



Making a positive difference everyday

Annual Report 2016-17



Whittlesea Community Connections is a place based not for profit incorporated association and an income tax exempt organisation endorsed as a Public Benevolent Institution and a Deductible Gift Recipient.

ABN 49881724827

Registration No. A0008867P

Telephone

03 9401 6666 General

03 9401 6644 Emergency Relief

03 9401 6655 Legal

03 9401 6633 Women in Work mobile childcare

03 9401 6622 Community Transport

Location

**Shop 111, Pacific Epping,
581 High Street, Epping VIC 3076**

**Thomastown West Community Hub,
98 Main Street, Thomastown VIC 3076**

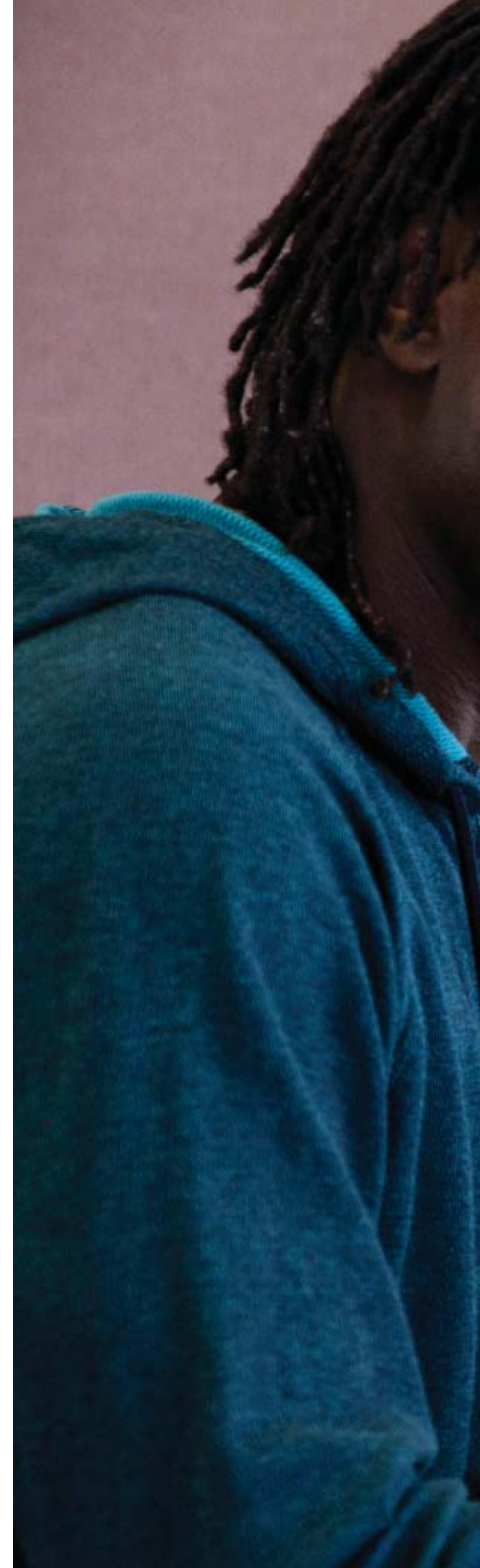
**Mernda Villages Community Activity Centre,
70 Mernda Villages Drive, Mernda VIC 3754**

Information

www.whittleseacc.org.au

facebook.com/whittleseacommunityconnections

Whittlesea Community Connections acknowledges the traditional owners of the land on which we provide our services, the Wurundjeri Willum Clan of the Kulin Nation. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present, and express our hope for reconciliation, justice and the recognition of the living culture of all First Nations people.



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Snapshot



This would not have been possible without the involvement of more than



who contributed approximately



Making a positive difference everyday

We made a difference by providing:

11,788
free community
transport trips



1,897
community
information
phone
contacts

336
community
transport
assessments
for new clients

352
community
information
front desk visit



551
casework
appointments
for settlement
clients



4,786
Emergency Relief
and Casework
appointments and
phone assessments

5,521
men, women and
young people with the
opportunity to participate
in our support and
settlement groups, training
and information sessions

1,755
legal clients
with advices



436 new legal clients with casework 	1457 Homework club participants 	117 people with support for Citizenship applications 	43 community organisations or agencies with individualised assistance to support volunteering
18 community legal education sessions	45 playgroup sessions at Thomastown West Community Hub 	282 inquiries for Tax help and 228 Tax help interactions (the highest of all single centres in Melbourne)	985 hours of childcare provided 
318 hours of activities for young people 	90 children a week with the opportunity to participate in literacy, numeracy, art and drama activities at Thomastown West Community Hub	452 people assisted towards volunteering 	371 childcare jobs for women from refugee backgrounds
270 homework or learning club sessions across five local schools	68 women (8 groups) with more than \$20,000 in grants to encourage participation of culturally and linguistically diverse women	197 volunteers and 34 volunteer managers trained	680 hours of supervised student placements and internships 

Our Board

Our Board members (as at 30 June 2017)

Nessie Sayar

President

Sam Alessi

Vice President, City of Whittlesea representative

Harry Jenkins

Treasurer

Rolf Peake

Secretary

Owen Waldie

Member

Randa Rafiq

Member

Maureen Corrigan

Member

Vicki Selvaggio

Member

Rosa Harrison

Volunteer representative

Elissa Andreacchio

Volunteer representative

Thank you to former members Stephen Lewis, Dinny Jaonis, Christine Lewis, Martin Booth and Greg Godfrey for their significant contributions.

Firstly, it is an honour to work with a grassroots organisation established by local residents (activists) for the community since 1973. Supporting the holistic needs of marginalised and disadvantaged communities is our strength.

My volunteering experience at WCC as an Emergency Relief Assessor, and Community Transport Services driver/assist gave me a strong insight into the great community disadvantage and gaps.

First elected to the Board as a Volunteer Representative in 2012, I continue my services with an energised, innovative, and committed Board.

September 2016 saw Alex Haynes come into the role of CEO.

Staff well being and support has been at the forefront with Alex. With great community expertise, and unique management skills, Alex has been able to successfully create diverse work roles for staff and volunteers, empowering positive changes within the organisation. This also includes a new look for WCC with a great logo, and transformation of the reception, and office space.

Alex's monthly reports, Strategic Priorities Plan 2017/18, and the financial administrative statements/budget presented to the Board has been one of outstanding, and exemplary work which displays a strong commitment to the organisation. This work is also evident in the successful achievements obtained over the last year with WCC's funding bodies, stakeholders and partners.

Alex's transparent work ethics has been a pleasure to work with, and I am confident WCC will continue to grow from strength to strength with Alex's leadership and advocacy at all levels.

President's report

It is with great pleasure I present this President's report for the year 2016 - 17 I am pleased to report the excellent work and progress WCC has achieved throughout the busy year.

Celebrations

Throughout this year WCC's programs have achieved fantastic milestones we can be proud of.

10 Year Anniversary & Celebration of WCC's Community Transport Services.

WCC's community transport services supports and assists our communities most vulnerable, isolated and disadvantaged residents to attend their medical and social cohesion appointments. Currently there are 38 active volunteer drivers on the road everyday, excluding weekends.

L2P 60th Milestone Celebration

The L2P Learner Driver Mentor Program which supports disadvantaged youth aged between 16 - 20 years to gain their 120 hours of supervised learner driving experience required for a Victorian driver licence system celebrated their 60th client this year.

WCC's participation in the "Emerge In The North" Arts Program presented by Multicultural Arts Victoria was a great success, and indicative of our commitment to empowering the culturally diverse community we live, and work with.

"Be Bold For Change" was the theme for International Women's Day Celebrations 2017

This event saw the celebration of young women in leadership roles, and promoting the importance of gender equality. Stories shared by guest speakers were empowering, and successful in bringing our municipality's culturally diverse women together to celebrate, and continue to advocate for gender equality.

All proceeds from the raffle has been donated to The International Women's Development Agency which works to advance and protect the rights of diverse women and girls in countries across the Asia Pacific region. IWDA's mission seeks to promote changes in policy, and participate toward gender equality, and the full realisation of women's right to empower women as agents of this change.

Volunteer Week saw us Celebrating WCC'S Volunteers with a luncheon & acknowledgments held at Three Beans & a Farm in Mernda.

This is a great opportunity for volunteers across all programs to come together, meet, and celebrate their selfless contributions to the organisation.

