



2024

Annual Report

JoCare Co-ordinator's Report

In 2024, we began our year in our new premises. Bright light filled offices with north facing windows were delightful during winter.

In 2014, JoCare began life as an outreach program of St Joseph's Catholic Parish, Malvern. In 2024, we traversed, the challenges of establishing our own infrastructure to become a separate identity. After twelve months, JoCare is well established to move forward confidently to support more residents in our local area with our programs. Our foundation will always be in Gospel values.

Face to face visits are now the norm for our visiting volunteers. A small cohort of neighbours prefer a regular phone call and our volunteers have willingly accommodated this need.

The number of connections in our visiting program grew slightly compared to the previous two years. Our digital program also had a small increase in the number of people accessing support.

During the year, we formed a partnership with The John Pierce Centre, which serves the deaf community. This relationship will enable JoCare to work with volunteers who are literate in Auslan to support further into the community.

Staff and an administrative volunteer worked hard in the second part of 2024 to bring a volunteer software package – Better Impact online. Better Impact will become our volunteer and neighbour database, with volunteers being able to report their connections through an online portal, decreasing paperwork in the office.

In March, we thanked Frank Clancy for his time as the Chair of JoCare Caring for Neighbours Inc and welcomed Susanne Tepe as the new Chair of our Committee of Management. Frank led us during a time of change, and Susanne during 2024, has consolidated JoCare into a thriving community.

Thank you for taking the time to read this brief glimpse of 2024.

Yours sincerely,

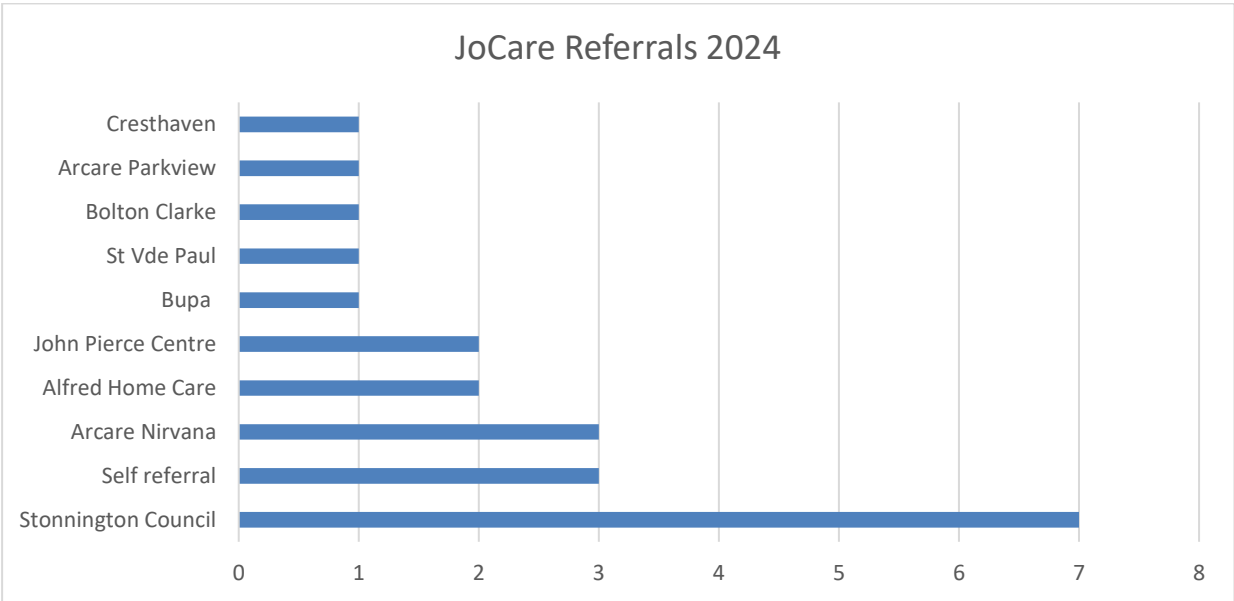
Kerri Anne Brussen

JoCare Co-ordinator

JoCare Neighbours 2024

We received twenty-two referrals for potential new neighbours from ten different sources. Several referrals came from services reaching out to us for the first time.

Sixteen new neighbours became part of the program. Five potential neighbours did not take up the opportunity for a volunteer visitor after deciding the program was not for them; one will start to receive visits in 2025.



JoCare volunteers undertook face to face visits, made phone calls, sent emails, letters and/or SMS's with forty-eight neighbours.

