



Australian

Croatian

Community

Services Inc.

Annual Report 2009/2010

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AUSTRALIAN CROATIAN COMMUNITY SERVICES INC.

Our Vision

Full participation of the target communities in the social, cultural and economic life of the wider community

Our Mission

ACCS' mission is to provide an extensive range of culturally and linguistically appropriate services and programs to refugee and humanitarian entrants and established migrants from Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina

All services and programs are designed to assess and address the needs of our target group in a holistic, responsive, equitable and non-discriminatory manner

Our Values

Social justice, Equity, Fairness, Empowerment, Respect, Excellence, Diversity, Openness, Integrity, Innovation, Generosity & Passion.

Strategic Goals

Increase effectiveness of all programs and services

Increase and diversify revenue base

Develop new programs and services to meet ongoing and changing needs

Strengthen links with all stakeholders

Improve organisational procedures and processes

COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT - CURRENT

Chairperson	Michael Pernar
Treasurer	Linda Paric
Secretary	Maria Radoslovic
Committee Members	Rosie Jurina Rosalia Marinov

ACCS STAFF - CURRENT

HACC	Lily Silic
'Count Us In' Project	Zdenka Brnada (until April 2010)
CACP Case Managers	Gordana Dudovic Marina Rozic
CACP Care Workers	
Footscray	Dandenong
Milojka Atanasova	Miroslav Delac
Jasminka Bionda	Dubravka Hlusko (until Dec 2009)
Mirjana Brekalo	Filomena Lovric (until June 2010)
Mila Vucica	Jasminka Radivoj
Ivka Zeba	Elizabeth Rako (until Dec 2009)
Milena Konjevic	Zdenka Ambros
	Brigita Basic
	Sabina Jusic
	Sonja Sekulic
	Nada Rubinic
Community Partners Program	Zdenka Brnada (until April 2010) Silvana Pavlovski (from May 2010)
ACFE / Language Classes	Lily Silic/Rosie Jurina
PAG	Lily Silic
Case Work	Senada Ekic (Footscray)
Office Administrator - Dandenong	Rosie Jurina
English Language Teachers	Sandra Mlikota (until Dec 2009) Franci Buljat Ivona Lonac (from June 2010)
Croatian Language Teachers	Sandra Mlikota (until Dec 2009) Marijana Pokrivac Nina Kovacina Silvana Kovacina (Sem 1, 2010)

Volunteers

Abicic Drago
Bacak Ruza
Barbaric Marija
Cvitkovic Marica
Dijanac Josip
Herceg Josipa(Pepica)
Jurcic Ivanka
Koch Antun
Kukuruzovic Branka
Mrso Katarina
Muhvic Rudi
Muhvic Dragica
Mikolas Katarina
Wuglach Sofija

Paric Manda
Pavlovic Andjelka
Perkovic Ruza
Pumple Dominik
Radoslovic Milena
Radoboljac Krsta
Romic Ana
Romic Katica
Ritosa Mirjana
Sumbera Ana
Sumic Sofija
Tonkovic Suzana
Valencic Olga

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

The past year has been one that raised many challenges for both staff and the committee. The Committee of Management along with our dedicated staff have continued to operate innovatively with a range of proactive strategies that we will continue to work on throughout the next reporting period. The organisation continues to deliver qualitative service based programs. We have been in the process of engaging a CEO to oversee our ever expanding service and client base.

We have continued to witness increased patronage at our Dandenong office that was opened in 2006 so that services could be delivered to our target groups. This move has proved affective with additional funding of CACPS and is continuing to raise our profile in the South – East. Our experience has proved that the most effective way of delivering good outcomes is when services are provided in the client's own language and by bi-lingual workers who are culturally and linguistically aware of the issues facing the target communities.

We continue to meet with representatives of the major political parties, service planners and providers across Victoria. There is a lot of ground to cover as the Croatian community is not on the lips of the government decision makers – we must change these attitudes. Again, we need a CEO that will drive this message to those that matter!