Monday 14th August 2017 - WCC's Mernda Outreach Community Information and Referral Services commenced at the Mernda Villages Community Activity Centre.

The service aims to support the needs of residents in Mernda, and the new and developing area.

Open Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9am - 5pm.

Board

February 14th 2017 - Board colleague Rosa and I attended a morning tea at the Parliament House Canberra held by Volunteering Australia, State, and Territory Peak Partners as a part of a National Advocacy Campaign for the Strengthening Communities Grants Program which is currently the primary source of funding for volunteer support services. This national campaign was successful in retaining the original funding, thus keeping many workers in their roles supporting volunteers, and volunteer opportunities.

It has been a busy, productive and exciting year for the Board. Amongst many other business, it was great to see the completion of the Board Charter, relevant Board policies, and successful fundraising commitments obtained.

I would like to thank all current Board Members of 2016/17, Harry Jenkins, Maureen Corrigan, Rosa Harrison, Cr Sam Alessi, Randa Rafiq, Rolf Peake, Vicki Selvaggio, Owen Waldi, and Elissa Andreacchio, for your hard work, dedication, and support to the organisation.

A special thanks to Maureen Corrigan OAM, now moving on, for the many years of commitment, much valued work and contribution to the Board of Management, dating back to 1987.

A valued friend of WCC, we look forward to your continued support, and wish you all the very best for the future.

In conclusion, I would sincerely like to once again thank the Board, CEO, Staff, and Volunteers on the successful delivery of work this year.

It has been an honour and a pleasure to observe the organisational growth, and excellent work delivered to the community.



NESSIE SAYAR

President, Whittlesea Community Connections



CEO's report

It has been a big year.. we have really delivered for our community, we have reinvigorated our community engagement focus with a new team, we refreshed our office and our logo to be more welcoming to everyone and to bring us together and remind us of our shared purpose.

We have strengthened our focus on prevention, improved our casework practice and done a lot of critical thinking about what we are doing. We have continued to focus on local responses to issues and needs within our communities - particularly family violence, financial hardship, gambling harm and people seeking asylum.

Thank you to our volunteers who continue to define who we are and give us the capacity to do what we do.

The staff are amazing. They supported each other through a number of leadership changes and a flood and then came together to plan our strategic direction with energy and commitment. The work they do everyday, and the approach they have to making others lives better, is inspirational.

The Board has been focused on improving governance and reporting and they have been a tremendous support to me in my new role. I have also learnt a lot from our clients, and appreciate their willingness to share their experiences and give feedback about our services and programs.

Our partnerships, particularly those with Spectrum, City of Whittlesea, Plenty Valley Community Health, Hume Whittlesea Primary Care Partnership, La Trobe University, Victoria Legal Aid, Whittlesea Emergency Relief Network partners, Whittlesea CALD Family Violence Project partners and Thomastown West Primary School shape and inform our work everyday. I am thankful we have them with us to strengthen our impact and pick us up when the going gets tough.

This year has been a personal and professional journey for me that in many ways is mirrored by our organisational journey – we are building on all our skills, experience, passion and our knowledge and connections across communities to reimagine the work that can be done, and needs to be done. We will continue to harness our resources for the greatest community benefit.

This annual report highlights some of our key milestones and 16/17 highlights and it showcases some of the ways we seek to make a positive difference in the lives of others.

Alex Haynes

ALEX HAYNES

CEO, Whittlesea Community Connections

OUR VISION is for a Whittlesea in which people and agencies work together to make a positive difference to our community, ensuring that everyone has equal access to the community's resources and services.

About Us

Our values

- Self determination
- Independence
- Not for profit
- Confidential
- Non judgmental
- Diversity

Our approach

- We welcome everyone in our community
- Our services are free
- We keep your information private
- We have bilingual workers and volunteers and use interpreters
- We support your rights
- We stand independent from the government or any other organisation
- We support you to build hope and confidence

What we do

WCC identifies and breaks down barriers to accessing information and specialised support services and works towards building individual and community resilience. As a client-centred, community-led organisation, WCC works alongside individuals, families and groups to create opportunities to access information and services and to build and strengthen connections through:

- Community Development activities and events
- Community Information and referral
- Community Transport
- Emergency relief and casework support
- Housing brokerage no interest loans and support
- Legal information, advice, casework and legal education
- Migration advice
- Road Safety and L2P Driving Programs
- Settlement advice, casework and support groups
- Social work casework service
- Tax Help
- The Harmony Arabic newsletter
- Volunteer Resource Service
- Women in Work childcare social enterprise
- Youth work and homework support
- Specialist Family Violence Casework from Crossroads Youth and Family Services
- Legal casework and specialist Centrelink support from Victorian Legal Aid



Client Services team connects community members with the information, services and referrals they need. Through emergency relief, housing brokerage no interest loans and case management we provide financial and other support to those experiencing financial hardship.

Settlement Services team provides support, casework, groupwork advocacy and referrals to newly arrived migrants and refugees to assist them with settlement in Australia. The team supports people to gain information, establish new connections and networks and address the settlement issues they face as they make a new life for themselves.

Legal Services team provides community education, advice and casework in areas including family law, family violence, fines and infringements, immigration, motor vehicles and crime compensation across six locations.

Community Engagement team works in partnership with the community and relevant stakeholders to increase the opportunities for community information, engagement and participation. The team includes community information, prevention, lead casework, volunteering resources and community led and place based initiatives like the Thomastown West Community Hub. The team promotes the Whittlesea Community Engagement principles across the City of Whittlesea.

Community Transport and Road Safety team provides community transport across the city, L2P driving program for young people and bike and road safety programs. They have 6 buses, 4 cars and more than 40 bikes and 55 trained volunteer drivers and mentors.

Where we are

- Shop 111 Pacific Epping, Epping (Monday to Friday) – All services
- Thomastown West Community Hub, 98 Main Street, Thomastown (Monday to Sunday) – Learning clubs and homework support, adult English, refugee support groups, school holiday programs, community meeting space
- Mernda Villages Community Activity Centre, Mernda (Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays) - Community information and referral, Emergency Relief and Casework
- General legal advice and casework offered in Mill Park, Epping, Laurimar, Mernda, Whittlesea township
- Community Information and referral in Whittlesea township (Thursdays)
- L2P driving education offered across Whittlesea with cars stationed in Epping and Whittlesea township
- Settlement support at Melbourne Polytechnic (Mondays)
- www.whittleseacc.org.au
- www.facebook.com/whittleseacommunityconnections



Highlights



The **Community Transport Service** celebrated **ten years** of operation in September 2016. This was an important achievement. From humble beginnings ten years ago with two vehicles, one decade later the service continues to make a meaningful contribution to local resident's lives. There are now seven vehicles, thirty eight active volunteers and over one thousand registered passengers. Nearly twelve thousand trips were completed in the last year. Some significant milestones included gaining Bus Accreditation status in 2013 and the purchase of a twenty four seater bus. Our anniversary was also an opportunity to show our gratitude for the local support that has enabled the service to be what it is today.

At the **60th Learner Milestone Celebration** the L2P program celebrated the 60th young person to get their probationary licence since the program began seven years ago. The celebration saw past and current volunteer / learners come together to share their stories and experiences. The celebration also saw high profile personalities and local business grace the occasion; our elected representatives, Council staff, Victoria Police, VicRoads, L2P sponsors, mentors and young people and L2P steering committee members were in attendance.

L2P expansion is supporting more young people be safe and get their licence. Given the demand for the program from our growth corridor, Whittlesea Community Connections, with the support of Northern Kia and Rotary Club Whittlesea, acquired a new vehicle to be stationed at the Whittlesea Police station to support young learners in the township, Doreen, Mernda, Kinglake West and Kinglake and surrounding rural areas. From 1 July 2017 L2P is expanding to deliver 'Enhance L2P' that provides targeted opportunities for young people who are at risk of being involved in the youth justice system.

In April 2017 we combined our **community transport and road safety** programs to form a new team. The team includes 28 volunteer mentors for L2P and 37 volunteer drivers for Community Transport. As you can see from the photo (right) they are a happy bunch working well together under Parry's leadership.

Our legal service and La Trobe University Law School have established a **successful clinical program** for the benefit of students of the university, in which the students attend the program as a subject offered by the University, and advise clients and act for them in casework. The legal service retains oversight of all files and

advices in conjunction with an academic from the University who holds a practicing certificate. A weekly meeting considers all pending files and action thereunder, and strategic direction. The program is now in its second year and enhances a partnership with the University to the benefit of its students and the clients of the legal service.

