

Winter 2015

# Transformations

The growing  
plight of family  
homelessness

MISSION  
AUSTRALIA | together  
we stand

# CEO welcome **Winter newsletter**



**As temperatures begin to drop, it can be a tough time of year for people in need. As most of us reach for our winter woollies, the cold reality of homelessness bites deep for the more than 100,000 people in Australia without a place to call home.**

And the seasonal chill takes no pity on families either, with children one of the largest groups of Australians experiencing homelessness.

It sometimes only takes one thing to make a family vulnerable to homelessness: an illness, a rent increase or a relationship breakdown. For the young family featured in this edition of Transformations, it was an unexpected redundancy that left them struggling to pay the rent.

The family had already endured years of hardship due to the challenges of parenting children with complex needs. But the threat of eviction put an incredible strain on their relationship, their mental health and emotional wellbeing.

Mission Australia helped to ease the pressure by providing short-term accommodation, budgeting advice and assisting with the emotional support they needed to recover from the trauma of homelessness. With our support, the family have secured safe, long-term housing and are working closely with us to explore training and employment opportunities so they can regain their independence.

Sadly, Mission Australia meets families every day who have lost the security of their own home. These families are remarkably similar to yours or mine, but due to the critical shortage of affordable housing for those on a low income, as well as rising unemployment and financial

hardship, many families are living just one pay slip away from homelessness.

You may not see these families sleeping rough. Many of them are hidden in our suburbs, moving from couch to couch as they rely on the kindness of friends or family to shelter them. But across Australia, a growing number of families urgently need our help.

In 2014, we helped nearly 300,000 people on their journey to independence, including 85,917 children and families.

**Our work to reduce homelessness and strengthen communities is made possible through the generosity of people like you. By donating to our services you are helping to change people's lives for the better.**

Each of the stories you will read about in the following pages have a common thread—the importance of coming together to make a positive difference. Thank you for your support and for standing together with Australians in need. We couldn't continue our critical work without your help.

**Catherine Yeomans**  
CEO, Mission Australia

**Founding Purpose** Inspired by Jesus Christ, Mission Australia exists to meet human need and to spread the knowledge of the love of God.

**Our Values** Compassion, Integrity, Respect, Perseverance, Celebration.

**Our Vision** is to see a fairer Australia by enabling people in need to find pathways to a better life.

## Connect with us

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-  supporter@missionaustralia.com.au
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-  @MissionAust
-  facebook.com/MissionAust

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### The challenge of new surroundings

For most people, 23 July 1984 is a date that has little significance. But for me, it was the date that I first arrived in Australia as an immigrant from the United States.

Arrival can be the hardest part of any journey. Even when we go on holiday, many of us can feel a little overwhelmed when we first step off the plane. Unfamiliar surrounds coupled with different sounds and smells can be quite disorientating and can sometimes overshadow any sense of excitement.

When I first arrived in Sydney, I walked off the plane and successfully negotiated Customs to collect my luggage from the carousel. But then I had to find the bus for my connecting flight to Adelaide. I looked around for a friendly face. "Excuse me," I said to a passer-by. "Could you tell me where to catch the Trans Australia Airlines transit bus?" The person looked blankly at me, so I tried again. "Could you tell me where to catch the Trans Australia Airlines transit bus?" Then the person said, "Oh! You mean the TAA bus. It's just over there."

Settling in Australia was stressful for me at first. Even though my wife is Australian and was there to support me, I struggled at first to find my feet. It was unsettling to be faced with so many life changes: different customs; different accents; different food; and even driving on a different side of the road. It wasn't easy, but gradually over time, I found my way and established a new life in Australia with my family.

This is a familiar story in Australia, a country that attracts thousands of new immigrants and refugees each year. However, the challenge to adapt to new circumstances is not limited to those who immigrate here. For many people in Australia, new circumstances may be the result of an unexpected illness, a job loss, a marriage breakdown, a spiralling addiction problem, family or domestic violence, or a natural disaster – all of which can lead



to homelessness, poverty and social exclusion.

Every day in every state, Mission Australia stands alongside people who, often through no fault of their own, find themselves confronting new and challenging circumstances. Whenever people are experiencing difficulties in their lives, we are here to help them get back on track and regain their independence. Together with our staff and our valued supporters, we work hard to reduce homelessness and strengthen communities across the country.

