM.

As a lifelong advocate for equality, community and diversity, Merle was well-known by many people in our local community and far beyond for her grace, courage, and tireless advocacy. She was a voice for thousands of people whose voices were unheard.

Born in Dandenong in 1934, Merle lived in the municipality for most of her life. A trained kindergarten teacher, Merle noticed the limited services for children and worked to establish kindergarten facilities and the Sandown Park Primary School.

She helped establish and was the first Director of the Springvale Community Aid and Advice Bureau (SCAAB). She remained committed to SCAAB for more than 45 years. She continued as the South East Community Links patron following the merger of SCAAB, Dandenong Community Advisory Bureau (DCAB) and Southern Ethnic Advocacy and Advisory Council (SEAAC) in 2015.

Merle played a vital role in establishing Springvale Neighbourhood House, the Family Mediation Centre and Springvale Monash Legal Service. Never one to shy away from advocating to politicians and policy makers, Merle shaped state and federal social welfare policies through roles with ACOSS and VCOS.

With the assistance of hundreds of community people, she helped document the rich history of the Enterprise Migrant Hostel, which played a vital role in the lives of over 30,000 migrants and refugees who lived there from 1970 to 1992. As a result, the Department of Immigration named the Hostel a 'Project of National Significance' - acknowledging the significant contributions and strength of migrant and refugee communities who have settled in this area and Australia more broadly.

Most recently, Merle was a strong advocate for the rights of older people living in aged care. She contributed to the Royal Commission into Aged Care, giving insights into the isolation felt by many residents during the coronavirus pandemic.

Merle's leadership in social justice was recognised with a Member of the Order of Australia and a City of Greater Dandenong Living Treasure Award.

Merle's message was simple "whenever I saw that something needed to be done, I thought we should do something about it". Her legacy will be long lasting, and her values, passion and leadership continue to underpin our work to improve the social and economic outcomes for people in the community.





About South East Community Links

South East Community Links (SECL) is the culmination of five decades of history and commitment. We work across the southeast of Melbourne to achieve better social and economic outcomes for people in our community.

We work with individuals, communities, policymakers and businesses to ensure every person counts and every system fair.

As a universal service provider, we deliver a wide range of programs and assistance to meet the needs of people in our community:

- Emergency relief
- Casework
- Housing support
- Youth and family support services
- Financial counselling and capability building
- Resettlement services for refugees and asylum seekers
- Prevention programs
- Community development and capacity building
- Volunteer programs.