The legal service has had dedicated **family violence lawyers** since the start of 2016 with financial support from the Department of Justice and Regulation. We advise clients on Intervention orders, offer court representation where appropriate, prepare applications for compensation where there is evidence of injury be physical or psychological; and Police liaison, where there is language or other difficulty. On occasion, the legal service has offered assistance up to and including final hearing, where there is evidence of severe injustice apparent on the facts of the matter.

In partnership with the City of Whittlesea we hosted **Whittlesea's first Volunteer Expo**, on 24 May 2017 at the Great Hall, City of Whittlesea. With over thirty volunteer involving organisations represented at the event including the SES, RSPCA, Second Chance Animal Rescue, Vinnies, The Smith Family, Oriel Services, Link Transport, Whittlesea Community House, Extended Families, and YMCA. With such a multitude of roles on offer it was an excellent opportunity for local residents to be informed and understand how they can make a difference in their community. Thank you to U3A, a volunteer led organisation who provided the music and to the Whittlesea Partnership on Volunteering and Community Engagement members who formulated ideas and helped organise the Expo. After positive feedback received from attendees the partnership will run it again in 2018.





One of our strategic priorities is to raise others' voices so when an opportunity to speak at the Hume City Council Leading Volunteers conference in May 2017 came up we encouraged one of our volunteer champions, Hatim Mansor, to represent WCC along with our Volunteer Resource Service worker, Michelle Newton. The pair made a great team sharing their expertise on '**Attracting volunteers from a multicultural background**'. After the presentation many of the attendees provided positive feedback and shared their experience of volunteering as new arrivals to Australia. 65% of people who present at WCC's Volunteer Resource Service are from a CALD background and are seeking to connect with their local community through volunteering.



This year our International Women's Day event was held on the 10th of March. The theme for the event was "**Celebrating young women's leadership**" and we invited 3 young women to talk about their journey and achievements. The guest speakers were Cr Emilia Lisa Sterjova, City of Whittlesea's youngest ever Councillor; Amelia Ryan, a young business women and Maryem Enweya, a young university student who also volunteers at the Whittlesea Community Legal service. Over 70 community members enjoyed lunch together and entertainment including the Thomastown West Primary School band and choir.

Women in Work, our mobile childcare service that provides qualified women from refugee backgrounds to provide care to children whose parents are attending services, programs, education and training and group activities grew substantially in 2017. We now have 13 trained bi-cultural childcare workers.



Thomastown West Community Hub

continues to grow and offer more opportunities for students, families and local residents. With the support of the Ward Ambler Foundation we established a new partnership with Melbourne Playback Theatre to run drama workshops at the Hub for year 3 and 4 students. The drama sessions work on developing students' storytelling skills, and building confidence and team work skills. These sessions received great feedback from the students involved and we will run another set of workshops in Term 4 2017. In addition to strengthening our partnership with Thomastown West Primary School, PRACE and The Smith Family we are building community partnerships; ELIA Persian Language School started running classes on Saturdays at the Hub in April 2017 and the Kurdish Women's Association are running regular sessions there also. **Nina is a master of school holiday activities and organised** exciting excursions for TWPS students - to Melbourne Writers Festival (August 2016), Altona Beach for beach safety lesson (January 2017) and Werribee Zoo (April 2017)

To recognise and celebrate Refugee Week this year, WCC partnered with Multicultural Arts Victoria (MAV), the City of Whittlesea, the Brotherhood of St Laurence, and AMES Australia to create **Emerge in the North**, a brand new festival sharing local talent, vibrant colours and infectious sounds from our diverse cultures. For the over 1200 community members present throughout the day, *Emerge in the North* was the first of its kind in the Whittlesea region, building on Refugee Week celebrations of the past and MAV's successful Emerge programs from across Victoria. The main event was a free community-based festival, profiling the Sudanese Nuba community, a very recently arrived Syrian youth marching band and a range of other emerging

local musicians, dancers and performers who shared the stage with more established performers and musicians. The festival will grow in the future to support artists in the outer northern region.

In response to the humanitarian crisis occurring in Syria and Iraqi, an additional humanitarian entrants intake of 12,000 was allocated in 2015 to those displaced by conflict. The vast majority of these Syrian and Iraqi arrivals to Victoria settled in the Hume/Whittlesea region in 16/17. In response, WCC initiated a new **Syrian Community Engagement Project** which is welcoming people to the region by providing key settlement information, resources and support. While Iraqis have been in our community for a number of years and have some strong community based links and support, the Syrian community is relatively new to the region. Even those who have been here a few months are showing a high level of enthusiasm and energy for their new country and are very willing to contribute to the wider community.

Many new arrivals can be nervous about approaching organisations and facilities in their local community without knowing what to expect. In order to combat these fears and promote confidence to access local supports, WCC initiated a **Services Bus Tour** for recently arrived adults studying English at Melbourne Polytechnic, which took them to Plenty Valley Community Health, Centrelink, Thomastown Library, our Epping Office and Thomastown West Community Hub and the Thomastown Recreation and Aquatic Centre. Participants were able to ask questions, hear about services and eligibility and understand the options available to them should they need help.

This year we expanded our support for newly arrived students in primary schools by establishing four new family learning clubs with Findon, Epping, Lalor and Lalor North Primary schools, supported by the **Refugee Education Support Program** (RESP). RESP is a partnership between Centre for Multicultural Youth, Foundation House, the Department of Education & Training and the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria. With the support of our dedicated volunteers our role in partnership with the four schools has been to provide holistic and targeted learning support programs to strengthen the connections between student achievement and wellbeing and to support student, family, school and community engagement. These clubs are providing a much needed additional educational support, especially for those who have missed many years of education due to their experience as refugees.

This year we gave free **migration advice** to 45 people to help them to sponsor family members living in danger overseas. Many community members are significantly affected by violence in their home country with grave fears for immediate family and community members, especially those in Iraq and Syria. Knowing that their family might have the chance to join them in safety can ease the stress on new arrivals so they are able to move on and build their new lives in Australia.

In February 2017 we gathered together to reflect on our values, our heritage and our communities' needs and to challenge ourselves to determine what priorities we needed to adopt to meet those needs. We had an amazing day largely due to the excellent facilitation of Jaap and Evelyn Jonkman from Conversant Consulting and the energy of the staff, volunteers and partners who joined us (Special thanks to Roy, Jon, Carmen and Stelvio for braving it). Our workplan for 17/18 will help us to deliver on our agreed priorities.



Khadija

a client since 2005

"I came here, to Whittlesea Community Connections, twenty days after coming in Australia as a refugee from Sudan, 14 August 2005. I came with my six children, the youngest was two years old, the oldest was 20.

I am very happy for finding this community, WCC, because when I came from my country, coming from zero, I can't know the spelling of my own name. I never went to school, this one difficult for me.

When I get the house, I came home one day and there was no electricity or gas because I can't pay the bills, I don't know the bills. The letter coming to me but I don't know to read my own name.. very hard. When I come here to WCC to tell Emma, she give me interpreter, I say everything cut off in my house and she said did you get a bill, I said what bill?. Emma said to bring all the letters I got and she contacted the companies, I bring everything in, all the mail.

Emma helped me, Emma fixed, that was my first problem. Second problem, I can't know my house.. I can't ask someone where to go, what my address, my house number, so Emma got someone, a volunteer to come to my house every week and help with everything, to buy food, sometime I bought the food, and they said that's not good for your kids, past its date, get help to pay bills, get ticket for bus.. when I got to train station to get ticket I can't, can't ask.

Emma bought me the ticket for the train, when the ticket finished I came here and she gave me another one.. very good, need to get around. Volunteer from WCC gave me a card with my address.

Emma and Phillipe sent me the bus for me and my kids every Saturday to have meeting for learning English, kids went in another room to do activities. There was an Arabic interpreter, I speak Arabic and I didn't know anyone before, but I met friends in the group, went to others houses. Every year different people came to the group, there are still six or seven Sudanese and South Sudanese in my area. Before there were about 15 but some moved to Shepparton, Melton, St Albans and Sunshine, Tarneit, Werribee..

When I been here 7 years Emma send me someone to drive me around for practice to get my licence. One day Phillipe said now that you are good driver we go to VicRoads and I said, no no no.. I was so nervous, I couldn't believe I can drive.

I came to the Saturday group and I learn everything – I know to pay the bills, I know my name, my kids name, I get licence, I am free, I get

my licence and straight away went to the job.