As winter approaches, there will be many more people who need a helping hand and who will rely on our programs and services to get back on their feet. So let's stand together with the people who need it most this winter. And together, let's help as many of them on their journey to independence.

*"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger and you invited me in. I needed clothes and you clothed me. I was sick and you looked after me. I was in prison and you came to visit me." Matthew 25:35*

**Jim Vaughn**  
State Chaplain, Victoria

# The reality of family homelessness

**Young Sydneysiders, Kate\*, Paul\* and their two children, Joshua\*, aged 6 years and Ayden\*, aged 4 years, never imagined they would find themselves homeless. They were educated and had good employment records. But the stark reality is that homelessness does not discriminate: it can happen to anyone.**

Keen to start a family together, the young couple were delighted when Kate fell pregnant with Joshua. He was an adorable baby but as a toddler, Joshua was noticeably different to other children. He didn't make eye contact and would make jerky and involuntary body movements. He was also easily upset by any changes to his routines.

Kate and Paul were devastated when their paediatrician diagnosed Joshua with autism. They sought professional help to find out how to support him to overcome his challenges and were confident that with the right treatment

plan, and a lot of love and support, Joshua would be okay.

Parenting is never easy, but raising a child with autism is even more challenging. In order to be the best parent you can be, it's essential that you take care of yourself. But Kate also had a newborn baby to look after. She frequently felt exhausted, overwhelmed and discouraged. Joshua's disruptive behaviours took a big toll on her, but things took a turn for the worse when at the age of 17 months Ayden was also diagnosed with autism.

Despite their challenges, Kate and Paul persevered with treatment and were delighted when Joshua was able to start at the local primary school. Ayden, however, had not responded as quickly to treatment and needed a lot more support. Although he attended a local day-care centre on a part-time basis so that Kate could work, he was becoming increasingly disruptive, lashing out at other children.

## The family's path to homelessness

The family made the difficult decision for Kate to give up work in order to focus on Ayden's needs. Paul had worked as a technician for the same company for over ten years. His salary was modest but the couple decided that it was enough for them to survive on while they focused on the individualised early intervention that would provide the best opportunities for Ayden to achieve his potential.

Unfortunately, barely 12 months later Paul was made redundant. He'd worked in a niche industry and his specialist skills meant that he was only qualified to work as a technician. Despite his best efforts, Paul struggled to find another job.

Trapped at home with no money and two children with complex needs to care for, Kate hit rock bottom. Her doctor prescribed anti-depressants but with rising debts and no prospect of paying them off, Kate struggled to cope. Last winter, Paul's





redundancy money ran out and the family were evicted from their home.

## Support at last

In desperation, Kate rang Housing NSW who referred her to Mission Australia's Fairfax House. It provides safe housing and the support families need to get back on their feet. This includes childcare services, education, healthcare, employment opportunities, parenting skills and financial management.

A dedicated caseworker helped the family to overcome the trauma of homelessness and establish some long-term strategies to regain their independence. This included financial counselling to ensure they could repay their debts and reduce the risk of becoming homeless again.

Kate, in particular, needed a lot of counselling to tackle her anxiety and depression. We helped her to access respite care for Ayden and to build up a network of local community support so that she no longer felt so isolated and alone.

It's made all the difference to Kate, who feels much more in control of her life and no longer needs to take anti-depressants.

**With Mission Australia's support, the family has found a 3-bedroom property where they now live. Although the couple still haven't found long-term jobs, they are confident about the future.**

\*Names have been changed to protect the privacy of the people we support

**"Without Mission Australia, we would be living on friend's couches. Fairfax House providing accommodation was a big help. It gave us the time we needed to get back on our feet and secure our future. My caseworker made it possible for me to work through my emotions and get myself out of my depression. She helped me to cope and that's when things started to get better." Kate**

## Vale Ken Short AO 1927-2014

**As many of our supporters know, Benjamin Short founded Mission Australia more than 155 years ago to meet human need and to spread the knowledge of the love of God. On 15 October 2014, Benjamin's great grandson Ken Short AO passed away at the age of 87 years.**

Following in the footsteps of his illustrious ancestor, Ken had a wide range of significant roles in his lifetime and made a deep impact in each of them. He was Dean of Sydney, Bishop of Wollongong and Parramatta, Chaplain-General of the army and first bishop to the armed forces, a role he assumed in 1979. In 1988, Ken was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia, General Division, and in 1989 he was made a Chaplain of the Order of St John.