WHERE OUR CLIENTS LIVE



Client snapshot



32,682
↑2%

Client sessions



\$5,813,612
↑13%

Debt resolved



↑152%

Increase in homeless youth clients

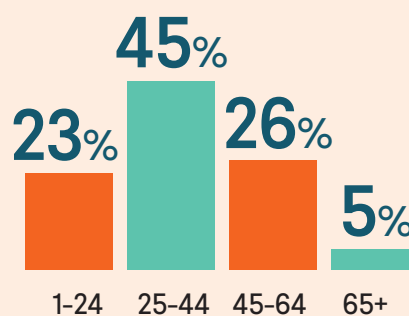


59%

Clients born overseas

Afghanistan,
India,
Sri Lanka, Iran,
Pakistan

Top 5 countries of clients' birth other than Australia



Client age groups in years



16%

Homeless or at risk



15%

Sole parent



55% Female

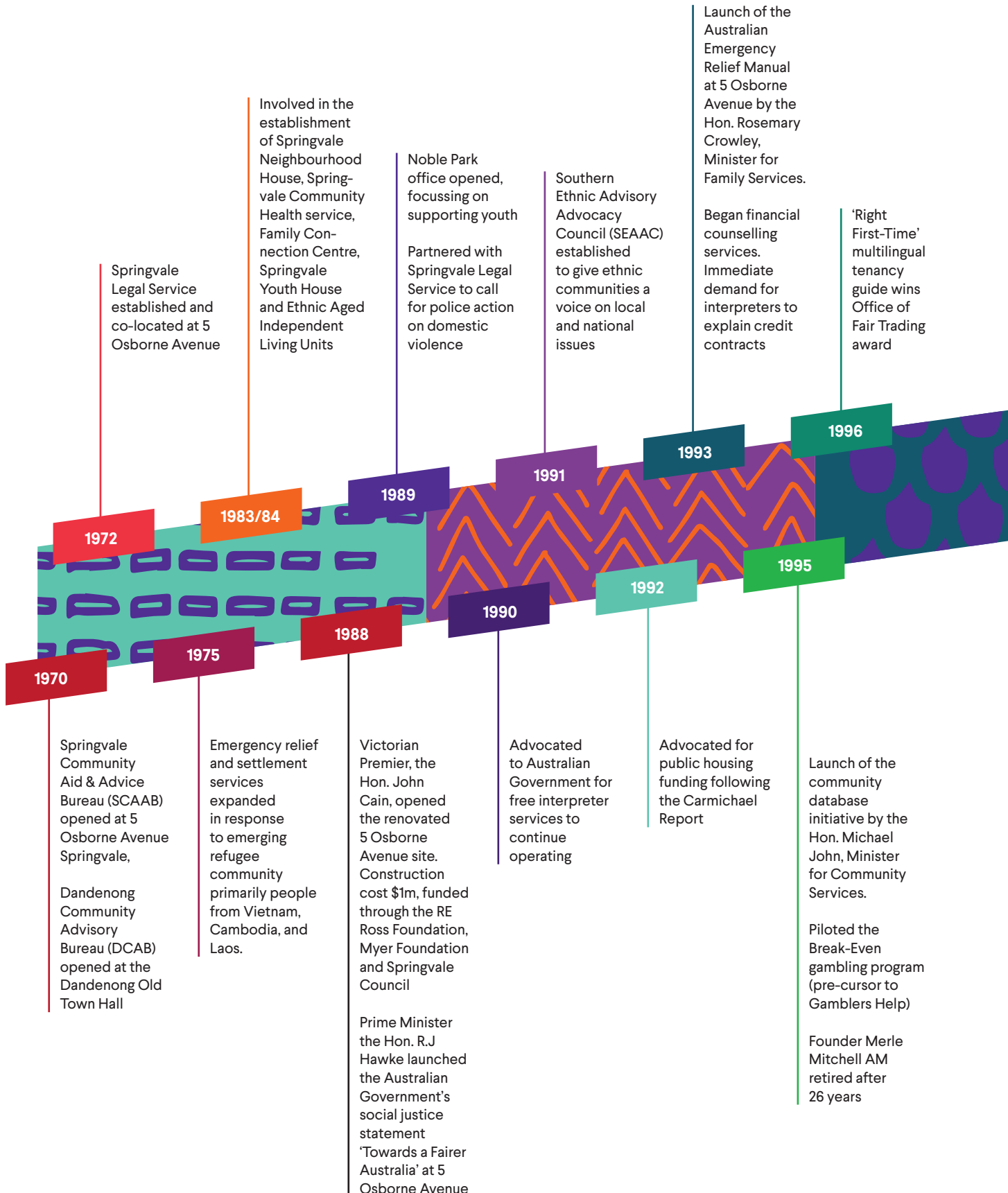
41% Male

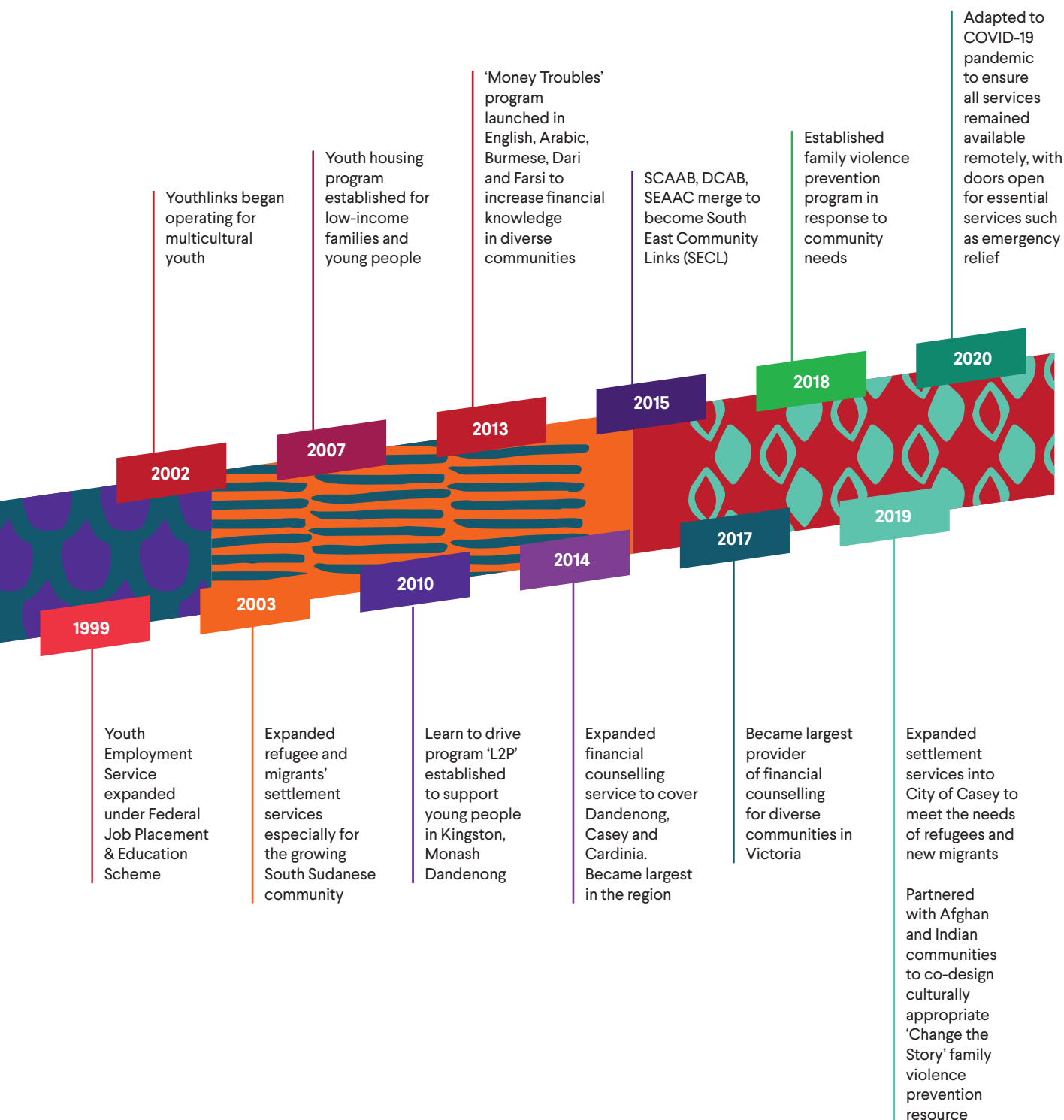
0.2% Intersex indeterminate

Client gender

* does not equal 100% as some clients did not provide this information

50 years of impact – SECL timeline





Community and financial wellbeing

Financial counselling

Demand for financial counselling eased during the extended lockdown of 2020 due to the systemic supports of JobKeeper, JobSeeker supplement, loan deferrals and moratoriums on utility disconnections and evictions. These supports ended by March 2020, which saw financial hardship return. People in need of financial counsellors sought support in droves, resulting in a 10 per cent increase in new cases.

As we look ahead, the ongoing financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is our most significant concern. Many clients have less income than pre-pandemic, placing them at risk of homelessness. More than 25 per cent of people seeking assistance sighted the impact of COVID-19, and 21 per cent were struggling to pay their mortgage. This year, thanks to additional Australian and Victorian Government funding, we introduced an internship model of financial counselling, mentoring three interns through their Diploma of Financial Counselling.

We continue to build our expert knowledge of financial abuse and reflect on how survivors navigate Australia's complex economic and legal systems to resolve debt and begin recovery. We are fortunate to represent our sector on the Australian Bankers Association Consumer Outcomes Group. In the Group, we advocate for access to independent interpreters for complex money conversations to ensure people understand their obligations and avoid conflict of interest as we work towards preventing financial abuse.

SECL would like to acknowledge Victoria Legal Aid, which funded our dedicated Child Support Program for more than 15 years. We are committed to looking at alternatives to ensure people in our community access their entitlements and navigate this complex system.

Community wellbeing

The ongoing impact of COVID-19 led to an increase in people in crisis and greater demand for emergency relief and crisis support. The most impacted were asylum seekers and international students, who were not eligible for government payments and had been reliant on employment that ceased due to COVID-19. While many front-line services were unable to remain open or reduced their services, SECL met the higher demand by increasing points of access and the services available to our community and delivering safe and reliable support.