I go cleaning in other people's houses, save money and then bought a house. Before I babysit in houses for two families for four years. Two mothers are sick, they are my friends, when I look after the kids, I am cleaning the house, washing because she's a single mother who is sick. I love to help, I want to help, something no good I want to fix. Before that I do family daycare in my home for three years, got my certificate.. but it was hard to find new kids when two families moved.. so I go back to the cleaning.

I live in South Morang, in 2012 I bought my house, because I am tired for every years move around different areas. When something wrong no one will fix, but now I'm happy, no one knock my door to visit the house. I am a grandmother with two grandchildren.

Some things are still hard, I have the job, my kids help me, I want more work, more cleaning work, money not enough to pay the mortgage. I need insurance, pay rates.. not easy. I want to leave message for everyone that I need work.

I have Certificate 3 in Childcare, when I get that work I will do it but now I am learning English four days with PRACE in Mill Park.

When I came here it was very hard, now I want to help someone with their problems. When you fall down, good to have someone to help, to pick you up, I was coming here to WCC all the time.. Someone like me coming to this country new, now I want to help, when you come from other country, different language, different culture, it's not easy, this one difficult.. I would help with shopping, maybe every Saturday, help with everyday things.. someone coming new can't drive, everything is different, you can't know everything, don't know the food, can't know how much it costs, when I came I take all the food I like and then my money not enough, then come back with other food, I was choosing the wrong food.

It's the best thing, I am very happy, I can't believe I drive the car, never in my country I drive, I can drive the donkey with a cart.. You know I drive, I got the house, I am okay with English, can make appointments, two kids finished university, two more in university.. in my country kids wouldn't go to school, there was no money to send anyone to school.. I can't believe how it's worked out.

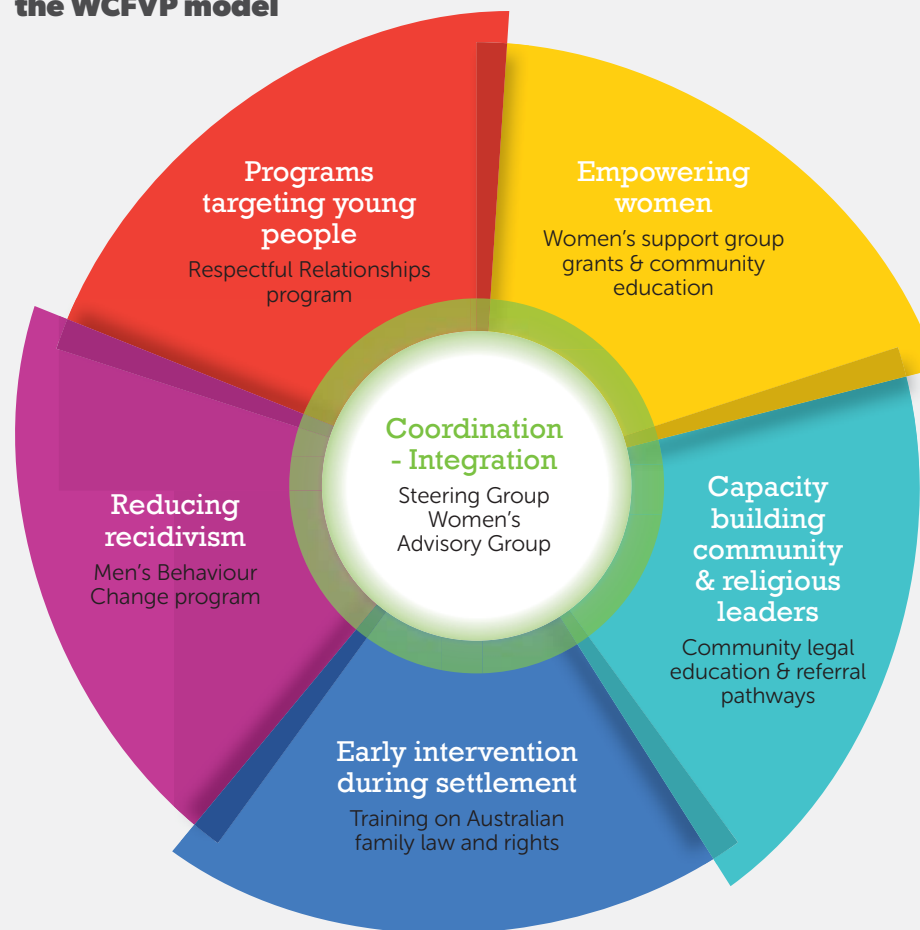
Very happy to come back here.. it's been a long time.
Good for me, its nice"



Making a difference by working together

Whittlesea CALD Family Violence Project (WCFVP)

Six elements of the WCFVP model



Whittlesea CALD Family Violence Project (WCFVP) brings together a range of key agencies to design, deliver and evaluate an integrated place-based model to reduce and prevent family violence in Whittlesea's CALD communities. It works across prevention, early intervention and response, aligning with the Victorian Framework for Primary Prevention of Violence against Women.

2016 saw the culmination of Stage one of the Whittlesea CALD Communities Family Violence Project, with the completion of an extensive evaluation produced by Dr Deborah Western from Monash University highlighting the project's achievements and challenges since 2013. The evaluation found many successes, including its strong collaboration and grounding in the community, an increase in CALD women's access to knowledge of family violence and services, and increased access to perpetrator interventions for Whittlesea's Arabic-speaking community. Following evaluation, the project partners began planning phase two of the project.

WCC leads the partnership with Crossroads Youth and Family Services, InTouch Multicultural Centre against Family Violence, City of Whittlesea, UnitingCare Kildonan, Northern Family and Domestic Violence Service - Berry Street, Plenty Valley Community Health and Victoria Police.

whittlesea
CALD communities
family violence
project

Whittlesea Interagency Taskforce on Gambling (WITOG)



"Putting the **health** & **wealth** back into Whittlesea."

Since 2012, Whittlesea Community Connections has been an active member of the Whittlesea Interagency Taskforce on Gambling (WITOG). WITOG is a network of agencies committed to preventing gambling harm in the City of Whittlesea through joint advocacy, localised research and awareness-raising.

In June 2016, the Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation (VCGLR) provided notification that the Commercial Hotel in South Morang had submitted an application for the approval of 40 poker machines within their premises. Following significant community pushback in the form of over 100 objections to Council over the Commercial Hotel's application, WITOG member agencies coordinated their advocacy against the installation of the poker machines in this venue.

We drew on our community legal expertise to strengthen advocacy against increasing the number of poker machines in the City of Whittlesea. WCC provided a formal objection to VCGLR that in turn opposed granting the pokies licence to the Commercial Hotel. Additionally, when the ruling was challenged and the case was elevated to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) – Whittlesea Community Connections Principal Solicitor Principal Solicitor advocated for WCC to be added as an official 'party' to the court hearing, enabling us to represent our clients experiencing harm from gambling and advocate not have pokies at the Commercial Hotel in South Morang. A final ruling from VCAT on the Commercial Hotel's application for pokies will be announced in late 2017.

WCC is collaborating with Plenty Valley Community Health, UnitingCare Kildonan, Crossroads Youth and Family Services, Hume Whittlesea Primary Care Partnership, Women's Health in the North and YMCA Whittlesea.

Equity, Health & Wellbeing Project

Equity, Health & Wellbeing Project is a partnership project that aims to enhance Plenty Valley Community Health and Whittlesea Community Connections capacity to identify and support women experiencing family violence living in the municipality's growth suburbs with a focus on prevention, early identification and intervention. Governed by a steering group, an inter-agency working group supports the work on the ground. In the first year of the project we improved understanding of different disciplines across the two organisations, established a secondary legal consult service for community service and health practitioners, trialled the use of a family violence legal health check and placing a family violence lawyer within an early childhood education and care setting. With this as the foundation we look forward to further developments and community outcomes in 2018.

WCC is partnering with Plenty Valley Community Health (PVCH), Hume Whittlesea Primary Care Partnership and La Trobe University. This project is made possible by Victoria Legal Aid Innovation and Transformation Fund.



Funded and supported through the Community Legal Centre Innovation and Transformation Fund

Whittlesea Multicultural Issues Network

Whittlesea Multicultural Issues Network is a place based settlement planning network facilitated by Whittlesea Community Connections which aims to increase the life opportunities and resources available to migrants and refugees and address any barriers that newly arrived community members face in settling in the City of Whittlesea and surrounds. WMIN assists service providers to achieve better client outcomes through effective service coordination, information sharing and a focus on emerging issues and changing community needs.

