

Annual Report
2010 | 2011



pact
Community Support

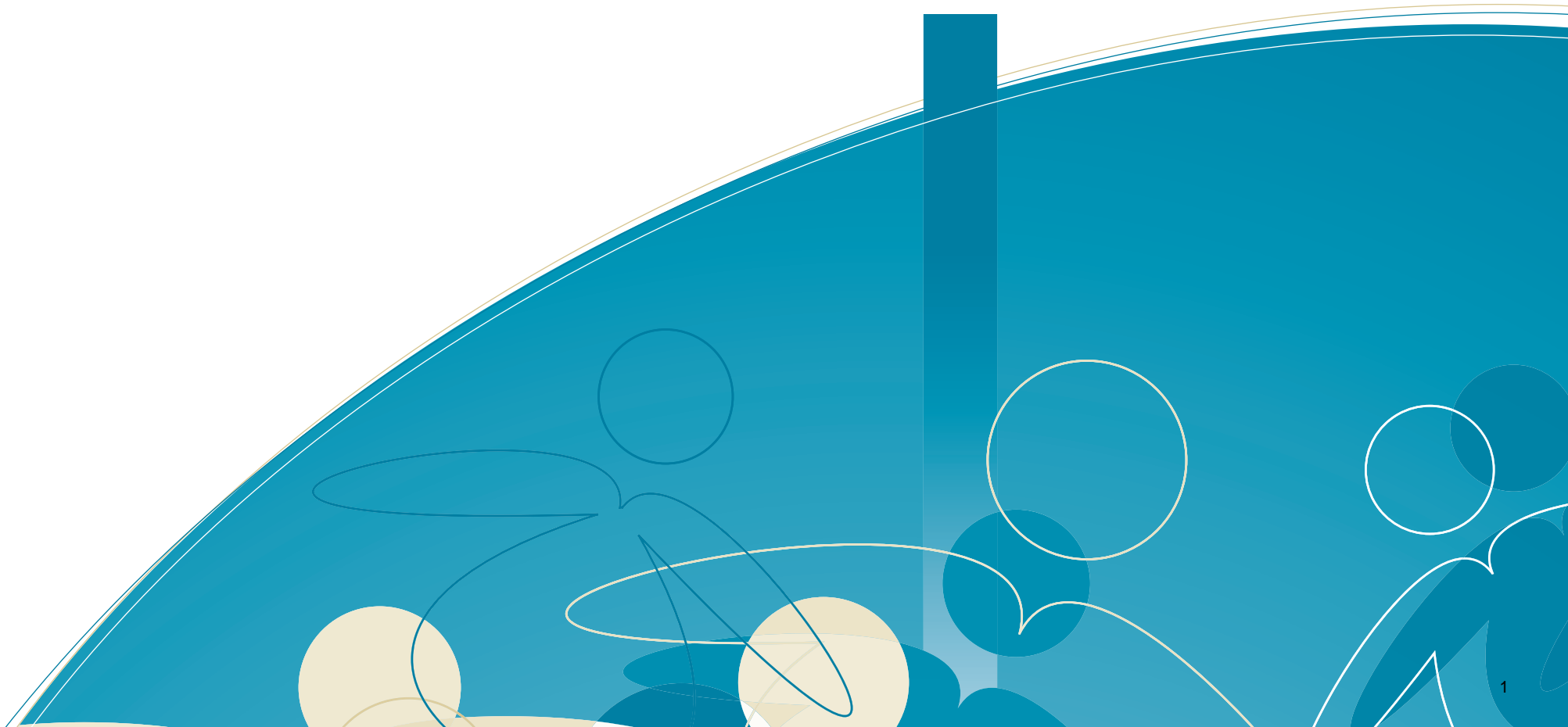


Table of Contents.

PACT Community Support

- Vision
- Mission
- Purpose
- Organisation Chart

Chairperson's Report

Executive Officer's Report

Treasurer's Report

Financial Summary

Highlights

Programs

- Social Housing Advocacy and Support Program (SHASP)
- Indigenous Tenants Advocacy and Support (ITS)
- Consumer Advocacy Victoria (CAV)
- Community Facilities and Tenant Participation

Projects and Quality Improvement

Partnerships

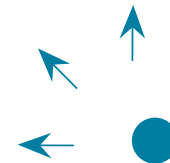
Acknowledgements

Board

Staff

Map.