Community wellbeing staff assessed participants over the phone, often emailing information to participants and providing referrals to other agencies for further assistance. We also increased the frequency of emergency relief and the amounts of funds provided

to the participants. Our staff continually updated their knowledge of what funds participants could apply for and assisted clients in applying for Extreme Hardship grants. In addition, our commitment to early intervention and the quality of our assessments and support led to positive client outcomes.

Microfinance

Our microfinance program offers the No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS), providing people on low incomes with flexible and affordable credit for essential items such as furniture, computers, health aids, education and car registration. This year we closed the StepUp loan program and reviewed our NILS program to examine how we could align it with our new strategic plan. Through this, a decision was made to move to a volunteer-delivered program and to scale up services. In addition, in the 2021–22 financial year, we will participate in the Pilot of NILS for transport, so community members will have the opportunity to access an interest-free car loan.



71 NILS no interest loans, totalling
\$91,245

24 StepUp fixed interest loans,
totalling **\$72,000**

46% of loans to buy household
appliances or furniture

Students and volunteers

This year 33 students from eight universities and TAFES completed placements at SECL. While COVID-19 and frequent lockdowns presented challenges, we developed new ways of working so that students could still undertake an integral role. A total of 63 volunteers – including 42 new volunteers – donated their valuable time this year. Highlights included celebrating national volunteer week with an onsite morning tea and introducing the Economic Inclusion of Women Mentoring program.



COVID-19 Vaccination program

At the start of 2021, SECL hired five bicultural workers, training them to communicate information about COVID-19 vaccinations. As a result, the incredibly successful vaccine information program has reached more than 3,000 people across the South Sudanese, Afghan, Burmese, Vietnamese and Tamil communities.

Junior Melo, SECL's Senior Practitioner Youth and Family Engagement, explained how the program works.

"Vaccination is the best way to stop the virus from spreading, but early on, we identified that the message wasn't reaching specific communities. Our idea was to get people to provide effective and consistent messaging in language. Most of our participants are from overseas, as English is an additional language. We realised that there was a lot of confusion and incorrect information was spreading about the vaccine.

Our bicultural workers, who know their communities, translate and share consistent messages from trusted sources through our program. We hosted five information sessions online with doctors and an interpreter. People had genuine doubts and asked good questions. Having a doctor answering those questions with facts has had a positive impact. We reached over 3000 people through those sessions and online engagement, including Facebook posts and group vaccination. In addition, we arranged buses to take South Sudanese, Afghan, Burmese, Vietnamese and Tamil community members to become vaccinated.

We've had a lot of positive community feedback. People have been saying that without SECL, they wouldn't be able to get to the clinics due to lack of transport. In our first group vaccination, some people attended to have a look; once they were there, they ended up taking part and getting their jabs. Having interpreters present and being in a group, with peer support, has made the difference for so many people getting vaccinated."

CLIENT STORY Suhela*

Suhela is an Afghan woman and a single parent with five dependent children. She was married at just 14 years old to a 27-year-old man. Suhela arrived as a refugee from Afghanistan in 2007 with no education and very limited English.

She has suffered extreme family violence and financial abuse. Suhela's ex-husband coerced her into signing a mortgage contract. When Suhela became concerned about her financial situation, her bank advised her to take loan protection insurance on her mortgage despite being a single parent on Centrelink benefits. She was not offered an interpreter. In 2017, Suhela was hospitalised for four months after her ex-husband stabbed her 10 times in the spine and face. Her children were put into foster care. She made an insurance claim which was rejected as the insurer did not recognise her injuries as 'trauma'. Suhela could not earn an income due to her injuries and was at risk of losing her home.

SECL lodged a complaint with the bank and later with the Australian Financial Complaints Authority (AFCA) to seek resolution on the insurance. Eventually, the insurance premiums were refunded, and a goodwill gesture payment was made to Suhela. In addition, the bank agreed to lower repayments on the mortgage and some debt was waived, so the mortgage repayments were sustainable.

Our financial counsellor also assisted Suhela with her property rates and utilities, court hearings and finalising the property settlement. As a result, Suhela had a fantastic outcome where she was entitled to 100 per cent of the equity in the family home. In addition, there is a lifetime intervention order against her ex-husband to protect her and the children. Three years later, Suhela has recovered well from her injuries. She has completed English language classes and works part-time while studying. Money is still tight, but thanks to SECL's financial counsellor, Suhela has a plan and knows what to do to make ends meet. Her children are all doing well, with her eldest at university, one son doing an apprenticeship and her other children in school.