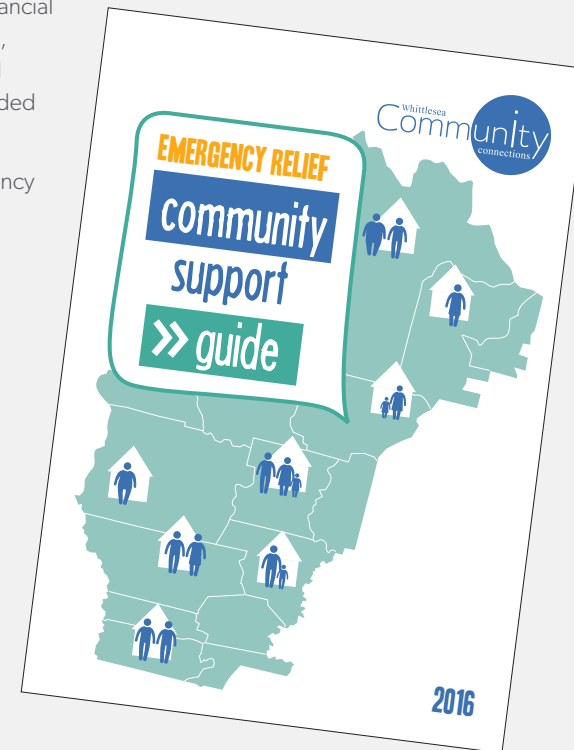


Whittlesea Emergency Relief Network

Facilitated by Whittlesea Community Connections, the Whittlesea Emergency Relief (ER) Network was established in 2010 to bring together local ER providers and other interested parties who provide services to residents of the City of Whittlesea. The network meets regularly to share knowledge and resources, and is an avenue for advocating for the needs of our community, including increased resources for ER providers.

The ER Network aims to collaboratively address issues and concerns around disadvantage in the local community. The ER network members actively participate in initiatives that increase resources for the network, advocate for the needs of community members accessing our services and promote the ER network as a broad based community resource for the municipality. These services work with vulnerable people in the municipality of Whittlesea who are in financial crisis and seeking assistance. Each year, these services assist thousands of local families with community lunches, breakfast programs, food hampers, financial assistance, housing support, case management, food and petrol vouchers and other material aid assistance. Much of the service delivery is provided by dedicated volunteers.

In September 2016 WCC launched the Emergency Relief Community Support Guide made possible through City of Whittlesea Community Development grant. The Community Support Guide is a resource to assist volunteers from a range of agencies when working with the community. It provides information about the range of services available for community members within the City of Whittlesea. The Guide is currently being updated. Members include ADRA.





Putting the Health and Wealth Back Into Whittlesea

Between 2015-17 Whittlesea Community Connections received funding from the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation through the *Local Prevention Grants Program* to test a settings-based approach to preventing harm from gambling. Gambling is a serious issue in the City of Whittlesea with local residents losing over \$106 million dollars to pokies alone in the last 12 months. Additionally, according to the Victorian Commission for Liquor and Gambling Regulation our municipality is home to four of *Victoria's Top Ten Highest Loss Pokies Venues*.

To address this community issue, WCC worked with local businesses to identify opportunities to de-normalise gambling in the workplace. Businesses involved included City of Whittlesea, Melbourne Market, YMCA Whittlesea, Plenty Valley Community Health and Whittlesea Community Connections.

A diverse range of activities were implemented across businesses to start conversations about gambling and the workplace and define what employers viewed as 'responsible practice' in relation to this issue. Activities included:

- Delivering information sessions to managers about gambling harm, so they could better understand the 'warning signs' and ways to respond.
- Supporting businesses to develop workplace gambling policies, outlining what behaviours businesses viewed as 'acceptable' and 'not acceptable' in relation to gambling and the workplace.
- Providing financial literacy training to staff, enabling them to make more informed financial choices.

- Delivering an awareness raising campaign encouraging local businesses to commit to not visit gambling venues for workplace outings (e.g. Christmas parties, meetings, social gatherings). 45 City of Whittlesea businesses became supporters of this campaign.

The lessons learnt from implementing the *Putting the Health and Wealth Back into Whittlesea* project have been summarised and included in a WCC developed toolkit for City of Whittlesea businesses interested to prevent and reduce gambling harm in the workplace. This toolkit and other resources for businesses can be found on our website www.whittleseacc.org.au. Resources for businesses are available www.whittleseacc.org.au

This project was made possible by Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation.

Mossat

a social work student on placement at WCC

I did an undergraduate degree in Development Studies in Zimbabwe. In 2014 I graduated and worked, at the same place that I did my placement for a year, they loved me, and called me back.

I was lucky to get a job, because I came from a small town and had good social connections. Many of the people I graduated with still haven't got a job two years later. There are no jobs, the industries have collapsed, everything, never know what is going to happen.

I worked on domestic violence prevention in rural areas. We identified that rural women were marginalised because of culture.. it's like when a woman marries they move into the family of the husband. They are obliged to agree with everything the husband says and do what he says, and they don't recognise emotional, verbal or financial abuse as family violence. Most of my work was raising awareness among the women that these things are not okay, and it's not okay to keep quiet.

The difficulty is when a woman comes forward and discloses and say the man gets jailed for one or two years and comes back to the village, what would happen around that.. there is a need to create crisis accommodation, places where women can go if they are experiencing family violence and whilst they are there we can train them with life skills, little projects so they don't

have to rely on husband's income. Most women stay in abusive relationships because they rely on the partner for income. So they are thinking 'If I leave then what, I am going to be in poverty'. The man is the head of the family so he has the right, the right over everything. It's normal, not something that women really like to disclose because it's also about the family, shaming the family, she's bad mouthing the husband so it brings shame.

Our work was also getting women to speak up in meetings. Most of the community meetings we had we wanted to include men as they need to be part of the solution.

We wanted to show that women can also talk and contribute in the meetings.. has to do with culture.. men are always given the power to talk and women are usually looked down on in most rural communities. We were trying to get rid of those norms. Something I really loved to do.

So the focus is on educating them, giving them skills to start something else, be self-sufficient, provide for their children. The project is one of those things that really pains me as I had to

leave before it was finished, particularly the accommodation.

I left Zimbabwe for Australia in February 2016 to study a Masters in International Development but because I was repeating the same sort of subjects, I wasn't motivated to keep going. I said let me do social work, and I swapped this year.

I didn't know what I was getting myself into, wanted something different. I knew I had a little bit of experience in family violence but it is different in developing countries.. I really wasn't sure. Now I am here I love this organisation, I have learnt a lot. When I came I was really raw. So many things I didn't know about like refugees and the sort of challenges they face, financial hardship... it was like a shocker because I didn't imagine in Australia anyone would have these problems and be struggling like this here.

Working here (WCC) has been an eye opener in terms of really educating me. I never thought of traditional owners of this land, it never occurred to me that there were people here all that time ago. I am aware of indigenous people through my studies in international development so I had some background not the history, and I think its

something that is important if I am in Australia to know more about the history. It's important to know these things.. we need avenues for people to know these things, learn about the history.. You guys, what you are doing here is amazing

One of the reasons I had to come here is there is no future, the economic and political environment are so unpredictable especially when it is around election time. We are having elections next year and he wants to go again, the President of my country. I remember in 2007 I was doing Year 8.. my dad, he used to work with a lot of white people, people in my country are so racist against white people, saying they got all the good land and left the unproductive land, it is time for us to fight for our country, to get it back and kick the white people out. But some of the white people were born in Zimbabwe so it is their country too. My dad is of the opposition party, it's a no no, you put your family at risk, everything is at risk and you are in danger.

I was at a boarding school, so my parents would come and visit, but there was a time they didn't come to visit, I was angry and frustrated, then one of my mums friends came and brought some things including a letter, everything was not ok but we will pray it gets better. I was really worried. At the end of term my dad came to pick me up in a different car.. when I asked him how he was he said 'I had a near death experience, I was assaulted, beaten, so bad I had to have surgery'. A lot of things happen around the election time.