3.



4.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

9.

10.

11.

12.

13.

14.

15.



Our Vision.

Social and economic justice in our community.

Mission.

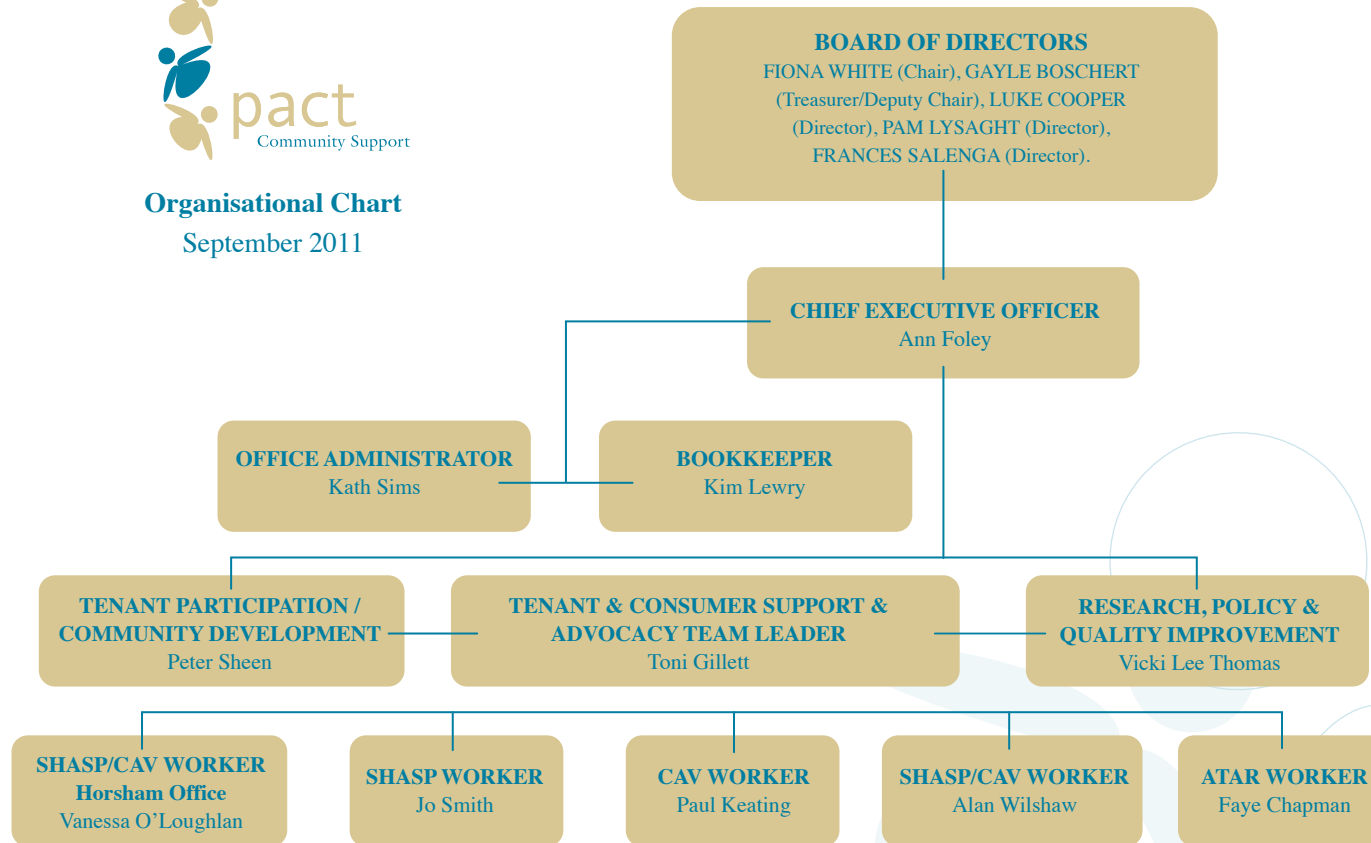
To improve social inclusion, connectedness and wellbeing

Purpose.