ACCS increased the funding received from the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing for Community Aged Care Packages (CACP). We now provide this service in the West, North and South East regions. Sadly, there are still clients on the waiting lists. Projections form both our Ten year report, as well as the Australian Bureau of Statistics indicate that our ageing population will peak in 2011 and we basically need an injection of additional services and funding to meet the increased demands. I know that ACCS will continue to advocate for this cohort of the Croatian Community.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the members of the Committee of Management, the Federal, State and Local government representatives for their cooperative assistance and positive working relationships with our agency and staff, and especially the tireless effort of our numerous volunteers.

Finally, I would also like to extend my appreciation to our wonderful staff at both offices for their efforts of the last year. A special mention to our Committee member, Linda Paric, for her tireless effort in ensuring we complied with our procedural audit conducted by the department

I look forward to the challenges that the next year will present as I know our team is ready, willing and capable.

Michael Pernar

Australian Croatian Community Services (ACCS) continues with providing culturally appropriate social support programs and activities for senior citizens, elderly people and individuals with a disability from Croatian, Bosnian and Herzegovinian backgrounds.

Volunteer Co-ordination

ACCS is funded by the Victorian Department of Health under its Home and Community Care program. This type of program caters for individuals who are in need of culturally and linguistically appropriate social support services and is delivered in the western and northern regions of Melbourne. The main aim of this program is to provide social support, companionship, improve and maintain client's independence. Overall it is about reducing social isolation, improvement quality of life and promoting positive ageing among elderly people and individuals with disabilities from Croatian, Bosnian and Herzegovinian backgrounds. Services provided under Friendly Visiting Program vary from friendly visiting, transport, attending to appointments or Planned Activity Group (PAG). This service is provided by Croatian speaking volunteers under the supervision of the Home and Community Care Manager and PAG worker.

The HACC program funds Volunteer Co-ordination, which involves recruiting training and supporting volunteers who provide social support to elderly people and individuals with disability living in their own homes. During the past year there have been new 8 client/volunteer matches in the western and 10 in the northern region supported under this program which brings the total to 54 client /volunteer matches.

In the coming financial year there will be an emphasis on recruiting new volunteers to meet the current demand.

ACCS recognises the importance of volunteers and the impact they have in reducing social isolation our clients are experiencing on a linguistic, cultural, social and emotional level as well. As a result of that it is essential to retain and support volunteers by providing continuous support, in-house training and information sessions. In the coming year the accent will be on promoting and providing the training on positive ageing among our volunteers which then will be promoted to our clients.

ACCS would like to take this opportunity to thank all past and present volunteers who have generously given their time to the elderly and people from Croatian, Bosnian and Herzegovinian communities.

Planned Activity Groups (PAG)

Planned Activity Groups in the Western Metropolitan region is another service run under the HACC program. The main purpose of the Planned Activity Group is to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate social support to isolated, frail, disabled and elderly members of Croatian, Bosnian and Herzegovinian backgrounds. Furthermore to reduce participants' sense of isolation, promote the sense of belonging, build social and community networks and improve mental and physical wellbeing.

ACCS runs weekly PAG core and high groups in Footscray, Altona and Deer Park with all groups well attended.



Grantham Green Facility-October 2009



Blue Lotus Farm – December 2009

Throughout the year ACCS continued to provide exciting activities, information sessions and outings for our groups. Some of the activities have included gentle exercise classes, walking, watching movies, information sessions focusing on health and wellbeing and services provided by government and non government bodies.

The majority of our referrals to PAG are from the service providers such as Aged Care Assessment Team, Western Health, Carers Links West as well as the elderly, their carers or family members

ACCS will continue to run its highly successful PAG program and in the future hopes to increase patronage and expand the service with additional funding. In the coming year the emphasis will be on the lobbying for the expanding the culturally and linguistically appropriate services to the north as well as the eastern and southern regions of Melbourne.