When I finish this study, I would like to stay here and get experience and when things are stable at home I can go back to Zimbabwe. I am passionate about women and children, and people in power they don't see, those people marginalised, they suffer. I was shocked in those areas far away, they are so disadvantaged. When things normalise, I want to try to rebuild my country for generations to come but I don't know

when that will be. I am shocked, he's 93, who votes for this guy.. really people are scared, it's hard. People don't want to vote for him, people are so scared, intimidated. They take advantage of rural people, they are in poverty, no education, no services, so in campaigns they bribe them, promise them a lot, their minds are easily won. Last election there were rumours of vote rigging, they never revised the voter registration, so a lot of people died but they are still in the system.

The first impression I got here is that you promote services to people, bring yourself out there, to help them with different things, if it's something that you can't help with you link them to others. In my country there are no organisations like this, they are non existent, there is no place that you can walk in, present your problem and get help, it's amazing work you do.. and you are not focussing on one group, you are welcoming everyone.



Making a difference

improving our practice

This year we worked on identifying ways we can improve our practices and processes to ensure high quality service provision to clients and our community.

Strengthening casework practice

A number of initiatives have been introduced including regular multidisciplinary casework meetings, debriefing support for caseworkers and students on placement across WCC and case coordination across multidisciplinary teams for complex client cases. Katriece took on the role of Lead caseworker to provide leadership and direction in the ongoing development of integrated practice, particularly in the area of case work, coordinate casework across WCC, lead the development, guidance and sharing of knowledge informing referral services and resources available for caseworkers working with clients and community. We are also looking at ways to support the active engagement and participation of Whittlesea residents in the planning, delivery and evaluation of casework services.

Focusing on prevention

To increase coordination of organisation wide prevention planning, community education and collaborative work we created a new role of Prevention Coordinator. Bianca is working hard to

- Assess community needs and identify issues negatively affecting the health and wellbeing of individuals
- Coordinate strategies to address the root causes of various social issues (e.g. family violence, gender inequity, gambling, social isolation, poor mental health, financial vulnerability, crime etc.)
- Apply an 'information lens' to WCC's work, ensuring residents have the tools and skills needed to become empowered and improve their own health and wellbeing

Volunteer coordination

On returning from maternity leave in April 2017 Vanessa bravely took on the new role of WCC Volunteer Coordinator. This role was created to recognise the importance of volunteers to the organisation, and the importance of planning ongoing volunteer management and support. It also helps our volunteers feel satisfied that they are making an important contribution. Vanessa is responsible for recruitment, orientation, management, development and support of WCC's volunteers, particularly the work of reception, intake and assessment, para legal, administration and tax help volunteers and contributes to the ongoing development of WCC's volunteer management, processes and procedures.

Vanessa and the current volunteers are working together to improve the operation of reception, strengthen the approach of mutual respect and support between volunteers and between volunteers and staff, focus on giving reliable and consistent information to clients, making appointments, and seeking timely support from staff.

Mernda: testing a new entry point for community information and referral

In August 2017 we started a new community information and referral service from the Mernda Villages Community activity Centre. The aim of the Mernda entry point is to provide:

- A locally accessible information and referral service for people living in Mernda and surrounding areas
- A single entry point for internal and external referrals

- Greater capacity to respond to people experiencing complex and multiple issues
- Legal telephone advice service where appropriate
- Casework and Emergency Relief appointments

The staff and community information volunteers at Mernda are providing information and referral to local community members - connecting people to relevant services, programs and activities. They are undertaking intake and assessment for people experiencing complex and multiple needs and providing supported referrals to different services as relevant and appropriate. They are responding to clients in crisis situations and mapping local community information to build a local community directory of services, programs and activities. New volunteers are welcome and will be supported to access and participate in the Community Information Workers course.



Making a difference

through social connection + groups



Persian Men's Group

Our adult settlement support groups provide information for new comers about living in Australia, English language support and practice, a chance to learn new skills, and opportunities to make social connections. Our Arabic speaking women's and men's groups, the Persian speaking women's group and the Refugee Support Group have been active for a number of years - they are a place where people can gain strength and insight from being with others in a similar situation and gain information and skills that helps them grow in confidence to participate actively in our community.

This year, with some additional funds, we established a new group for Persian speaking men who are seeking asylum as we recognized these men often carried a heavy load in supporting themselves and their families through prolonged periods of uncertainty. The program was very varied – they heard from Tenant's Union about renting, practiced English for looking for work, received road safety and legal information, and went swimming, cycling and ten pin bowling. The group was a gateway to other services available to the participants such as seeking legal advice. We developed a partnership with Drummond Street Services to deliver the 'Healthy Body, Healthy Mind, Healthy Heart' program where the men were able to discuss changes to their roles and the challenges they face in seeking asylum.

'We have to experience many things in Australia. Attending these sessions, you can change your mind, find something new about living together (in a different country). When I'm here, I feel free and don't think about the outside. I don't have stress in the group. Mentally it helps me to be here. You can share your issues. I really appreciate what Jackie has shown me.'

Multicultural Girls Group

Hayley, our youth worker, has had a very busy year supporting newly arrived young people through holiday programs, sports days, swimming, bike education, cricket programs and employment support. Following the success of our boys social soccer program in partnership with City of Whittlesea and YMCA, we recognized the need to better address the needs of isolated girls and young women. Hayley and Nina, our Thomastown West Hub Coordinator, created a multicultural girls group which gathers weekly to strengthen social and support networks in a safe and inclusive environment. Activities for the girls, who have Iranian, Iraqi, Afghani, Indian and Lebanese backgrounds, have included art and craft, conversational English practice, dancing, cooking & sports such as volleyball, basketball & roller-skating. They are enjoying being together, exploring their similarities and supporting one another to gain confidence in English.

Whittlesea CALD women's group grant program

Research tells us that the more socially connected women are, the less vulnerable they may be to family violence. The aim of the Whittlesea CALD women's group grants program is to support the establishment and growth of groups that encourage women in Whittlesea to:

- Build their social connections and networks
- Increase knowledge of their rights and services
- Raise and discuss issues affecting them and their families
- Build confidence to access local services including family violence services
- Take on leadership roles within groups, and participate in the wider Whittlesea community

- Work together to plan activities, develop the group and its sustainability

By building social connections, the groups allow women more opportunities to share their experiences and support each other to connect to the various supports in the community. The inclusion of an informed family violence focus within the women's groups alongside another more explicit group purpose of general support and life skills has been an effective way to provide information about family violence to CALD women in their local communities.

"We don't have family here, we were friends first and we wanted to do something that included our children and to put some structure around it. Back home we would have had moral and physical support but here it is very hard and having a sisterhood means that if something happens you can ring someone and know that someone will help. The group has helped us a lot, monthly meetings are big for us, we only have each other and we want our children to benefit from it too. We laugh – we belong to something. The group helps us recreate home" African Sisterhood

"There were no Sri Lankan women's groups in Whittlesea and we never thought about having a women's only group. It has given us a different experience, it's fun, gives us a break and we learn a lot of things like art and craft. We also received information about family violence" Sri Lankan Women's Group

"I love the group. When I am here, I feel like all my worries of the last 40 years disappear" CALD Women's Art Class (Mill Park Library)

With funding from the Victorian Womens Trust and Sunshine and Crocodiles Pty Ltd we have supported 24 groups (more than 350 women) with the CALD Women's groups grants since 2014.