PACT provides skilled advocacy and support to vulnerable and disadvantaged tenants and consumers and works with people on community development and social research project.



Organisational Chart
September 2011



Acronym Key:

SHASP - Social Housing Advocacy & Support Program
 CAV - Consumer Affairs Victoria Advocacy Program
 ATAR - Aboriginal Tenants At Risk Program



Chairperson's Report.

Thankyou to all Staff and our Board volunteers for another year of professional and compassionate response to people in need of specialised support and advocacy.

PACT continues to provide a unique early intervention service that saves many people across the Grampians and Wimmera from becoming homeless. The hallmarks of our service are mediation and negotiation, advocacy skills and specialised knowledge of legislation. Our skilled team collaborate across their areas of specialisation in Client Support, Case management, Aboriginal Tenancy Support, Advocacy at VCAT, Community Development and Research.

Teamwork is also a hallmark of the Board's contribution. Board working groups take responsibility for reviewing the policies that support our organisation. Our Board members each maintain an awareness of our responsibilities to manage risks inherent in our service, support our staff, manage and plan our financial resources and carry the organisation forward to continue to provide services underpinned by fair and good governance.

Thankyou to Andrew our outgoing Chairperson who was a very wise and committed Board member over several years and Wilbert Mapombere an outgoing Director who is now committed in other spheres.

We welcome two new Directors to the Board. Luke Cooper's experience is invaluable as we review our Human Resources systems. We also welcome Frances Salenga who has been working internationally and in Australia on issues of justice and development for many years. Frances brings an expertise in community engagement, especially in working with diverse community members across different cultural backgrounds.

I commend our Annual Report to you.



Fiona White

Executive Officer's Report.

I am pleased to report a successful year of client support and advocacy services in the Grampians and also significant contributions to Regional and State-wide initiatives.

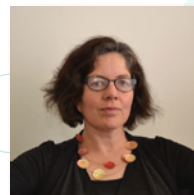
This year our staff team have provided support to 889 vulnerable tenants and consumers and their families and travelled over 10,000 kilometres in the course of this work. PACT provides these services through shop-front offices in Ballarat and Horsham, as well as regular outreach and visits to Bacchus Marsh, Ararat, Horsham and Creswick and other home and Agency visits beyond when needed.

Our research projects this year have addressed diverse issues, including: family violence reporting in the media; feasibility of engaging vulnerable families in community projects; and monitoring and evaluation of local service networks.

We've also turned the monitoring and evaluation lens on ourselves and our Government partners. Together with the Grampians Regional Office of Housing we have worked on strengthening our early intervention practices for tenants at risk, especially the way our team works with and communicates with Office of Housing and Aboriginal Housing Victoria to get the best assistance for our mutual clients.

Our website has been updated to provide clear information about our services and links to other services for our clients. It has also become one of our tools for seeking client feedback on their experience of our service. As we adopt a new national homelessness services data tool we are also taking steps to work towards reduction of our environmental impact by use of less paper and better use of electronic knowledge management.

PACT staff work with our clients and their issues with respect, professionalism and resilience. Our voluntary Board members unstintingly provide their time to the governance tasks that underpin the organisation. I thank you all and look forward to continuing our work to provide both direct assistance to vulnerable and disadvantaged tenants and consumers and to working energetically with our community, government and industry colleagues to advance our objectives.



Ann Foley

Treasurer's Report.

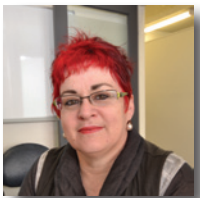
PACT's annual report shows a strong and viable operation.

Strategic investment in the past three years in our new office, communication technologies, staff recruitment and vehicles is now reflected in a high level of service across our program areas. Our annual operating position is moving positively, with a slight loss of \$1,525 recorded in this financial year down from a loss of \$13,011 last year.

We maintain a sound capital base, ensuring good debt to equity ratios. The Board made a significant investment of capital with UCA Investment Funds this year to ensure both an ethical investment and improved return on monies invested.

