

# Transformations

January 2014



## Brianna's new journey

One of our five core values here at Mission Australia is 'celebrate'; to recognise and celebrate the efforts and achievements of our staff, supporters and the people we help. Whenever we can we share these achievements with our supporters through this newsletter.

One of our recent success stories is about a young girl named Brianna\*. We first met Brianna four years ago, when she was just 16 years-old. Brianna had been the victim of years of escalating domestic violence at the hands of her father. At an all-time low Brianna escaped her father and had been homeless for three weeks before being referred to *The Grove Youth Outreach & Support Service* (formerly known as *Lemongrove Lodge*) by local police.

From day one Brianna was determined to do better for herself to ensure she never becomes like her mother and father: drug addicts who have been incarcerated. She was so sure she

would do whatever she had to do to never be in another position where she could become homeless and at risk.

By offering Brianna stable accommodation, support and guidance, and through Brianna's own perseverance and resilience she completed her Cert 2, 3 and a diploma through TAFE in Community Services. Four years on Brianna is now 20 years-old and has recently been accepted into university to complete her Bachelor of Social Science to further her education.

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Brianna has had the same case manager follow her progress from when she first entered our facility

three years ago. Her case manager explains, 'It is evident that continuum of service delivery has been a major contributing factor to Brianna's success and achievements. Residential programs like *The Grove* undoubtedly provide the hard outcomes and positive impact for clients.'

The program at *The Grove* first works to find housing for youth before focusing strongly on getting them into education and employment in preparation of their next journey in life. As our program manager Meghan Winckle explains, 'It's imperative we do this, it shows them there are other ways of living and working hard for what you want in life and it will pay you back tenfold, you just need to persevere!'

It is with the help of our supporters that we are able to continue to provide services like *The Grove*, and continue to help struggling youth like Brianna get their lives back on track.

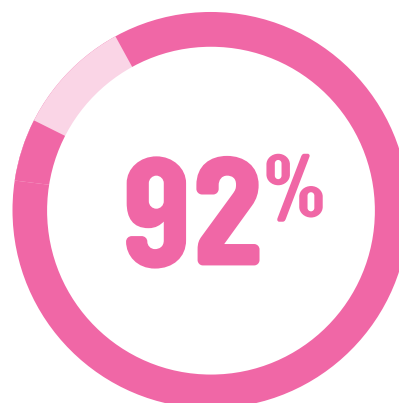
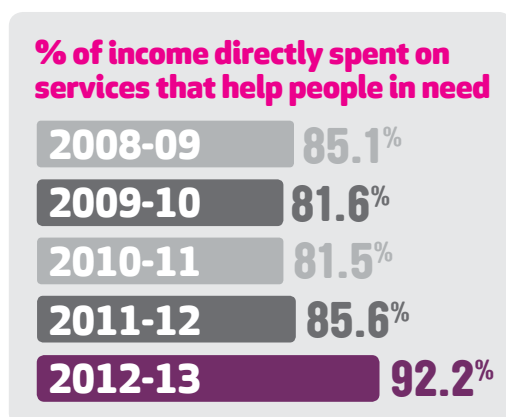
\*Names and images have been changed to protect the identities of those we help.

# Snapshot of 2013

## How you made a difference

The past year has been hugely successful and we couldn't have done it without your support! To share the success of 2013 with you we created this snapshot to show how your donations are being used effectively to help thousands of Australians in need every year.

**This would not have been possible without your support. Thank-you.**



## How we use our funds

More than 92% of the total revenue Mission Australia receives goes towards delivering support services in cities and towns, rural and remote areas across the nation. We appreciate every single donation we receive, and ensure that every dollar is well utilised.

## CEO Welcome

**Happy New Year and a big thank you for your support in 2013.**



Thanks to the support we've received from you, our volunteers, partners and government departments, we were able to help over 300,000 people in 2013. This includes three-year-old Issac\* and Brianna\* whose achievements you can read in this newsletter. Their stories show how donations like yours are helping people in need find the pathway to independence.

We've had some big achievements over the last year but there are still

many more Australians who need our support. As our WA chaplain discusses in this newsletter's Spirit Matters article, it's all about perseverance.

Thank you for your support this past year and for your continued support in 2014. We couldn't help the people we do without you.

Toby Hall  
CEO, Mission Australia

## Spirit Matters



This past weekend my friend Matt told me a story that keeps replaying in my head:

*"Over 20 years ago I was attending a youth group in Perth that had decided to spend a week in Halls Creek cleaning, painting and working amongst the locals. We also planted some little gum trees behind the church building.*

*Last week I re-visited Halls Creek. There I sat under the giant, 60-foot*

*gum trees out the back of the little church building, now desperately in need of another paint job!*

*While sitting there I reflected on influence and perseverance. I thought about the physical change that we had made to this little place just by planting a few trees.*

*I reflected on the challenges those trees must have had in that climate; how some trees had not survived, but how some had held on tight through famine and flood and persevered, surviving all the trials. I reflected on my life and the ripples made on my own circles of influence."*

All of a sudden, while Matt was telling the story I remembered a conversation I had had with a young girl at one of our services, a few days before.

