



2023

Annual Report

JoCare Co-ordinator's Report

We began the year with much enthusiasm to increase our digital outreach within the local community as well as continue to grow our visiting program reaching all who reach out to us. The success of our first year of supporting the local community with digital devices illustrated for us, there was a need and a hunger for digital literacy amongst the older population of Stonnington.

Our visiting volunteers continued to visit in the home and face to face visits were more of the norm. We have a small cohort of neighbours who prefer a regular phone call and our volunteers have been amazing at accommodating this need. We need to give a special call out to those volunteers who take time to be in touch with neighbours who live alone and love their sport. Much texting occurs during football and cricket matches. These connections ensure our neighbours feel as if someone is sharing a common interest and they are not so disconnected from a community of care.

Volunteers and our neighbours were very conscious of informing each other if they are not well. This has been a reflection of the care and respect that they have for each other. Aged care visits were still on occasion thwarted by COVID lockdowns but these were only very occasional compared to previous years. Occasional gastroenteritis lockdowns also impeded visits.

Our numbers of connections in our visiting program were similar to last year. Our digital program had a small increase in the number of people accessing support but this cohort reached out less our digital team on more occasions than in 2022. A reflection of their increased knowledge and a furthering of their skills.

As an auspice of the Federal Government's Community Visitors Scheme, we continued to reach out to those who qualified under this scheme, either residing in a residential aged facility or on a Home Care Package subsidised by the Australian Government. Our independent funding from Stonnington Council, Cabrini Australia and donations allowed us to include those who do not qualify for a volunteer visitor under the Community Visitor Scheme guidelines.

This has permitted us to be an inclusive program. We are proud to be an organisation that can service others regardless of their personal circumstances. In July 2023 our funding was renewed through the Federal Government visiting program. It has been rebadged as the Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme (ACVVS). There has been an increase in Government support through a renewing of the scheme for which we are very grateful.

At the close of 2023 we were able to budget to employ another part time staff member. Jeanine will assist with bringing JoCare forward with revamping the office into a greater online presence with digital portals for our volunteers. We will decrease our print footprint and move much of our paperwork to an online presence. This will allow us to streamline more of our procedures.

Unfortunately, we had a number of our neighbours pass away during the year. It was a difficult year for some volunteers as they had been visiting these neighbours for many years. Where possible we support volunteers during this time. Several have been able to utilise their skills and have begun to visit other neighbours.

As we finish up 2023 we are moving to new offices. January saw the offices being refurbished and staff are now well ensconced in a new bright more for purpose space.

JoCare's work in the local community of Stonnington is supported by the Federal Government, Cabrini Australia, the Stonnington Council and philanthropic and private donors, as well as in kind donation of office and meeting space by St Joseph's Malvern. We are grateful for their ongoing patronage of our work.

We hope you enjoy reading our report and we thank you for taking the time.

Yours sincerely,

Kerri Anne Brussen

JoCare Co-ordinator

JoCare Referrals 2023

We received seventeen referrals and enquiries from seven different agencies. The number of self referrals increased significantly this year to seven up from two last year.

Three referrals when contacted asked to be contacted in 2024 due to ill health. Referrals received late in the year are often fulfilled early in the new year as we do not visit in January.

Forty-one people received contact from JoCare volunteers in 2023, with eleven new neighbours becoming part of the program. There is a natural attrition of neighbours with changes in circumstances and deaths.

Volunteers

24 Volunteer Enquiries

13 Undertook Training

2 Supporting the Digital Program

10 Joined our volunteer visiting program

4 unable to volunteer due to ill health, or change in personal circumstances including 1 who undertook training

6 Lost to follow-up

2 realised our volunteer opportunities were not for them after discussions with staff

Total Volunteer Activity for 2023 - 43 Active Volunteers

39 Volunteers part of our visiting program

4 Assist at our digital drop ins

Training for volunteers is now embedded as face to face training. We have determined that face to face training is the optimum method to work with volunteers and ensure volunteers are equipped with the skills and information that they require to undertake their volunteering with confidence. It also allows for conversations about unfamiliar material. Utilising on line training during COVID has confirmed face to face as our preferred method.

During July we incorporated the new training requirements of the new Federal Government Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme into our training module and our Volunteer Handbook.

JoCare Connections

Forty-one people received contact from JoCare volunteers in 2023.



158
phone calls



97
letters/cards
/emails



579
face to face
visits

834
connections
made in
2023 by
JoCare
volunteers

Eighty-five percent of our connections were to those who qualify for a visitor under the Community Visitors Scheme/Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme. (CVS/ACVVS). This is a thirty-five percent increase on the number who qualified in 2022. The federal government has increased the availability of Home Care Packages enabling more older people to qualify for a volunteer visitor under the CVS/ACVVS.

Digital JoCare

During 2023 JoCare assisted sixty-two people with a problem with digital device. This is a fifteen percent increase on the number who

accessed support in 2022. Some people visited our drop in once others dropped in regularly for digital support but also for social interaction and company. JoCare digital support was accessed on 302 occasions by the 62 Stonnington residents. We are now offering drop in digital support at four locations with the Stonnington area. We are looking at expanding this in 2024.

Five people accessed our digital table program. Most deciding the technology superhighway was not for them. The uptake of this program has not been as much as expected in the community. Many people exclaim – ‘what a great idea’ however we need to review our marketing strategy for this program to reach more people in need of support to embrace technology.

Professional Development

During 2023 the JoCare Coordinator participated in:

- The Community Visitor Scheme Network/Age Care Volunteer Visitor Scheme meetings.
- Stonnington Aged Services Network meetings
- Stonnington Volunteer Network and Discover Meetings

Professional Membership

JoCare is a member of

1. Volunteering Victoria
2. Catholic Social Services of Victoria
3. Meaningful Ageing

Funding

During 2023 JoCare was supported financially through several different sources to maintain our inclusive ongoing visitors program and to support us with the further development of our digital technology program. We are grateful to the following:

1. Cabrini Australia

Ongoing funding has been provided from Cabrini Health since the inception of JoCare in 2014. This continuous funding has allowed JoCare to continue to provide a service that is now well embedded in the local community and to visit those not eligible under the Federal Governments Community Visitors Scheme/Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme.

2. Federal Governments Community Visitor Scheme/Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme (CSV/ACVVS)

Continuation of this funding allowed JoCare to provide volunteer visitors to residents in an aged care facility or recipients of a Federal Government Home Care Package.

3. Be Connected

Be Connected is an Australia wide initiative empowering all Australians to thrive in a digital world. During 2023 we successfully acquitted two small grants under this scheme.

4. Stonnington Council

We continued to be supported by Stonnington Council in 2023 through our three-year Partnership Grant. This continuous funding has allowed JoCare to grow our digital program further and to visit those not eligible under the Federal Governments Community Visitors Scheme/Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme.

5. St Joseph's Malvern

St Joseph's parish continues to provide in kind support to JoCare. Office space and supplies, as well as meeting spaces.

Private Donations

Again JoCare was privileged to receive funds from private donors. We are grateful for their donations which allow us to continue to be an inclusive program where we can provide volunteer visitors to anyone seeking companionship as well as expand our digital program without compromise.