Financial statement



**Statement of Financial
Performance and Other
Comprehensive Income for the
Year Ended 30 June 2017**

Annual Report 2016-17

	Note	2017 \$	2016 \$
Income			
Grants received		2,575,633	2,588,497
Donations		30,542	43,548
Interest		24,639	26,950
Service generated income		97,359	84,256
Other revenue		50,949	38,685
Profit on disposal of fixed assets		-	1,325
		2,779,122	2,783,261
Expenses			
Accounting & book-keeping fees		15,800	43,248
Advertising & marketing		33,888	-
Audit fees		3,949	4,950
Bad Debts		680	-
Bank charges		24	142
Depreciation		51,164	48,615
Interpreting services		6,065	4,795
Immigration assistance		-	14,948
Information technology		41,064	20,417
Insurance		6,426	4,983
Legal practicing certificate		3,509	3,250
Legal library		1,187	165
Meeting expenses		7,331	1,841
Motor vehicle expenses		86,403	87,956
Printing and stationery		17,624	11,667
Police and working with children checks		2,578	911
Postage and couriers		4,838	4,233
Program costs		215,431	364,656
Rent and outgoing		19,643	12,162
Repairs and maintenance		10,808	3,028
Statutory fees		223	272
Subscriptions and memberships		5,056	5,021
Sundry expenses		9,496	9,192
Telephone and internet		32,753	23,857
Volunteers' expenses		5,441	5,406
Wages and related costs		2,201,741	1,864,446
Total expenses		2,783,122	2,540,161
Operating (deficit) surplus before income tax		(4,000)	243,100
Income tax expense	2(d)	-	-
Operating (deficit) surplus for the year		(4,000)	243,100
Other comprehensive income		-	-
Total comprehensive (loss) income for the year		(4,000)	243,100

**Statement of Financial Position
as at 30 June 2017**

	Note	2017 \$	2016 \$
Current Assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	3a	1,360,046	1,290,919
Trade receivables		31,889	28,311
Sundry receivables		10,911	-
Housing loans		1,322	4,398
		1,404,168	1,323,628
Non-Current Assets			
Plant and equipment	4	113,253	139,921
Investments		60	60
		113,313	139,981
Total Assets		1,517,481	1,463,609
Current Liabilities			
Trade creditors		30,321	6,373
Sundry creditors and accruals		28,690	43,900
Grants to be carried forward		520,931	491,297
Provision for employee entitlements	5	336,500	317,000
		916,442	858,570
Total Liabilities		916,442	858,570
Net Assets		601,039	605,039
Equity			
Accumulated surplus		605,039	361,939
Current year (deficit) surplus		(4,000)	243,100
Total Equity		601,039	605,039



**Statement of Changes in Equity
for the Year Ended 30 June 2017**

	Accumulated Surplus \$
Balance as at 1 July 2015	361,939
Surplus for the year	243,100
Balance as at 30 June 2016	605,039
Deficit for the year	(4,000)
Balance as at 30 June 2017	601,039

Note about Equity – Our equity is held in two CUA Multi term deposits; a Loss of Contract Fund and a Growing Communities Fund.

WCC is heavily reliant on government funding. The funding environment is shifting significantly with Federal/State Government policy shifts, tendering practices and preferences for larger providers. The Loss of Contract fund is designed to reduce the negative impact on the community of the loss of one or more funding/service agreements with government. The funds can be used to plan and manage a transition for the community from one provider to another, redesign how WCC are able to respond to community need and ensure we can cover any unforeseen costs with winding up a service.

The City of Whittlesea's resident population is growing quickly and each new development or area has distinct needs and timeframe for development. The Growing Communities fund is to enable Whittlesea Community Connections to establish/develop effective ways to support, inform and connect residents in the CoW's growth areas and to meet the rapidly growing service demands of population.

**Statement of Cash Flows for the
Year Ended 30 June 2017**

	Note	2017 \$	2016 \$
Cash flows from operating activities			
Receipts from operations		3,049,177	3,029,665
Interest received		19,638	26,947
Cash inflows		3,068,815	3,056,612
Payments to suppliers and employees		(2,975,192)	(2,617,515)
Net operating cash flows	3(b)	93,623	439,097
Cash flows from investing activities			
Net payments for plant and equipment		(24,496)	(81,459)
Net investing cash flows		(24,496)	(81,459)
Net increase in cash held		69,127	367,638
Cash at the beginning of the financial year		1,290,919	933,281
Cash at the end of the financial year		1,360,046	1,290,919

The full audited financial statement with accompanying notes is available on our website.

Our volunteers

We are an organisation founded by local volunteers and led by volunteers. Our ability to connect and engage with the community is largely because of the contributions of our volunteers. The care, attention, expertise and commitment of our volunteers keeps WCC strong and focussed on responding appropriately to our local community's needs and aspirations. Fourteen of our current staff members started at WCC as volunteers, including the CEO.

- Paul Dellios
- Souliman Abdo
- David O'Meara
- Chamila Dasanayaka
- Anna Sinclair
- Carl Helgesen
- Shaun Moran
- Noraliza Ayub
- Ayub Nasir
- Haley Bourke
- Loretta Young
- Peter Murray
- Randa Rafiq
- Carl Reid
- Owen Stanley Waldie
- Rolf Peake
- Nadarajah (Bala) Sribalachandran
- Dinny (Sebastian) Jaconis
- Marnie Guthrie
- Lena Gargano-Reddy
- Michael Saleh
- Frank Torcasio
- Alan Roberts
- Martin Booth
- Sylvia Georgiadis
- Shoukry Sidrak
- Sulaika Dilruksheen Dhanapala
- Nessie Sayar
- Gordon Poudfoot
- Alex Roussel
- Igor Pavlovski
- Yanwei Chen
- Tanya D'Souza
- Victoria Mira
- Sandy Newman
- William Hutchins
- Fahima Iria
- Noosha Behshad
- Kandiah Sriskautharajah
- Jaesshanth Yoganathan
- Margaret Rose Terrett
- Kalia Loche
- Caitlyn Smethurst
- Rebecca Gristi
- Eshan Arya
- Kim Luong
- Harriet O'Farrell
- Jamila Xiong
- Lucas Gillard
- Cassandra Stanford
- Sarah Louise Gregg
- Cristal Flood
- Bessie Lim
- Marian Santos
- Hany Abdelmessih
- Emma Hamdan
- Norm Dykes
- Stephen Lewis
- Mary Micallef
- Henry Kupper
- Nathan Pedersen
- Marion Jordan
- Jill El-Khoury
- Tiernan Ahearne
- Belinda Moore- Gilbert
- Steven Chin-Yik Chew
- Melissa Catherine Zonta
- Patrick Smith
- Amma Boakye
- Shanalee Edirisingh
- Elijah Jayabah
- Sandra Aboueid
- Georgia Millen
- Salah Edres
- Karen (Dongmei) Long
- Agok (Aggie) Angok
- Sebastina Paramarajh
- Sophie D'Agostino
- Angela Daniel
- Priya Johnston
- Melody (Chi-Fei) Tsai
- Linda Ciputri
- Yasmin Farah Moussa
- Elissa Andreacchio
- Vicki Ann Selvaggio
- Michelle Patching
- Karamjeet Kaur
- Peter Hudson
- Amanat Azfar
- George Tadrus
- Norman Dykes
- Harsharan (Harry) Gill
- Frank Torcasio
- Hom Naidu
- Tina Battaglia
- Sidharth Dhananjayan
- Rajiv Verma
- Judy Franklin
- Shailja Sharma
- Fauto (Lisa) Lee Tui
- Kenneth Lennox
- Alan Ip
- Paul Wilson
- Delila Balta-Kecic
- Valantina Shamoon
- Rosa Harrison
- Paul Byrnes
- Salad Ismail Ali
- Tanya Jonnalagadda
- Sowmiya Sooriakumaran
- Michael Boulis
- Jiselle Hanna
- Glyniss Warren
- Tom Ondicho
- Ceri Webb
- Sakire Saban
- Dharmasiri Dassanayake
- Stella Gorham
- Kate Pratt
- James Gamm
- Nicola (Nikki) Wemyss
- Helen Said
- Sama Ghanim
- Ray Wyatt
- Nick Metherrall
- Natalie Gurrisi
- Mariam Francis