Youth services

Overview

Our youth services team provides services for young people in the south-east region. We provide information, referral, advocacy, crisis intervention and support for people aged 12–25. The COVID-19 crisis hit young people and their families significantly, and many of our clients lost employment, housing and were disengaged from education. We worked with young people and their families to re-establish their goals and re-engage with social activities.

CLIENT STORY Logan*

Logan was referred to SECL's Navigator program in 2018. He suffered from anxiety and was very withdrawn, living alone with his mum, who had mental and health issues. After numerous home visits, Logan finally agreed to try an alternative

education program. The Navigator worker noticed that Logan started coming dressed as a girl: woman's boots, makeup and nail polish. He also wanted to be called Lucy. The Navigator worker respected this decision and encouraged them to see a Headspace worker. In the next few months, they improved and completed a Certificate in General Education for Adults, then began to study a higher-level Certificate.

In July 2020, their mum passed away, and they ended up in Emergency Accommodation in Dandenong. They called their most trusted Navigator worker, who helped secure one of SECL's units, where they are now living. After talking through gender issues at Headspace, they changed their appearance and asked to be called Logan again. In January 2021, the Navigator caseworker referred Logan to the L2P program at SECL to help him get his driving licence. He was also referred to a mentoring program for assistance with finding a job. Logan lives independently and attends school after being very isolated in the community, dependent entirely on his mum, and then losing his mum during the COVID-19 lockdown. He is looking forward to completing his education, getting a driving licence and a job.

Our services include:

- Employment, Education and Housing support
- Youth Leadership and volunteering opportunities
- Community engagement activities
- Coaching support with driver education
- Complex casework support and referral pathways
- A drop-in space (online meetings)

Highlights

Education

This year, almost 60 per cent of all young people presented to SECL required support with education and training. Using our connections with local schools and service providers, we successfully supported 86 per cent of those young people to return to education in the last financial year.

Employment

Nearly 80 per cent of young people required employment support. Despite the pandemic, we successfully supported 86 per cent through referrals to employment agencies or securing employment. In addition, our team provided individualised casework and workshops for young people to equip them with practical skills on job applications, interview preparation and individual career advice.

Housing

More than 50 per cent of young people presenting to our housing program were in financial crisis and needed employment. One in five had no family or social support and were survivors of family violence. However, almost 50 per cent of the young people who accessed our housing program secured long-term, safe, and sustainable accommodation.

L2P driving program

31 young people gained P plates this year, and 58 L2P mentors registered to support young people with driving lessons. In addition to our current areas of Kingston and Monash, we gained additional funding to operate driving lessons in the City of Greater Dandenong area.

Workshops

SECL provided ongoing education and employment support through our Homework Club, Employment Workshops and Youth Leadership group meetings. Additionally, we delivered workshops on the COVID Research Project, Legal Rights and the Resuscitate a Mate CPR Introductory Workshop. Our school holiday programs included Nature Walk, Soccer Clinic, Water Safety and Youth Festival group activities for young people.



Family violence prevention

Safer and Stronger Communities Pilot

We delivered year two of the Pilot in the Southern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne, working with diverse migrant and refugee communities in the City of Greater Dandenong and the City of Casey. The Pilot allowed us to build our workforce capacity and test what works best to prevent family violence in migrant and refugee communities. Guided by our crucial project partners, Our Watch and Multicultural Centre for Women's Health, with the provision of training, ongoing advice and communities of practice, SECL achieved outstanding outcomes during a very challenging year of ongoing COVID-19 lockdowns.

Our team continued to facilitate three community-led groups this year, with 22 members across the Afghan, African and Indian communities. These groups designed tailored prevention initiatives that developed the capacity of community members to better understand the nature of family violence, and the actions required to address the gendered drivers that lead to violence against women.

Highlights

Our highlights this financial year were the impressive Afghan and Indian co-designed adaptation of the 'Our Watch' Change the Story' video, which illustrates the drivers of violence against women and what works to prevent it based on the national framework. Our members voiced their concern about the lack of multilingual educational resources available. Members saw this as an opportunity to co-create meaningful prevention tools in language. Our members drafted the stories, recorded the voiceovers and chose music and costumes for the video animation. Thanks to Our Watch, we are incredibly proud to have been part of developing such significant resources widely shared across Victoria, Australia, and internationally.