The Short family have always supported Mission Australia's invaluable work, through donations, bequests and by speaking at

fundraising events. Most recently, Ken spoke on behalf of the Short family at our inaugural high tea for the Benjamin Short Society, the very special group of people who have chosen to include a bequest to Mission Australia in their Will.

In his speech, Ken spoke about the Sydney City Mission, or SCM as it was more commonly known. The SCM formed the basis of what is Mission Australia today. But according to Ken the acronym SCM also stood for the words sympathy, Christian and mission.

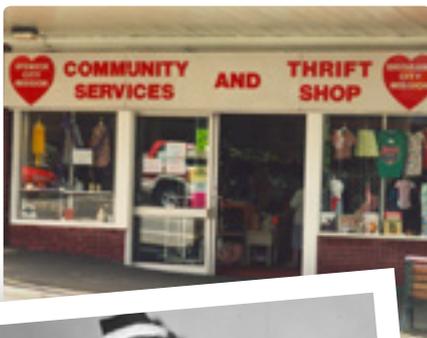
'Sympathy' Ken explained, represents the sympathy that Benjamin Short felt for the marginalised and the vulnerable that were in desperate need of help. 'Christian' refers to his Christian faith and legacy, which continues to shape the critical work that Mission Australia does today. 'Mission' refers to the fact that Benjamin Short founded the Sydney City Mission to meet human need, regardless of creed.

Ken Short is survived by his beloved wife Gloria, his three children Kathryn, David and Marion, eight grandchildren and one great-grandson.



Photo: Ken Short standing next to a painting of his great grandfather, and our founder, Benjamin Short

Archbishop Glenn Davies, who visited Ken in hospital shortly before he died, asked people to pray for his family, particularly his wife. "We pray for Gloria who has been an outstanding woman of God and woman of faith in her own right, as well as the support she gave to Ken throughout their life of ministry."



## Mission Australia history

**From the 1850's, City Missions emerged in most major Australian cities to address the spiritual and physical needs of those living in poverty. No government welfare or unemployment benefits existed so City Missions were there to save many families from starvation. During the recession of 1890 and the Great Depression of the 1930s, Mission halls overflowed with people in need.**

As the years progressed, so did the approach of these City Missions to their care of the disadvantaged and needy in their communities. Handouts and 'soup lines' were replaced with structured

programs that looked at the causes of problems, and sought to find long-term solutions. Holistic assistance was provided to cater to people's emotional, physical, social and spiritual needs.

Today Mission Australia is one of the largest national community services organisations in Australia. Each year, we stand together with around 300,000 Australians in need, supporting them to regain their independence.

**With the help of our dedicated staff, volunteers, supporters and partners, we are committed to reducing homelessness and strengthening communities across Australia.**



# Our timeline

**Mid-19th** The City Mission movement from the United Kingdom, takes root in emerging Australian colonial settlements to address tremendous social deprivation.

**1859** The Town and Country Mission – later to be known as the Brisbane City Mission – is established, making it the second oldest charitable organisation in Queensland.

**1860** Benjamin Short, a newly arrived immigrant from England, appalled by the poverty he witnesses in Sydney, feels compelled to act: “I had a burning desire to do something to awaken sufficient interest in the minds of my fellow citizens to commence a purely unsectarian mission on the same lines of the London City Mission.”

**1862** Benjamin Short establishes the Sydney City Mission.

**1867** Independent of the Sydney City Mission, Adelaide City Mission is founded.

**1970s** Perth City Mission is founded as Jesus People Welfare Services and achieves a strong reputation for being at the cutting edge of youth work.

**1978** Sydney City Mission provides employment services for the first time.

**1983** The Wollongong City Mission is founded as part of the Sydney City Mission.

**1990** The Wagga Wagga City Mission is established and becomes part of the Mission Australia Limited family, with services extending to Tumut in 1992.

Perth City Mission joins Mission Australia Limited.