PACT has a strong philosophical commitment to responsibly investing resources back into our services and our staff. Rather than accumulating profit, we direct available income into building our capacity to provide better service to vulnerable and disadvantaged clients. Our considerations for future investment include financing improved technology and communications resources to improve our services to clients across the region.

PACT has fully met all external financial reporting requirements to ASIC, Australian Taxation Office and our funding partners. Internal reporting and management continues to be robust with profit and loss and balance sheet reporting each quarter. Both are analysed by the Financial Planning and Management committee and the full Board.



Gayle Boschert



Summary of Financial Performance.

YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2011		
	2011	2010
INCOME		
Government Grants	572,887	551,211
Non-government funding	49,432	49,548
Other income	11,645	23,569
Interest	11,116	9,264
TOTAL INCOME	645,080	633,592
EXPENSES		
Salaries and Wages	423,513	400,534
On-costs, provisions and other staffing costs	62,011	56,939
Depreciation	23,780	19,652
Administration costs	30,659	44,547
Client costs	20,502	37,727
Office costs	66,358	67,531
Transport costs	13,344	14,847
Corporate costs	6,438	4,826
TOTAL EXPENSES	646,605	646,603
PERATING DEFICIT	(1,525)	(13,011)
SUMMARY STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION		
YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2011		
	2011	2010
ASSETS		
Property, plant and equipment	173,482	183,184
Other Assets	275,898	272,738
TOTAL ASSETS	449,380	455,922
LIABILITIES		
Payables	31,893	34,833
Provisions	51,225	41,396
Grants in Advance	21,546	33,452
TOTAL LIABILITIES	104,664	109,681
NET ASSESTS	344,716	346,241
EQUITY		
Retained Surplus	344,716	346,241
TOTAL EQUITY	344,716	346,241
<i>Note: The Summary Statements above have been derived from and are consistent with the full Audited Financial Statements, which are available on request from the Executive Officer.</i>		



Highlights.

Service improvement

Following the review of the Social Housing Advocacy and Support Program (SHASP), we seized the opportunity to work together with Regional Office of Housing (OOH) on improved services to vulnerable tenants. In partnership we have implemented a Memorandum of Understanding that commits us all to working better together towards improvements. The 'devil in the detail' includes enhanced intake procedures to ensure accurate and timely referral of information to PACT, regular referral meetings to work jointly on referral of clients for assistance, more regular liaison with the OOH High Risk Tenancy worker, and regular client-focussed staff training. We are already observing the benefits in our working relationship with Office of Housing and are introducing similar improvements across the Agency in our consumer advocacy and work with Aboriginal Housing Victoria

Supporting Aboriginal Tenants At Risk

A strength of the Indigenous Tenant Support (ITS) Program is consistent outreach service for Aboriginal tenants across the Grampians, with weekly client outreach offered at Ballarat and District Aboriginal Co-operative (BADAC), monthly visits to Horsham, regular contact with Goolum Goolum and Budja Budja Aboriginal organisations and visits to clients beyond major centres as required. A reference group meeting 3 to 4 times each year enhances communication between PACT and other Agencies about how we can best provide effective and culturally sensitive service to Aboriginal clients. This regional work is also reinforced by our staff participating actively in State-wide networks.