This young girl wanted to go to TAFE to study Social Science after being influenced by one of our staff.

The staff member had been persevering with this girl, doing her job and doing it very well. But the interesting thing is that this staff member was also influenced by her university lecturer some years before. He had challenged her to be her best, to persevere with tough and challenging clients, to 'plant well', and to make sure her 'seed fell on good soil'.

Her lecturer knew well. He spoke from experience. He had planted well himself. Her university lecturer was my friend Matt... the tree planter.

Scott Vawser, Chaplain, WA

## Standing together in 2014

Your continued support is critical to help Mission Australia find secure housing for homeless families, support young people to overcome addiction and address the root causes of a person's issue before their life spirals out of control.

The need in our community has never been greater, that is why we need your ongoing support:

- More families each year are requiring our support. **In 2013 we**

**assisted 11,993 families, almost twice as many as we helped last year.**

Of the 105,237 individuals who were homeless on the recent census night 17% were under the age of 12.<sup>1</sup> When seeking accommodation families are most likely to be turned away, with fewer services able to accept children.

- **Last year we assisted 40,724 homeless individuals**, that's a whopping 16,007 more than in 2012, and we are expecting

these numbers to rise again this year.

- We had a large increase in the number of **people we supported with life and work-skills services** too; offering assistance to 26,307 individuals, well over twice as many as we supported in 2012.

**We've already helped over 300,000 people in 2013, just think of what we can achieve this year!**

<sup>1</sup>ABS (2012) Estimating Homeless



## Miller Childhood Service

**Miller Community Pre-school & Early Childhood Intervention Service offers a variety of programs to support children and their families in our community.**

Programs offered include the Pre-School Program, a consultancy service and a Family Support Program, which offers counselling and parenting classes. In addition to teachers and childcare workers Miller also employs a speech therapist, occupational therapist and family support worker to help the many families and children that come through the service. The staff work together to create individual programs for each child, tailored to suit their needs and their family.

### Isaac's story

When three-year-old Isaac\* joined Miller's Early Intervention Program he had very minimal language skills, only using a few single words. He wasn't toilet trained and his mother Rachael\* was distressed as she couldn't take him out in social settings because he would lash out at other children. He would scream and hit adults or spit at them. His behaviour was very challenging and with his poor communication skills he was easily frustrated.

A program was developed for Isaac focusing on improving his



communication skills, minimising inappropriate behaviours and developing his skills to improve social interactions. As part of the program Rachael was also taught strategies to guide his behaviour.

At the end of the 12 month program there was a drastic increase in Isaac's language development. He was using 3-4 word sentences and had learnt key phrases to express himself. He transitioned into the Pre-School Program where the focus was moved to promoting sharing and turn taking skills, increasing Isaac's confidence and independence and teaching him to follow directions given by an adult.

Isaac no longer lashes out at other children or adults, has made friends and can now share and take turns with minimal adult prompting. His last

assessment came within the normal range of language development and he is now more confident. Isaac is now drawing to the end of his pre-school journey and the transition process to big school has started. Rachael is very grateful for the support she received and the skills she developed. She is also more confident in her parenting and can enjoy social interactions without the fear that she will be ostracised because of the behaviour of her child.

Without the donations we receive from our generous supporters, services like Miller Community Pre-School & Early Childhood Intervention Service wouldn't exist, and we wouldn't be able to continue helping young kids like Isaac.

\*Names and images have been changed to protect the identities of those we help.

## Winter Sleepout success!

**A big thank-you to everyone who contributed to raising funds for our Winter Sleepout campaign this year.**

Over 260 fundraisers slept outdoors for the night to help us raise money to support homelessness throughout Australia. This year fundraising teams, individual fundraisers, donors and volunteers contributed to help us raise a total of \$80,000!

An extra special thank-you to the United Services Union team who raised \$18,391 this year, the most raised of all of the teams who participated. This team have been a great support to Mission Australia, also raising over \$10,000 for us in 2012.

With the money raised from this campaign we'll be able to continue our work supporting people who

are homeless throughout Australia, providing counselling, referral advice, living skills programs and emergency and long term accommodation to help them overcome the varied challenges they face and break the cycle of homelessness.

**Keep an eye on your mailbox in a few months' time for information on how you can get involved in the 2014 Winter Sleepout campaign.**