COMMUNITY AGED CARE PACKAGES

Community Aged Care Packages (CACPs) funded by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing commenced in Australia in 1992 and Australian Croatian Community Services received its first allocation of clients in 2002. Since that time our package numbers have increased and are now a well regarded community program funded to provide care to 45 frail Croatian, Bosnian and Herzegovinian elderly living across Melbourne Metropolitan.

Community Aged Care Package is a planned and coordinated package of community care, designed to assist frail, elderly people to remain living in their own home. The packages provide a comprehensive range of services that are flexible and can change according to needs.

To be eligible for CACPs, a person over the age of 65 must be assessed by the Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT) for low level residential care/CACP and then placed on a waitin list. A person who accepts CACPs has a uniqe program of care designed specifically for them. The package addressess any activities of daily living that can no longer be carried out independently and require coordination of the care services.

Support provided includes 24hr on call emergency service, case management, advocacy and liaison with family/carers and other key contacts, referrals to appropriate community agencies and services to enhance the clients independence, such as physiotherapy, occupational therapy, other allied health services and home modifications and maintenance.

Care provided includes supervision and direct support for activities of daily living, such as: bathing, dressing, mobilising, meal preparation, medication monitoring, sensory aids; assistance with house cleaning, light gardening, transport, shopping, banking, bill payments, appointments; and support to participate in the client's usual community activities such attendance at planned activity group (PAG) or community restaurants, visits to the library, and other social outings.

In 2009, CACPs program was reviewed by DoHA quality assessors and continued throughout the year. Consequently, CACPs program has been restructured internally and staff has developed improvements in file recording, assessment, information, financial systems that have created efficiencies in reporting and data quality, meeting program Standard compliance required by funding bodies.

During the 2009-2010, ACCS was funded with 5 additional CACPs packages in the North-West region. These packages were taken up immediately by those on the waiting list. An integral part in the success of the packages is the ability to provide bilingual home and personal care staff worker who are familiar with the cultural, dietary and social requirements of our community.

Whilst ACCS has been able to provide CACP's in the Metropolitan region, the allocation of funding and under resourced community in Geelong and Ballarat has been an issue for many years. We will continue to pursue our goals and lobby for funding to these regions.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS PROGRAM

Community Partners Program (CPP) is a program that identifies barriers that CALD communities face when accessing aged care services and residential facilities. It is funded by the Department of Health and Ageing. Under the CPP, Australian Croatian Community Services facilitated an increase in access by people from Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina to aged care support services. These target communities have large ageing populations, significant aged care needs and low rates of mainstream aged care service utilisation.

ACCS has been fortunate to have the CPP funded for three years. The regions that will be covered in this three year period are: Year 1 Geelong and Ballarat; Year 2 South East and Mornington; and Year 3 Gippsland and LaTrobe.

Geelong and Ballarat

Throughout the past year the program has engaged older people from Geelong and Ballarat to provide information to increase their knowledge and understanding of culturally appropriate residential and community aged care support services and how to access those. Activities have included information days for the target communities and provision of information and referrals, development of partnerships with peak aged care bodies and residential care facilities, cultural briefings to residential and community care providers as well as main stream providers.

As work has been undertaken throughout the project it has confirmed that there is a lot of misunderstanding and fear about aged care services amongst the elderly and their carers who are often placed in the difficult position of transferring a loved one from home into an aged care facility. This is also continually experienced by our CACP and HACC clients whose health deteriorates progressively over time.

Some of the key activities undertaken this year were information sessions in Geelong for staff at Marysville Nursing Home and information sessions for the Croatian community in Geelong. A bus tour was organised to visit the Multicultural Age Care Facility in Geelong. It was a worthwhile exercise in demystifying aged care and also provided participants with information of what to expect from an aged care facility. The CPP worker had Radio interview with SBS radio on Community Partners Program project.