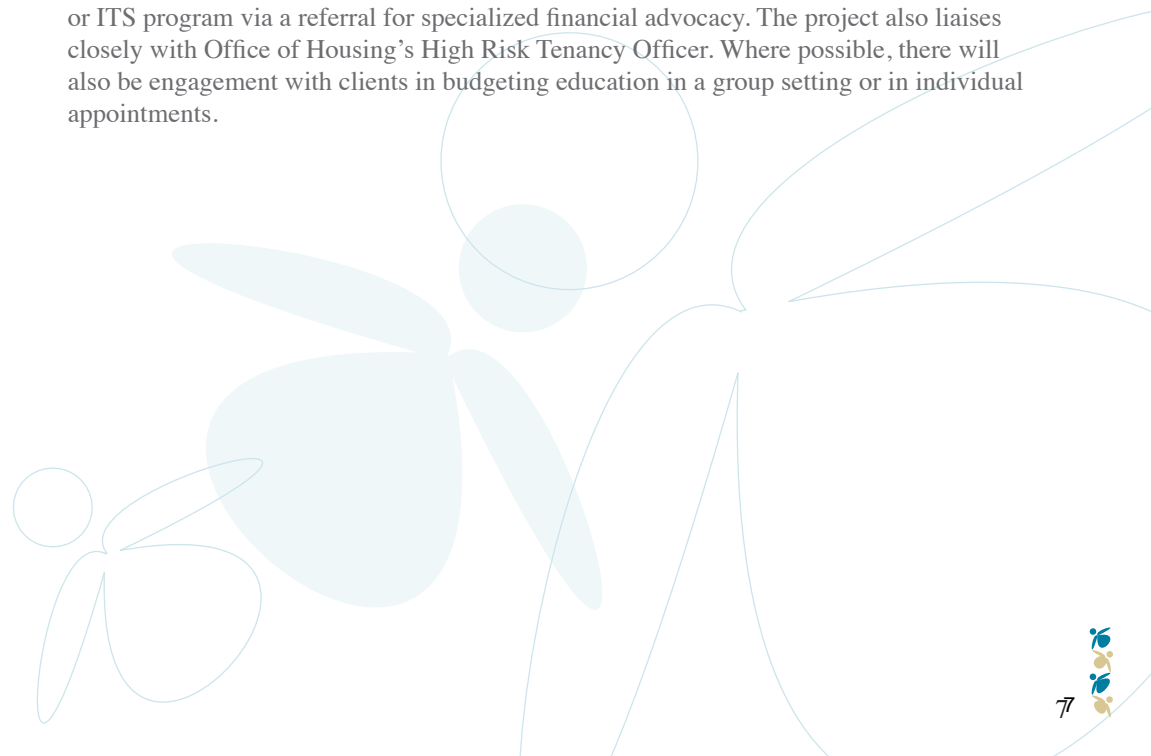
Family Violence in the News Media Toolkit Update

PACT Community Support and Child and Family Services (CAFS), Ballarat, completed this update with funding provided by the Office of Women's Policy and the Grampians Integrated Family Violence Committee. *The 2nd Edition of Family Violence in the News: A Media Toolkit* was launched at the EVA Media Awards ceremony on 10 June 2011 in Melbourne. The 'Toolkit' was published originally in 2005, with the aim of promoting an informed understanding of family violence in the community through accurate and informed coverage of this issue within the media. In the six years since the Toolkit was published, there have been changes to the Victorian legislation and Police Code of Practice for the Investigation of Family Violence, publication of new research and updated

statistics, and further strategic approaches to family violence developed at both State and Commonwealth levels. The 2nd Edition of the Toolkit reflects this new material. The update is available as an electronic publication only, and is accessible on the websites of PACT Community Support (www.pactcs.org.au), Child and Family Services, Ballarat (www.cafs.org.au) and Grampians Integrated Family Violence Committee (GIFVC) (www.grampiansfamilyviolence.com.au).

United Way Financial Advocacy Project

In 2010/11 PACT developed a three year project with to combine budgeting and financial advice with one-off grant or loan for clients. This package can assist people to overcome a financial crisis and get on their feet. This Project and the ongoing support of United Way enables PACT to work with clients, usually public tenants, to negotiate lump sum payments to landlords or payment of outstanding utilities or other costs. The grant or loan are always utilised together with client contributions and an action plan to address debt and financial issues. The program is linked with client support through the SHASP, CAV or ITS program via a referral for specialized financial advocacy. The project also liaises closely with Office of Housing's High Risk Tenancy Officer. Where possible, there will also be engagement with clients in budgeting education in a group setting or in individual appointments.



Programs.

Social Housing Advocacy and Support Program (SHASP)

This program funded by Department of Human Services assisted 541 households. This exceeded our overall performance targets by 60% and the SHASP team met individual program targets in all areas. Services covered the following areas of client support: and achieved overwhelmingly successful outcomes for clients in each Program, sustaining tenancies in almost all cases:

Advocacy Program

assisted 273 clients experiencing major difficulties and unable to advocate on their own behalf in their dealings with the Office of Housing (OOH) or their social housing provider. Client issues included rent arrears, VCAT (Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal) assistance. anti-social behaviour, Office of Housing debts, repairs and disability modification assistance.