Our multilingual videos in Tamil, Punjabi, Hindi, Dari and Hazaragi were launched at City of Casey's 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence online event and shared with over 100 community associations, are available on our website and social media pages.



CLIENT STORY Anushka*

Anushka is a 30-year-old female from an Indian background who approached SECL seeking emergency relief assistance. Anushka had been experiencing family violence for the past eight years in the form of emotional, verbal, financial, coercive control, and physical abuse. During a recent confrontation with her husband, Anushka suffered particularly violent abuse.

Anushka joined her husband in Australia in 2016 under a sponsor visa. They have a four-year-old child together, and she is on a 485 temporary graduate visa. SECL intervened to find a solution for Anushka and her child, who were vulnerable, living in fear and at risk of being homeless. Without her partner, she had no income or access to money, and without help with childcare, she could not secure a job. In addition, her rental property was in her partner's name, which increased her risk and instability.

SECL transferred the rental agreement to Anushka's name by advocating for her human right to remain in the property. We secured rental support and helped Anushka access family violence financial assistance. We helped her address her debt and provided support with Centrelink, including COVID relief disaster payments. SECL awarded Anushka the Moses Bhooshi scholarship allowing her to study and improve her English language skills. She also enrolled in our Women's Mentoring program to strengthen her confidence and employability skills.

We provided more than 200 hours of regular intensive casework and advocated for Anushka with 20 services, including childcare and legal support. SECL continues to support Anushka in her criminal battle with the husband and his girlfriend. After significant SECL intervention, persistence and advocacy, Anushka is looking forward to a brighter future.



Settlement support

CLIENT STORY Samira*

Samira, a 44-year-old female from an Iranian background, is a single mother who recently moved from interstate to Melbourne with a teenager and an adult son. She suffers from complex health issues,

mental health difficulties, and severe mobility challenges. While living interstate, Samira had been linked with NDIS. Unfortunately, her limited English had prevented her from accessing her NDIS support.

By the time she arrived at SECL, Samira's mental and physical health was in very poor condition. She was in financial distress, vulnerable and socially isolated. Due to her poor health situation, Samira is unable to work. SECL helped Samira understand and begin to access her NDIS supports, including individualised home care support. Our practitioner initiated regular care meetings and assisted her in filing for various Centrelink supports. We linked Samira with St. Vinnie's for material aid and support and Cranbourne Information and Support Services for emergency support and financial counselling. SECL also helped Samira acquire a multi-purpose taxi card and access transport support from NDIS. We are currently providing free driving lessons through our driver education program, and she was referred to our Step-up loan program, which enabled her to purchase a car. SECL has also helped Samira improve her English by referring her to a Melbourne Polytechnic volunteer tutor to work with her one on one via zoom. Samira has also been connected to family services, and we are continuing to provide advocacy and support to ensure Samira receives the care to which she is entitled.

Our settlement engagement and transition program achieved enormous growth this year, continuing our expansion into the Casey south region, in addition to our existing work in Greater Dandenong. Across the year, we have supported 267 clients, of which 58 were young people living in the City of Casey. Despite COVID-related restrictions dominating most of the year, we continued to build community networks and harness collaborative opportunities.

Our work has led to many newly arrived community members building their skills and knowledge as they navigate their settlement journey. In addition, we have generated more than 220 referrals to national, state and local organisations that have played critical roles in responding to the diverse needs of our clients.

Since January 2021, we have focused our attention on employment, with many of our clients losing work during the pandemic. We supported our clients to identify their strengths, skills and career aspirations whilst referring approximately 50 of our clients across to complementary work readiness programs within SECL and externally. This work resulted in nine people securing employment.

Community capacity building

We engaged with leaders from various ethnic communities and their associations in our community capacity building program. Highlights included assisting three community groups in finding suitable spaces to deliver community activities. Another successful project outcome involved working with the Afghan community to deliver two learner driver programs to almost 30 highly isolated Afghan women. As a result, 20 women successfully passed their learner's driver's test, a massive boost to their self-confidence and independence.

Strategic engagement and coordination program

Over the past 12 months, we developed a strong partnership with Relationships Australia Victoria to produce resources for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities. The resources were co-designed by Indian, Afghan and Tamil community members. They included two tip sheets and a six-week parenting program, acknowledging the impact of migration and settlement on family relationships. We also ran an internship program for people from CALD backgrounds who have faced multiple barriers to



employment. Interns can develop critical skills, become familiar with Australian workplace culture and build networks. This year, one intern has continued working with SECL, and another has successfully gained an ongoing local council role.