**1991** Hunter Mission is established, building on community service programs provided by the Mayfield Baptist Church.

**1998** Mission Australia Limited is formed, bringing together Sydney City Mission, Adelaide City Mission and Wollongong City Mission.

Brisbane City Mission joins Mission Australia.

The Federal Government privatises employment services and Mission Australia wins a significant share of these programs. Mission Australia is still one of the biggest employment providers in Australia today.

**2000** The ‘mission family’ becomes Mission Australia – a single, unified organisation to provide an integrated approach to meet Australia’s changing social needs.

Members include Sydney City Mission, Brisbane City Mission, Hunter Mission, Mission South Australia, Wollongong City Mission, Perth City Mission and Wagga Wagga City Mission.



Brisbane City Mission meeting 1950s

# Triple Care Farm celebrates a life changing 25 years

**On 18 December 2014, the swirling mists that had covered the Southern Highlands started to disappear as guests arrived for a very special graduation day: the 25th anniversary of Triple Care Farm.**

Triple Care Farm is one of Australia's most successful treatment programs for young people affected by drug abuse and mental illness. Located in isolated, but picture-postcard perfect countryside, it's a place where vulnerable young people can take that difficult first step to rebuilding broken lives.

All participants of the Triple Care Farm Program have a substance misuse issue. In addition, 85% suffer from some form of mental illness. A shocking 75% of participants have tried to

commit suicide in the 12 months before starting the program.

The indomitable Aunty Val gave the Welcome to Country and spoke about her childhood, when Aboriginal people were denied access to services like health, education, housing and employment. She also gave a moving – and very funny – tribute to the late Tom Hammerton, whose work with troubled young people at Triple Care Farm had been a consuming passion.

## Thanking our supporters

Our Chairman Ewen Crouch welcomed guests including The Honourable Pru Goward, MP; Michael Crowley, Chairman of the Sir David Martin Foundation; Lady Martin; Ruth Armytage AM of the Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation; members of the Fairfax family; Brian Petschler, Mayor of Kiama; and many valued supporters from the local community.

**Guests learned that in 2014 the program helped 164 young people to tackle their problems, equipping them with the skills to make positive change. In total, 96 young people graduated from the residential program and a further 68 graduated from the community aftercare program.**

**At the end of the program, 99% of participants were in stable accommodation, 33% were in education and training, and 29% had secured employment. This was incredible given that only 4% were engaged in education, training and employment prior to commencing the program.**

Most of the young graduates were present to proudly receive their certificates from Lady Martin. There wasn't a dry eye in the house when one brave graduate took to the microphone to describe how Triple Care Farm had saved her life. Choking back her tears, her mother then spoke movingly about her desperate battle to save her daughter and her gratitude to everyone at Triple Care Farm for succeeding where everything else had failed.

On this very special day, the inaugural John Bushnell scholarship was awarded to a student who embodied the ethos of the program. John Bushnell was assisted by Mission Australia during a time of intense need as a younger man. In the spirit of reciprocity and paying it forward, John decided to support a graduating student.

The student who received the scholarship was previously homeless but is now living independently and attending TAFE full-time, completing a Certificate II in Business Administration. The scholarship will assist with the cost of textbooks, equipment and a new computer.

**Triple Care Farm – it's life changing.**



John Bushnell congratulating a graduating student



A car-full of teddy bears on their way to needy children

Last Christmas, she donated a huge pile of teddies to the children who are part of our Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Program in Nowra. Many of these children have faced difficult circumstances due to family conflict, child abuse or neglect, and were delighted to receive a special teddy in their Christmas stocking.

**The generous contributions of supporters like Ruth allow Mission Australia to help more Australians in need on their journey to independence. We cannot achieve our goal to reduce homelessness and strengthen communities across the country without this support.**

Ruth is now deciding whether to leave a bequest to Mission Australia in her Will. We've advised Ruth, that when preparing a Will, it is important to seek qualified legal advice to ensure you achieve all you wish for your family and others through your Will.

**Looking after children and families has been at the heart of Mission Australia's work for more than 155 years.** If you are able to leave a bequest to Mission Australia you will help bring about lasting change in the lives of disadvantaged people, families and communities for generations to come. Remembering Mission Australia in your Will is a gift, which will endure beyond your lifetime.