Assistance for Early Housing (AEH)

was provided to 121 clients in inappropriate, unsafe or insecure housing to assist them in establishing eligibility for public housing. Approximately 40% of clients assisted had medical reasons for seeking advocacy assistance for early housing

Establishing Successful Tenancies (EST)

There were 63 support cases under this program to new tenants, who have a high risk of tenancy failure due to eviction history, tenancy breaches, rental arrears, neighbourhood dispute issues, previous or current Centrelink issues, relocation, family reunification, isolation due to lack of support at the time of an offer of housing, substance use, mental health, or domestic violence issues. Of the total EST cases 24 clients were assisted under the OOH Anti-Social Behaviour Pilot (ASB) program which provides additional structured case coordination and home visits and liaison with Office of Housing during twelve month tenancies that are conditional on meeting all tenancy conditions.

Intervention Tenancies at Risk (ITAR)

There were 84 cases of support in this Program. Client issues addressed included rent arrears, VCAT (Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal) assistance. anti-social behaviour, rebate issues, appeals, orders of possession agreements, and neighbourhood disputes. Over 90% of cases involved rental arrears and budgeting problems.

Maria

Maria had a debt of \$5,700 to Office of Housing due to damage to her previous Office of Housing home caused by a former partner. Due to family violence her four young children had been temporarily removed from her care. Eventually she fled the property and left her home town in fear for her life. She gained a two bedroom unit in Ballarat and subsequently had all children placed back in her care. This meant the two bedroom property was overcrowded and inappropriate. Maria worked with PACT to seek allocation of a larger property as well as to furnish her house. settle the children at school, obtain some specialist family support through CAFS and PINARC and to furnish and secure her new family home. She also sought assistance through the United Way financial advocacy project to learn some budgeting skills.

Harriet

Harriet, a single mother with 4 children was overwhelmed by financial and personal issues - she was no longer opening her mail or answering the door. She was in danger of imminent eviction. Police attended her property to execute a warrant. She contacted PACT as a last resort. After extensive negotiation Office of Housing provided an extension to her tenancy of 30 days. During this time PACT worked with her to develop a plan and act to avoid the eviction, including a lump sum payment towards rent and a repayment schedule. The plan also included ongoing financial and psychological counselling support.



Programs continued.

Indigenous Tenant Advocacy and Support Program (ITS) Aboriginal Tenants at Risk (ATAR)

Through a funding and service agreement with Department of Human Services, PACT's Indigenous Tenant Support (ITS) Program provides an early intervention service to prevent homelessness and sustain tenancies for Aboriginal people. ITS provides a package of culturally sensitive support, constructive tenancy advocacy, client participation in decisions and problem solving and material aid to assist people to overcome crisis and resume meeting their tenancy obligations. This intervention avoided the costly and inefficient consequences of protracted disputes and evictions in all cases.

Of the total of 90 clients supported in 2011 most (87%) were substantial interventions of 4-13 weeks duration (49) and over 75% of the support periods are for 4 weeks or more. The outcomes for clients have included

- 100% of the assisted tenancies were sustained through support, negotiation and VCAT advocacy, including 67 with severe financial problems threatening the tenancy and 4 imminent evictions averted
- Financial advice and budgeting information and referrals made for 12 clients and in-house budgeting advice provided to 9 clients
- Effective personal support referrals for 21 clients including referrals to other psychological counselling and family support
- Effective material aid for 27 families within ITAR brokerage guidelines

Consumer Advocacy Victoria Program (CAV)

Through a funding and service agreement with Department of Justice, PACT provides advocacy services for private tenants and consumers who are vulnerable and disadvantaged in the market place. These clients are unable to deal with their issues independently and require telephone or face-to-face assistance. Private tenants may seek advocacy in relation to tenancy issues in rental premises, boarding houses and caravan parks. Consumers seek assistance with disputes with traders, written contracts, door to door sales, VCAT hearings and alternative dispute resolution. Our advocacy services complement and extend services provided by Consumer Affairs Victoria's Consumer Help Line, Dispute Resolution Service and Regional CAV Offices.