With a change in staff mid way, the CPP worker made contact with the Croatian community in Ballarat HK "Stjepan Radić" and the first ever aged care presentation to the Croatian community took place. The presentation was organised and held in cooperation and partnership with the CPP worker from Ballarat Regional Multicultural Council (BRMC).

Following the information session a cultural briefing was held for staff of Nazareth House in Ballarat. The feedback from the participants was positive and another briefing was requested. The CPP worker also visited a Croatian resident in Nazareth House on request of the resident. The greatest achievement was the connection between Nazareth House, Ballarat Multicultural Regional Council and Croatian community in Ballarat.

Media articles on CPP and CPP project in Ballarat were published in Croatian Herald and CroExpress.



Members of Croatian Club "Stjepan Radic" Ballarat with ACCS workers



Mr Boris Skontra and Kim Romeo (BRMC)

As work has been undertaken throughout the project it has confirmed that there is a lot of misunderstanding and fear about aged care services amongst the elderly and their carers who are often placed in the difficult position of transferring a loved one from home into an aged care facility. This is also continually experienced by our CACP and HACC clients whose health deteriorates progressively over time.

In terms of sustained access and capacity building, there is still plenty of work to be done particularly in view of the swell of numbers predicted in our target populations in the upcoming years. This program offers plenty of scope to broaden and develop our knowledge and that of our clients.

'COUNT US IN' PROJECT

In mid June 2009, ACCS received additional funding from the Department of Human Services to deliver a project titled 'Count Us In' (CUI). The purpose of this project was to break down the social, linguistic and cultural barriers for aged care facility residents who are unable to participate in regular activities due to these issues.

In collaboration with the McKellar Centre, Geelong and three of their lodges, Percy Baxter Lodge (low care), Wallace Lodge (high care) and Blakiston Lodge (dementia and mental health) the CUI project was able to get off the ground.

The CUI worker was based at the McKellar Centre 2 days a week. The objective of the project was to improve day to day living of Croatian speaking residents through a range of activities that promote sense of value, meaning and inclusion.

Activities included board games, bocce, music and movies. The most popular activity was watching videos and in particular, about residents' family events, especially weddings. They also enjoyed talking about their past such as their childhood, family and work they used to do. Some of them liked to look through the Croatian Herald and other magazines and newspapers that were made available.

Watching videos was also the most popular activity for residents in High care (movies, folk music, old traditions) and storytelling about their lives back home, family and work they used to do. Due to their limited mobility they were not able to participate in any other activities. The residents would watch DVDs in the lounge room. Staff passing by would always stop and ask questions about what they were watching and what connection there was to the residents.

Outings to Australian Croatian National Hall for lunch were very popular and they always asked when the next visit was planned. Some of the residents have not been to the club for a decade and it was very emotional when they visited. The daughter of one of the residents had a wedding reception at this club back in 1998. Shortly afterwards, he became ill and entered the McKellar Centre. He had not been back to the hall since the wedding and was in tears during this visit.

At meal time, when the menu was presented to them, they all chose Croatian traditional meals such as sarma (sauerkraut cabbage rolls), gulas, punjene paprika (stuffed capsicum).



Another successful grant received was from Telstra to run the 'Telstra Connected Seniors' project. The aim of this project was to provide education and training to the elderly in the area of technology.

Over the year six training sessions were held at both Footscray and Dandenong with for a total of 20 participants attending. Topics included Introduction to Mobile Phones; Introduction to the Internet and Introduction to Email, sharing photos and attachments, blogging and sharing online.

Training was delivered to participants in a through a practical 'hands on approach' to allow real time learning. On completion of training the participants who were mainly 65+ felt very confident in using this technology on their own to keep in touch with family and friends than on commencement. This knowledge was also passed onto other members of the community who were unable to participate in this project.

Learning about technology has made a huge difference to our participant's lives.