SECL launched our Women's Mentoring Program, which directly responds to the unique challenges CALD women experience as they try to enter the workforce. Through sharing their own lived experiences, our co-design group of women from African, Afghan and Burmese communities felt that having a mentor and someone to support women navigate employment and education pathways could be a way of improving job outcomes.

By June 2021, SECL had already recruited 15 mentors to be matched with mentees and provided more than 60 mentoring sessions, which included support with job applications, resume and cover letter development, interview preparation, conversational English support and career guidance.

Our strategic partnership program work with Southern Migrant Resource Centre grew in strength as we joined forces to ensure local communities were kept informed in-language of changing COVID-19 pandemic restrictions and were connected to meaningful programs that prevented further isolation. Such programs included online governance and leadership training, women's yoga classes and social support groups.

Reducing Gambling Harm in CALD Communities

Funded by the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation, SECL continued to work closely with project partners, Connect Health and Community Gambler's Help Program and our three co-design community groups to design tailored campaigns to reduce the level of gambling related harm in CALD communities.

A core group of 12 members from the Vietnamese, Afghan and Burmese communities spent hundreds of hours developing short YOU-TUBE videos, SBS radio advertisements and interview campaigns and in-language posters that reached a staggering 130,000 people.

A huge thank you to our committed Afghan, Burmese and Vietnamese community partners for their dedication during extremely difficult pandemic times.



Financial reports

Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income for the year ended 30 June 2021

	\$ 2021	\$ 2020
Revenue	5,229,223	5,000,303
Employee and contractor benefits expense	(4,311,631)	(3,835,060)
Client support expenses	(207,055)	(212,368)
Consultancy expenses	(42,551)	(83,086)
Information technology expenses	(183,351)	(232,184)
Occupancy expenses	(48,000)	(48,000)
Depreciation expenses	(26,216)	(32,995)
Other expenses	(322,769)	(349,122)
Current year surplus	87,650	207,487
Other comprehensive income	-	-
Total other comprehensive income for the year	87,650	207,487
Total comprehensive income attributable to members of the entity	87,650	207,487

**Statement of
financial position
for the year ended
30 June 2021**

ASSETS	\$ 2021	\$ 2020
Current assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	3,807,583	2,538,904
Accounts receivable and other debtors	67,486	79,087
Total current assets	3,875,069	2,617,992
Non-current assets		
Property, plant and equipment	68,136	94,352
Total non-current assets	68,136	94,352
Total assets	3,943,205	2,712,343
LIABILITIES		
Current liabilities		
Accounts payable and other payables	500,648	320,905
Provisions	507,727	432,061
Grants received in advance	1,492,136	599,289
Total current liabilities	2,500,512	1,352,255
Non-current liabilities		
Provisions	43,593	48,638
Total non-current liabilities	43,593	48,638
Total liabilities	2,544,105	1,400,893
Net assets	1,399,100	1,311,450
Members' funds		
Retained surplus	1,399,100	1,311,450
Total members' funds	1,399,100	1,311,450

**Statement of cash
flows for the year
ended 30 June 2021**

	\$ 2021	\$ 2020
Cash flows from operating activities		
Receipts from operating activities	6,630,763	5,468,044
Interest received	9,744	24,465
Payments to suppliers and employees	(5,371,828)	(5,006,000)
Net cash used in operating activities	1,268,679	85,011
Cash flows from investing activities		
Payment for property, plant and equipment	-	(37,650)
Net cash used in investing activities	-	(37,650)
Cash flows from financing activities		
Net cash provided by financing activities	-	-
Net increase / (decrease) in cash held	1,268,679	47,361
Cash on hand at beginning of financial year	2,538,904	2,491,543
Cash on hand at end of financial year	3,807,583	2,538,904

Board of Directors 2020 – 21



Ross Hepburn
Chair

Ross holds degrees in Civil Engineering and Business Administration. He started his diverse marketing and management career at ACI Fibreglass in the late 1970s and finished as the Director of Corporate Services for the City of Greater Dandenong in 2007. He served on the RMIT University Council for 13 years. His connection with Springvale and Dandenong spans some 35 years and includes business, local government and sport.