PACT professional advocacy is based on a model of alternative dispute resolution and negotiation, and through a strength-based approach we seek to both assist and empower

our clients. We receive referrals from Consumer Affairs Victoria, Real Estate agents, VCAT members, Members of Parliament and community sector agencies. All are unsolicited referrals to PACT. As in other programs, clients may suffer financial, health, mental health, isolation and other disadvantages.

PACT's CAV Advocates have assisted 258 tenants and consumers at Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) hearings in 2009/10, including representing 237 tenants and 21 consumers at hearings. Of these 55 VCAT hearings were held at Ballarat, 15 in Horsham and 2 by phone conference

Monique

Monique rented privately in Ballarat. She required an interpreter at VCAT. She was facing eviction due to extensive property damage to the property by her spouse who also required an interpreter. The hearing was complex due to family violence issues and language issues – a fair result was concluded and the client was ordered to meet a number of reduced costs and other costs were pursued from the person who caused the damage.

Harry

Harry, A 55 year old male resident of a rooming house was referred to PACT for advocacy assistance at VCAT due to what was believed to be an illegal eviction. The client required extensive support due to severe mental health issues. PACT staff consulted with the mental health team on a number of occasions. PACT worked in consultation with mental health and homelessness support agencies to get the best outcome for the client. Extensive support was crucial in addition to advocacy. VCAT hearings were protracted and difficult due to the changing nature of the client's needs and his poor mental health. As a result of effective referrals and support the client now resides in private shared accommodation.



Programs continued.

Community Facilities and Tenant Participation

Through a funding and service agreement with Department of Human Services, PACT provides support, advice and assistance to existing tenant groups and intensive assistance to emerging tenant groups in their first 12 months of operation. Key areas of support include assistance with governance, operational capacity and incorporation. We also encourage and facilitate tenant access to skill enhancement and community participatory activities.

We also facilitate tenant involvement in the management and use of community facilities by promoting and encouraging the use of community facilities for the provision of appropriate services and activities. PACT encourages and facilitates participation of tenants and tenant groups in networks including the Regional Tenant Council, the VPTA, Office of Housing forums and other relevant activities.

This year our Tenant Participation work included but was not limited to the following outcomes:

- Successful implementation of Community Facility Guidelines for community facilities at Creswick, Wray Park, Vale St, Ararat and Horsham.
- Maintenance of a positive and professional working relationship with the Office of Housing Tenant Participation Officer
- Completion of Memorandum of Understanding with the Victorian Public Tenants Association enhancing the professional relationship with the organization
- Promotion and Support for the use of Grampians Region Community facilities including attendance at regular Community Facility meetings

- Ongoing support to Mt Clear Public Tenants Group
- Active involvement in The Office of Housing Regional Tenant Council (RTC) including attendance at regular RTC events to provide talks and input at RTC planning sessions
- Active involvement in preparing and advocating for the successful funding to develop new community gardens at Mt Clear.
- Active involvement in Housing Week including successful funding and organization of an annual bus trip for tenants.
- Active involvement in 'Vic in Bloom' gardening competition, including promotion and attendance at events.
- Organisation of a series of community lunches across the region.
- Disbursement of Tenant Participation funds targeting a range of activities including supporting community gardens, community lunches and tenant involvement in community activities.



Projects and Quality Improvement.

Projects

The United Way Emergency Grant project is flexible and innovative and achieves good outcomes. This year they included:

- Prevention of homelessness for 16 families through individual support for tenants and their families
- Partnering with other local community service agencies to provide holistic support: security of housing, warmth through assistance with heating and utilities and referrals for personal and psychological support
- Combining United Way funds with our advocacy to landlords and VCAT to prevent both termination of utilities and eviction
- Assisting 5 families to avert immediate threat of eviction

Research

The following research consultancies were completed:

- Evaluation of the Central Highlands Opening Doors model for homelessness service provision
- Update of the Family Violence in the News Media Toolkit and recommendations for the future review of the Strategic Framework
- Community Gardening and Vulnerable Families Feasibility Study 2010
- SHASP Service Improvement Initiative – A Partnership Approach

Quality Improvement

PACT's continuous quality improvement work has included extensive revision of PACT Practice Manual, policies and procedures and client service processes. Working groups review Governance, Financial Planning and Management, Human Resources, Quality Improvement and Risk.