- Kristyn Cowie
- Vivian Hoang
- Stephanie Girevski
- Safiya Zackariya
- Stephanie Rose Scherping
- Vivianna Hmenia
- Abubakar Rifqi
- Mike Hurley
- Bruce Steele
- Denis Fitzgibbon
- Mossat Nyamurumwa
- Kranthi Chakilam
- Norman Dykes
- Jennifer Galbraith
- Paul Wilson
- Alan Ip
- Adolf Samsa
- Jacklyn Mahood
- Rai Harry Harmohinder
- Khawni Qorban Ali
- Ahmed Ammar
- Jerjis Inam
- Rema Panaligan
- Ariel Vourdoumpa-Kri
- Nancy (Nhac) Nghe
- Natalie Micevski
- Kaying (Karen) Lam
- Stacey Allden
- Spiro Gicev
- Matthew D'Amore
- James Adley
- Thea Johnstone
- Alyson Bryant
- Tatiana Echeverri Restre
- Teagan Manger
- Guneet Kaur Bindra
- Jamshed Ammar Kahn
- Jaclyn Mahood
- Harmonhinder Rai
- Craig Pfanner
- Adolf Samsa
- Hatim Mansor
- Kenneth Lennox
- Faiz Al-falah
- Steven Dalglish
- Elise Davis
- Anjelica Polychronopoulo
- Pedro Borges
- Kelly Bolton
- Paula Abate
- Pat McFadden
- Peter Chivers
- Qorban Ali Khawari
- Chantelle Ormsby
- Brittany Carter
- Katerina Petkovska
- Sandra Mansour
- Drew El Moussalli
- Bhuvneshwari
- Nikki Weymss
- Abeer Albehaar
- Josie Dibella
- Shamis Osman
- Amina Hagi-Hashi
- Erica Ransley
- Parduka Sumedha Abeywickrema
- Olivia Poonan
- Jonathan Lyle Jones
- Hana Hageali
- Jessica Jong
- Suzi Duncan
- Siggi Pfeff
- Rebecca Vitelli
- Marina Goshevska
- Sonali Sehgal
- Jayde Moffatt
- Rachael Davies
- Ubasana Ramesh
- Reza Haidari
- Haryharakrishna Batmesswaran
- Vanessa Petridis
- Bahareh Irannejad
- Katie O'Brien
- Kristen Clement
- Julia Fimiani
- Natalie Potenza
- Gloria Ozougwu
- Sarah Notarianni
- Wilhelmina (Helma) Kohler
- Sukhpreet Kaur
- Joylyn Karunakaran
- Jacklyn Assaf
- David Yap
- Ehab Saweirs
- Alfred Fenech
- Zahraossadat (Ellie) Saadati
- Sarah Abbasinjad
- Carmel Sannino
- Sabina Yesmin
- Preeti Gaur
- Wee Chuan Quek
- Sarah Thomas
- Rodney Alan
- Geeta Geeta
- Khodijah Muladawilah
- Chamani Jayamala Serasinghe
- Jessica McLachlan
- Zara Khan
- Phillip Dzevedukoski
- Catherine Zhang
- Arpita Seth
- Joanna Zhang
- Maryfaye Agapay
- Annelise Mirra
- Claire Quinlivan
- Jeanine Sharp
- Noreen Ahmad
- Hadeel El Safi
- Anastasia Chrisohoidis
- Ginette Beguely
- Marjorie Mcrae
- Minuri (Bulathsing Perera
- Semhar Habteselase
- Matthew Caruana
- Katrina Mauley
- Biljana Cibalevska
- Allison Waring-May
- Zoe Christodoulou
- Jessica Samuel
- Fadime Ibis
- Jack (Jiaqin) Tan
- Amelia Watters
- Leeanne White
- Belen Christine Makiling
- Brittaney Webb
- Cagla Rifat
- Mina Gebraeel
- Catherine Marangos
- Syed Navqi
- Courtney Remington
- Rana Makhoul
- Niati Sharma
- Rita Jaup
- Jacqueline Kahle
- Nitika Saini
- Godwin Samuel
- Dean Marando
- Rowayda Al-Badri
- Kumara Chelvy Velauthapillai
- Trish Mackin
- Tika Suprapti Djainuddin
- Erin Zhang
- Heena Qureshi
- Violetta Mladenova
- Andrew Wilson
- Alexandra Ciaffaglione





Our staff (as at July 2017)

Alex Haynes	CEO
Ann Lightowler	Community Lawyer
Belinda Leon	Client Services Manager
Bianca Opasinis	Lead - Prevention
Caterina Angelis	Social Worker
Chris Howse	Principal Solicitor
Chris Ryan	Community Lawyer
Dalal Sleiman	Settlement Caseworker (leave without pay)
Deepty Cusima	Caseworker
Despina Kouros	Community Lawyer
Edmond Babatunde	Road Safety Coordinator
Emma Antonetti	Community Engagement Manager
Emma O'Neill	Family Violence Lawyer
Georgianna Brooks	Community Transport Worker
Grozda Nedeljkovic	Migration Advisor
Hayley Bateman	Youth Worker
Hiyah Rahman	Group Coordinator
Issa Yusuf	Settlement Caseworker
Jackie Turner	Settlement Support Worker
Jess Bigby	Social Worker
Kate O'Sullivan	Settlement Program Manager
Katie O'Brien	Emergency Relief Coordinator
Katrice Bolden	Lead - Caseworker
Kim Lai	Office Coordinator
Mandy Giannarelli	Women in Work Coordinator
Manel Rouma	Women in Work Support Worker
Michelle Newton	Volunteer Resource and Training Coordinator
Moses Florendo	Community Lawyer
Nina Lim	Thomastown West Community Hub Coordinator
Norma Medawar	Bicultural Community Engagement Worker
Omid Sorkhi	Bicultural Community Engagement Worker
Parry Williams	Community Transport Coordinator
Rema Panaligan	Community Lawyer
Sam Charlesworth	Community Engagement Worker
Sonali Sehgal	Community Transport Support Worker
Tanya Francis	Family Violence lawyer (maternity leave)
Vanessa Galea	Volunteer Coordinator
Vieli Choka	Settlement Case worker

Onwards and upwards - Thank you to the staff we farewelled in 16/17

Anna Hutchens	Client Services Manager
Carmela Raudino	Settlement Case worker
Claire Varley	Partnerships and Projects Program Manager
Haseeb Mian	Community Lawyer
Nathalie Njako	Volunteer Administration – Legal
Peta Fualau	Client Services Program Manager
Rani Flory	Family Violence Lawyer
Sarah Haintz	Settlement Youth Worker
Chandana Rao	Project Worker
Fiona Miller	Playgroup Facilitator

Women In Work childcare workers:

Fawzia Abukalam
Lina Ida
Nagwa Kori
Rachel Kori
Vivian Yang Lee
Ahlam Mina
Emilienne Nibigira
Nafiso Said
Lina Salem







Our partners and supporters

Service Delivery Partners

- City of Whittlesea
- Community Information and Support Victoria (CisVIC)
- La Trobe University Law School
- Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre
- Thomastown West Primary School, PRACE and The Smith Family – Thomastown West Community Hub
- Thomastown Language School
- Victorian Legal Aid

Project Partners

- AMES Australia
- Brotherhood of St Laurence
- Centre for Multicultural Youth
- City of Whittlesea
- Crossroads Youth and Family Services
- Hume Whittlesea Primary Care Partnership (HWPCP)
- InTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence
- La Trobe University Law School
- Plenty Valley Community Health (PVCH)
- Multicultural Arts Victoria
- Northern Domestic and Family Violence Service – Berry Street
- Uniting Care Kildonan
- Victoria Police
- Women's Health in the North
- YMCA Whittlesea

Funding Partners

- Australian Department of Social Services (DSS)
- City of Whittlesea
- Hume Whittlesea Primary Care Partnership (HWPCP)
- Office of Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship (OMAC)
- Our Community Foundation
- Ralph and Barbara Ward Ambler
- RE Ross Trust
- Rotary Club of Bundoora
- Rotary Club of Whittlesea
- The Jack Brockhoff Foundation
- The Queens Fund
- Transport Accident Commission (TAC)
- Sunshine and Crocodiles Pty Ltd
- VicRoads
- Victorian Department of Justice and Regulation (DoJR)
- Victorian Legal Aid (VLA)
- Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation (VRGF)
- Ward Ambler Foundation

Sponsors

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- Andrew Giles MP office
- Anthony McKee Photographer
- Big W Broadmeadows
- Hip Pocket Workwear
- Jaap and Evelyn Jonkman, Conversant Consulting
- Pacific Epping
- Plenty Valley FM
- Storage King Thomastown

Thank you to all the people who generously donated throughout the year and to all those clients who supported the Women In Work enterprise.

Thank you to our key suppliers including ID Yours (graphic design), printing (Impact Digital), Finrea (IT support) for their ongoing support, often at the last minute!







Volunteer

We are always looking for new volunteers of all backgrounds and experience to join our WCC team. There are always opportunities as drivers, driver mentors, community information workers, homework tutors, English teachers, fundraisers, media and communications volunteers, legal services and shorter term project roles.

Donate

Please contact our CEO, Alex Haynes, if you would like to invest in the work we do with the residents of the City of Whittlesea. You can also donate via the link on our website.

Become a member

Members of WCC contribute to the community ownership and direction of this unique local and independent organisation. Our strength lies in the support given by local people. Joining is easy. Contact us or download a membership form from the website.

Partner with us

The needs and aspirations of our growing community are significant and we cannot respond alone. Get in touch if you are interested in partnering with us to deliver services, activities or create new opportunities for Whittlesea.

Get involved

Information

whittleseacc.org.au

facebook.com/whittleseacommunityconnections





Whittlesea
Community
Connections

Making a positive difference everyday