Sarah Loh
Vice chair

Sarah has a Masters in Sport Business and is currently CEO of the South Metro Junior Football League. She has been working in sport management for more than 31 years. Sarah migrated to Australia at the age of six from Malaysia in 1977 and lived in Noble Park North. She is also an AFL Multicultural Community Ambassador, taking newcomers to AFL matches and teaching them about the game.



Fiona Garside
Treasurer

Fiona has a Bachelor of Commerce and Bachelor of Economics degree. She is a Member of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants in the UK. During her tenure in London, Fiona became a senior finance manager at the multinational telecommunications company British Telecom. She returned to Melbourne in 2013 and has been actively involved with local community organisations.



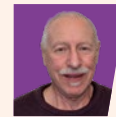
Jan Cormack
Secretary

Jan holds a Bachelor of Business (Public Administration) degree. She worked in the Australian Public Service for over 40 years, mainly for the Department of Veterans Affairs and for Centrelink, before retiring in 2012. In 2008, Jan received the Minister for Human Services Award for exemplary services to customers and stakeholders and, in 2011, an Australia Day medal for achievement.



Deborah Remfry
Director

Deborah has a Bachelor of Commerce degree and a Postgraduate Diploma in Town and Country Planning. She has worked for local and state governments in planning related fields for over 20 years. From 2002 to 2009, Deborah worked with the community and government agencies in the Greater Dandenong region on a range of infrastructure and community building projects.



Chris James
Director

Chris is a life member of SECL. He joined the Board of Directors (SCAAB) in 1971 and has held the position of Treasurer, Vice-Chairperson, Chairperson at various times. Prior to retirement, Chris worked with the ANZ group for more than 40 years where he held various management posts in marketing, sales, audit and training. Chris is also a Fellow of the Financial Services Institute of Australasia.



Robert Davies
Director

Robert has qualifications in town planning, property and business management, and is a Chartered Practising Planner (Planning Institute of Australia). He has more than 30 years experience in management and statutory and strategic planning across the consulting, corporate, local and state government sectors, including eight years as the Executive Officer of the Dandenong Development Board.



Knowles Tivendale
Director

Knowles runs a boutique transport planning consultancy based in Dandenong. He works to achieve a vision of more integrated, efficient and sustainable transport solutions. Knowles was the Strategic Planner at City of Greater Dandenong responsible for the initial stages of what became the Revitalising Central Dandenong project. He later became the Team Leader of Social Planning overseeing several projects related to the City's diverse community. Knowles joined the Board in March 2021.



Peter McNamara
CEO

Peter has more than 20 years' Executive and Director experience, including as Chief Executive Officer, Good Shepherd Microfinance and General Manager, Asylum Seeker Resource Centre. Peter is the current President of the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS), having served on the Board since 2015. Peter has studied finances and strategy at Harvard Business School, Stanford Business School and Melbourne Business School and is a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.



Rachna Bowman
Staff representative

Rachna has a Masters in Business and Diploma in Community Services (Financial Counselling). She is a financial counsellor currently working as the Senior Practitioner in SECL's Financial Wellbeing Program. Rachna is a consumer representative on the Australian Banking Association consumer outcomes group. She was formerly a consumer representative on the Financial Ombudsman Service consumer liaison group.



Rhonda Cumberland
previous CEO

Rhonda was CEO of South East Community Links from January 2016 to December 2020. Her contribution to SECL was acknowledged in the 2019-2020 Annual Report.

Management Team

Kay Dilger, Manager Community and Financial Wellbeing

Zoe Canaider, Community Wellbeing and Organisational Development Manager

Marlena Kupczyk, Manager Youth Services

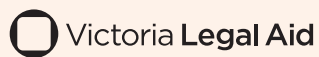
Michelle Rowland, Manager of Settlement, Inclusion and Prevention

Chris Hinds, Finance and Administration Manager



Project partners and supporters

FUNDERS



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Deborah Welsh

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Springvale Monash Legal Service

Springvale Neighbourhood House

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St Mary's Primary School

Taskforce

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Westall Secondary College

Windermere Family Services

Women's Health in the South East

Youth Support and Advocacy
Service (YSAS)

**South East
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Noble Park 3174

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Dandenong

186 Foster Street East

Dandenong 3175

T: (03) 9791 8344

**SOUTH EAST
COMMUNITY
LINKS**