Five neighbours died during 2024. Several had been part of our program for some years. Nine neighbours withdrew from the program at different times during the year. Unfortunately, for several with dementia, the visits were no longer appropriate. Others moved out of the area, or personal circumstances changed.



JoCare Volunteers 2024

20 Volunteer Enquiries

17 Undertook Training

3 Support the Digital Program (2 to begin support in 2025)

12 Joined our volunteer visiting program (4 to begin visiting in 2025)

1 Joined both digital and visiting programs

1 after training, was no longer able to volunteer

3 Lost to follow-up



Total Volunteer Activity for 2024 - 46 Active Volunteers

42 Visiting Volunteers

6 Digital Volunteers

2 Volunteers visit as well as provide digital support

The number of volunteers visiting at any one time depended on their availability and that of the neighbour. Deaths and withdrawals influenced this number.

In 2024, a significant number of our volunteers were sourced from the local churches. JoCare members were given the opportunity to present the JoCare program at Sunday services, resulting in several members of the church communities joining JoCare as volunteers. We thank the local parish priest for this opportunity.

Stonnington Council now has an event devoted to volunteering, supported by the Community Development team. This Volunteer Expo resulted in local residents looking for a chance to volunteer locally joining JoCare.

While these two sources in 2024 provided us with the majority of our volunteer inquiries, JoCare continues to welcome volunteers irrespective of ethnicity, gender, age, ability, or faith.

We continued with face to face training, finding the sessions to be fulfilling for both staff and volunteers. Our feedback is usually: *so much came up that I just hadn't thought about*. Our training is integral to demonstrating to our volunteers that we value them, respect the gift of their time, and want to provide them with the support so they can volunteer in the community with confidence.

In our training program, we continue to incorporate the Federal Government requirements for the ACVVS visiting program as well as numerous other topics which our volunteers find useful. After the training session, volunteers take home a Handbook which is based on our training program, as well as information regarding our policies and procedures.



Dementia Australia presented two further volunteer training sessions, *Dementia Behaviours* and *Talking with Ted*, for our volunteers during 2024. Both were well attended and feedback was positive on the usefulness of the information provided.

JoCare Connections 2024

The Forty-eight people who received contact from JoCare volunteers in 2024, received:



143
phone calls



59
letters/cards
/emails



710
face to face
visits

**912
connections
made in
2024 by
JoCare
volunteers**

Eighty-six percent of our connections were to those who qualify for a visitor under the Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme. This is approximately the same as 2023.

The number of phone calls decreased by 9.4%, the number of written contacts decreased by 39%, with the number of visits increasing by 22.6%, indicating that more of our connections are face to face.

Digital JoCare

One hundred and nineteen people accessed our digital program in 2024. Thirty-six had not accessed assistance in previous years. Assistance was accessed on three hundred and fifty occasions. These numbers present a 16% increase for our services in 2024. This is a similar rise in assistance that we saw from 2022 to 2023. This consistent rise in numbers indicates that the service is serving a need in the Stonnington community.



Our digital drop-in continued at three locations. This will be reviewed in 2025.

After only two people accessing our tablet program in 2024, we made the decision at the end of 2024 to discontinue the program.

Professional Development

During 2024, JoCare Staff participated in:

- Aged Care Volunteer Visitor Scheme meetings.
- Stonnington Aged Services Network meetings
- Stonnington Volunteer Network and Discover Meetings
- One staff member attended the ACVVS conference

Professional Membership

JoCare is a member of

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

Funding

During 2024 JoCare was supported financially through several different sources. We are grateful to the following:

1. *Cabrini Australia*

Ongoing funding has been provided by Cabrini Australia 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 allows volunteers to visit those not eligible under the Federal Government's Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme, as well as supporting our digital program.

2. *Federal Governments Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme (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 in the home.

3. *Be Connected*

Be Connected is an Australia wide initiative empowering all Australians to thrive in a digital world. During 2024 we successfully acquitted two small grants under this scheme.

4. *Stonnington Council*

We continued to be supported by Stonnington Council in 2024 through our three-year Partnership Grant. This continuous funding has allowed JoCare to grow our digital program further as well as visiting those not eligible under the Federal Governments ACVVS. This grant was renewed for another three years in July 2024.

5. *St Joseph's Malvern*

St Joseph's parish continues to provide in kind support for the JoCare office.

6. *Private Donations*

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.

7. *Container Deposit Scheme*

JoCare has joined the Victorian Government's Container Deposit Scheme for recycling. While amounts are small we are creating community by members of JoCare assisting with the collection of bottles and cans. We thank Geoff who collects bottles and cans from his local bowling club, to support this initiative.