English as a Second Language Course (ESL)

ACCS has a long history of ESL provision in the Western and South-Eastern Regions. These classes are funded by the Adult Council of Further Education. Classes are held in both the Footscray and Dandenong premises. ACCS has an extensive waiting list of interested students wishing to participate in classes. Not only do the classes provide an opportunity for learning, but they are a tool for learning new technology, friendship building and breaking down isolation.

Students in the course of the last 12 months have had the opportunity to learn about computers, internet use, searching the web, sending and receiving emails, mobile phone usage. Classes are also interactive as students have gone to the cinemas to watch movies, visit places of interest such as the museum, Melbourne Aquarium.

Aims of the course:

1. To improve students' communication skills.
2. To improve students' learning skills.
3. To improve students' knowledge of English grammar, idioms and phrases.
4. To improve students' team work skills by being involved in role plays and other conversations.
5. To improve students' technology skills by using computers and internet.
6. To improve students' initiative and enterprising skills by getting them actively involved into organising activities and outings.

Croatian Language Classes for Adults

Australian Croatian Community Services has been providing Croatian Language Classes for adults for well over 10 years. The Classes in these last 10 years have moved from 1 class and a handful of students to 4 classes all full to capacity. ACCS has undertaken an extensive promoting campaign during the last 12 months and the result is the largest intake of students than in any previous year.

Classes are offered in Footscray and Dandenong and are run in the evenings. The classes cater to the needs of students and a number of levels are provided. As well as covering aspects of the language, students are introduced to various aspects of Croatian culture.

Aims of the course:

1. To introduce students to basic Croatian vocabulary and grammar.
2. To involve students in role plays and conversation in Croatian.
3. To include topics useful for daily interaction – family, work, shopping, dining.
4. To introduce students to Croatia, famous tourist attractions and landmarks.
5. To introduce students to the Croatian culture, heritage, customs and traditions.

PROGRAMS IN DANDENONG

Australian Croatian Community Services office is based in Walker St, Dandenong. The office has continued to be an important link and service for the Croatian community in the south east. Not only are there 20 Community Aged Care Package's managed from the office, the social activities that are also offered have continued to play an integral role within the community.

The community is still underfunded in the region, despite the high number of residents in need of specific CALD services. HACC funding is not provided yet it is greatly needed due to the ever increasing older Croatian population. Despite this, ACCS has continued to run a non funded social group. The group meets fortnightly and various activities are organised based on need and request. Film days are still popular particularly Croatian comedies.

ACCS works closely with and where possible in partnership with the Croatian Media Association (CMA) and Croatian Psychiatric Service (CPOS). ACCS has supported projects undertaken by these organisations and has been able to provide guidance and direction on projects targeting the Croatian community. These have included information sessions on mental health topics, aged care issues and cultural briefs to mainstream organisations. These projects were made possible with funding by the Victorian Multicultural Commission.

ACCS continues to work with mainstream service providers in the region and workers attend regular network meetings. ACCS will continue to support the community in the south east and seek funds to enable the organisation to successfully deliver culturally appropriate services.

The Agency Financial Reports have been produced in accordance with the ACCS Articles of Association and include the following:

Statement by the Committee of Management
Auditor's Report
Statement of Income and Expenditure
Balance Sheet

The audited financial statements (listed above) for the year ended 30 June, 2010 have been published separately and are available on request to funding bodies and ACCS members.

Key Funding sources:

ACCS wish to sincerely thank the various major funding bodies for their continual financial support.

Federal Government funding bodies

- Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA)

Victorian State funding bodies

- Department of Health (DH)
- Adult Community and Further Education (ACFE)
- Department of Victorian Communities

Other bodies

- Victorian Multicultural Commission
- Telstra

We service the following activities off site in the following locations:

Senior Citizen Clubs

**Bocce Gospic
Broadmeadows
Clifton Hill
Footscray
Gladstone Park**

Planned Activity Groups

**Altona
Footscray
Deer Park**