Leanne

Leanne presented to PACT as a single mother of two children with no family, friends or support in Ballarat. She had escaped family violence and came to Ballarat to re-establish her life here. An offer of public housing came unexpectedly early. Leanne had no money and could not even communicate by phone due to a large outstanding debt to Telstra. PACT assisted to negotiate and pay off the debt and provided referrals to a financial counsellor. After accepting the housing offer Leanne accepted referrals to local family and child support agencies and she continued to receive further tenancy support from PACT to address ongoing issues with budgeting and arrears.

Ben and Isa

At 5pm on a Friday a young couple with two children and one on the way presented at PACT's office in Ballarat: Both had recently lost employment unexpectedly. The husband's father was in hospital in Melbourne and the couple were meeting extensive travel expenses to visit and support him. Their loss of employment coincided with a rent increase. Suddenly housing and travel costs had become unaffordable for them. They were unable to cope and fearful of the future. They were forced to seek assistance but did not know what was available. They were referred to PACT by a local MP. PACT provided counselling, grocery vouchers and a lump sum for assistance to cover 2 weeks rent to bridge the period between this crisis and impending resumption of employment.



Partners.

PACT works extensively with other community and human services, homelessness services, health education and counselling services, and has developed and maintained memoranda of understanding and / or protocol agreements with the following:

- Office of Housing, Grampians Region (OOH)
- Aboriginal Housing Victoria (AHV)
- Child and Family Services (CAFS)
- University of Ballarat Psychological Counselling Clinic
- Central Highlands, Homelessness Local Area Service Network
- Central Grampians and Wimmera Local Area Service Network
- Ballarat & District Aboriginal Co-operative (BADAC)
- Victorian Public Tenants Association (VPTA)

PACT staff represented PACT in the following networks and working groups:

- State-wide Reference Group for Family Violence in the News and the EVAs
- HASS Accreditation Sector Reference Group
- Victorian Aboriginal Homelessness Network
- Central Highlands Local Area Service Network (LASN)
- Central Grampian/Wimmera Local Area Service Network (LASN)
- LASN Monitoring and Evaluation Working Group
- SHASP Managers Network
- Grampians One DHS Working Group
- Central South West Region SHASP Workers Network
- Grampians Regional Tenant Council



Acknowledgements.

PACT Community Support acknowledges the following Partners who have worked with us and/or supported our work this year:

- Ballarat and District Aboriginal Co-operative (BADAC)
- Victorian Department of Human Services (DHS)
- The Department of Justice
- Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV)
- Aboriginal Housing, Victoria (AHV)
- United Way Ballarat
- Grampians Region Office of Housing (OOH)
- Community Axis, Horsham
- City of Ballarat
- Child and Family Services (CAFS)
- Victorian Council of Social Service VCOSS
- Central Highland Local Area Service Network (LASN)
- Central Grampians / Wimmera Local Area Service Network LASN
- BIS Computers
- QICSA
- University of Ballarat Psychological Counselling Clinic
- Grampians Regional Tenant Council
- Tenants Union of Victoria (TUV)
- Victorian Public Tenants Association (VPTA)
- Homelessness Australia
- Council to Homeless Persons
- Central South West Region SHASP Workers Network
- SHASP Managers State-wide Network
- dedide
- Nashish Design and Marketing



Board.



Fiona White
Chairperson



Gayle Boschert
Secretary / Treasurer



Luke Cooper



Pamela Lysaght



Frances Salenga



Ballarat Office
1/15 Main Road, Ballarat
(PO Box 1032
Bakery Hill Victoria 3354)
Telephone: (03) 5309 1900
Facsimile: (03) 5338 8666
Email: ballarat@pactcs.org.au

Horsham Office
22 McLachlan Street
(PO Box 796)
Horsham Victoria 3402
Telephone: (03) 5382 6300
Facsimile: (03) 5381 1772

Grampians Housing Network

T/AS PACT Community Support . ABN 62 080 467 938



pact
Community Support