

# LIFEBOAT GEELONG FOUNDATION

## ANNUAL REPORT 2021

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### INTRODUCTION:

2021 has been an effective and worthwhile year of activity for the "Lifeboat Geelong Foundation". Most of the year was overshadowed by the Covid restrictions, which impacted the lives of many of our clients, limited personal visits by our Client Support Officers, and reduced opportunities for fund-raising and other "in person" functions, including Committee meetings.

Nonetheless, Lifeboat continued to give strong practical and personal support to over one hundred clients, and we look forward to a less complicated but even more effective year of operation in 2022.

We were saddened indeed by the loss in May of our esteemed patron Frank Costa AO, and remain indebted to him for his leadership and support of Lifeboat from its earliest days. May his noble soul rest in peace.



### CLIENT SUPPORT OFFICERS:

As noted above, Covid continued to limit the personal contact of our Client Support Officers with clients, but the phone engagement, practical assistance and sense of personal support was deeply appreciated.

The sense of commitment by our four "staff", Trudy, Anne, Cath and Patrick has been exceptional, and Lifeboat is grateful for their generosity of time (well above and beyond what is and should be expected of them), and the exceptional skill and gifts they apply to their work in supporting our many clients. Thank you to you all for your commitment during a challenging year.

### LIFEBOAT FOUNDATION BOARD:

The Board met on five occasions, paying special attention to its professional and compliance responsibilities, as well as continuing to frame a realistic vision for Lifeboat's future. The Board is aiming at finding new benefactors so as to ensure our younger clients will continue to have the personal support they will require for many years to come.

### FINANCE:

As in 2020, 2021 provided limited opportunities for fundraising, and almost no fundraising events, due to the COVID restrictions, but the Combined Catholic Parishes Raffle generated around \$9,000. Sincere thanks

again to Sr. Anne Lourey and Lyn Howard, assisted by a number of committed people in various parishes across Geelong and Melbourne.

The Raffle may continue in 2022, under the leadership of the Keysborough Parish. If so, Lifeboat will be able to participate again and possibly expand its involvement.

A generous response to the provision of the 2020 Annual Report (both hard copy and on-line) was especially helpful for our finances. Donations - both large and small - are consistently received from people who appreciate and understand the mission of Lifeboat. To these are added a number of charitable foundations whose consistent generosity has allowed the work to continue and expand.

As well as meeting our staff costs and meeting the many requirements of our clients, Lifeboat has managed to put aside a reserve of funds so as to ensure its continuity of service, in the event that donations and grants are more difficult to find.

With nearly all clients assisted so far, Lifeboat has been able to provide appropriate support and assistance to all who have requested it.

### **MARY MACKILLOP LIFEBOAT CONFERENCE:**



The “Lifeboat Geelong Foundation” is deeply appreciative of the moral, spiritual and financial assistance of the Mary MacKillop “Lifeboat” Conference of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, which also meets monthly and follows up additional needs of our clients. The Conference shares the same vision as “Lifeboat”, and works in great harmony with the Foundation in every way.

Tim Hardiman.  
Inaugural President of Mary MacKillop Lifeboat Conference

### **ST. AYLES SKIFF – “COVENT GARDEN”.**

In 2019, the generosity (again!) of The Anthony Costa Foundation allowed for the purchase and construction of a “St Ayles Skiff”, which we have used as a social and active focal point for our clients and supporters.



The COVID lockdowns of 2020 and 2021 have made use of the “Covent Garden” very limited.

The skiff has now been handed over to the care and direction of the Geelong Yacht club and is available for community use.

### **GRANTS:**

We did not receive many grants this year, but a grant from The Anthony Costa Foundation enabled the engagement of Patrick Caruana as our “Accommodation Advisor”, an appointment which has proved to be well worthwhile and is being continued, funded by “Lifeboat’s” own funds. Also a grant from Geelong Community Foundation for Complimentary Therapies will allow clients to access services to help with wellbeing. Once again, Anne Johnson’s initiative’s with grants has proved most successful.

## **SURVIVORS:**

Currently “Lifeboat” is in regular contact with up to 150 victims / survivors in every state of Australia, but especially in Geelong and Melbourne. About two-thirds of these have received some financial assistance – some regularly, others just on the odd occasion that they need it.

The remaining one-third may not request financial assistance of any kind, but still receive regular contact and support, either in person or by phone. They ask for nothing other than compassion and recognition of the damage done to them and, in too many cases, of the injustice and rejection they have experienced when they have reached out to church authorities for help. The compassionate listening ears of all associated with “Lifeboat” have been of substantial help to them, helping them to maintain a reasonably balanced and healthy outlook on life.

“Zoom” allowed meetings of survivors to commence on a regular basis, and these have proved well-worthwhile for participants. It is hoped that participation might expand, and perhaps be conducted “in person” in 2022. Thanks to Anne and Trudy for their leadership with these.

## **LIFEBOAT ADVISORY COMMITTEE:**

The Committee continues to meet each month, and in 2021 “Zoom” allowed our meetings to continue effectively. The regular attendance of members and visitors has given our meetings a vitality and purpose which has been most positive. Attendance of clients was less than in earlier years, but the return of “in person” meetings will hopefully mean more can attend in 2022. The hybrid of in person and Zoom meetings is valuable.

The engagement of clients at meetings keeps the Committee and the organisation focussed on the purpose and importance of “Lifeboat”.

The Committee is essentially, in nautical terms, the “engine room” of the organisation, while the Board is the “bridge”. The contribution and commitment of all is both effective and appreciated.

## **FORMAL CHURCH CONTACT:**

“Lifeboat” continues to occasion little interest or practical support from the institutional church.

The release of “Pathways Victoria” as a replacement (in Victoria) for “The Melbourne Response” and “Towards Healing”, provided a degree of initial promise that it would be an improvement on the two protocols it is replacing. Further investigation and discussion seems to indicate it might be “more of the same”. In the meantime, Church lawyers are still strenuously and fiercely fighting damaged clients in the courts in civil actions. Nonetheless, substantial damages are being received by many clients and the principles upon which church defences have been mounted are being successfully challenged by our clients.

**SINCERE THANKS -THE GEELONG YACHT CLUB,**

**MICHAEL AND LOUISE KING:**

This report would be quite incomplete without a “special mention” of the hospitality over the past six years of the Geelong Yacht Club for our meetings and social functions, and of Michael and Louise King in donating to Lifeboat the excellent office premises of Kings Funeral Services in Myers St., Geelong. This acknowledgement of Lifeboat’s work and worth is deeply appreciated, and is a source of great encouragement to the Board, the Committee, our supporters – and most importantly our clients. Our sincere thanks to them.



## **THE FUTURE:**

We anticipate that the work of “Lifeboat” will be necessary for some time to come, and we will be highly aware of this ongoing need in our pastoral and financial planning.

2021 has been a difficult yet nonetheless productive year, and despite COVID-19, our clients have been able to be assisted – in nearly all cases – quite significantly. We look forward to a more settled year in 2022, hopefully with even better outcomes for those victims / survivors who are the key focus of our mission.

Sincere thanks to all concerned – our dedicated staff, the Board, the Committee, our many generous supporters, other Foundations which have supported us, and the many individuals whose financial, practical and prayerful support has enabled the Foundation to continue its work for the positive benefit of our clients.

Fr. Kevin Dillon  
Chair, Lifeboat Geelong Foundation  
February 23, 2022