**For information about making a bequest gift to Mission Australia please contact us on: 02 9217 1064 or 1800 888 868. Alternatively, you can email us: [bequests@missionaustralia.com.au](mailto:bequests@missionaustralia.com.au).**

## Teddy bear joy

**What is it about cuddly teddy bears that we find so appealing? After all, real bears are dangerous predators rather than cute, fluffy animals.**

The story goes that the teddy bear owes its origins to former President of the United States, Theodore 'Teddy' Roosevelt, who refused to shoot a bear on a hunting trip, leading to a series of satirical cartoons in *The Washington Post*. A toymaker was then inspired to make a cute cuddly little bear cub, which he called 'Teddy's Bear'. Thus the teddy bear was born.

Stroking the soft fur of a teddy bear has been found to be therapeutic for children, evoking a sense of peace and security. **Studies have shown that it can lessen the adverse psychological effects of social exclusion and reduce stress.** What's more, considerable comfort is obtained from cuddling, naming and speaking to a teddy bear.

One of our most valued supporters, Ruth, knows all too well the joy that teddy bears bring to children in need. Several years

ago, she decided to put her sewing skills to good use, scouring local op shops on the hunt for suitable pre-loved teddy bears, which she then carefully washes, mends and tends, before sending out into the world for a child to cuddle.

### Children in need

Ruth's preference is that her teddies go to children in need. She began by donating 20 pre-loved bears to various programs at Mission Australia, including Macarthur Early Childhood Intervention Service in Sydney, which looks after children with disabilities and their families.

### A generous supporter

**Donating pre-loved teddy bears is not the only way that Ruth has supported Mission Australia. Struck by the plight of homeless people in her home town of Wollongong, she realised that homelessness was not just confined to big cities like Sydney, but is everywhere. Over the past 50 years, Ruth has donated regularly to our programs and services, supporting us to make a difference to those who desperately need our help.**



# Join us for City2Surf 2015

**Registrations are now open for The Sun-Herald 2015 City2Surf fun run, based in Sydney. This year the City2Surf will be held Sunday, August 9.**

Whether you're a seasoned City2Surf competitor out to beat your PB, or a first-time who has always wanted to give it a go, we'd love you to select Mission Australia as your charity of choice and help us fundraise to help Australians in need.

The Sun-Herald City2Surf is not only Sydney's favourite sporting event but also the world's largest fun run, with over 80,000 participants - a larger number than the New York and London Marathons combined.

The City2Surf course runs for 14km from Sydney's Hyde Park to beautiful Bondi Beach and participants can choose to either walk or run the course. This year Mission Australia is aiming to raise \$40,000 to help Australians in need - but we need YOUR help.

**Get involved by either running on your own and striving to achieve your goal time, or creating a team and motivating each other.** Set a fundraising total and track your progress. What better way to get fit, enjoy the outdoors and help Australians in need?

**TO REGISTER visit [city2surf.com.au](http://city2surf.com.au), follow the prompts and select 'Team Mission Australia' as the charity of your choice.**





# MISSION AUSTRALIA

# WINTER SLEEPOUT 1 JUNE - 31 AUGUST 2015

**JOIN OUR  
Winter Sleepout**  
.....

**We need  
your help!**

**As winter approaches it's a bleak outlook for individuals and families who don't have a place to call home. More than 100,000 Australians are homeless on any given night; including thousands of families.**

**Sign up today to host your own Winter Sleepout.**

Whether it is in your backyard, your office, your school hall or even on your living room floor, Winter Sleepout is about getting your friends, family, colleagues and community to raise vital funds towards Australians having a safe place to sleep this winter.

**When** From 1 June to 31 August - choose a night that suits you

**How** Register at [wintersleepout.gofundraise.com.au](http://wintersleepout.gofundraise.com.au)

# Our hidden homeless

Families are the hidden  
face of homelessness.  
Tonight **17,845** children  
are homeless.\*

\*ABS Census of Housing and Population 2011.



**Let's bring our hidden homeless  
in from the cold this winter**

Please donate today

**MISSION  
AUSTRALIA** | together  
we stand

 Complete the enclosed coupon

 1800 88 88 68

 [missionaustralia.com.au  
/hiddenhomeless](http://missionaustralia.com.au/hiddenhomeless)