



Independence

Spring 2016

thank you
for helping me

MISSION
AUSTRALIA

Giving thanks

With spring time upon us, I would like to thank you for continuing to have such faith in our work. I am so incredibly proud of the impact you have on Australians in need and so grateful for your ongoing support.

Recently, you came together to help 36-year old Simon whose childhood was stolen away at the age of 5. While you can't give him his childhood back, **find out how you are giving Simon a future.**

The memories I have of my grandmother are incredibly precious, so I was heartbroken to read about 80-year-old Ivy who spent more than 20 years sleeping rough in a train station. Ivy was hospitalised after a bout of pneumonia. She was then referred to Mission Australia's Charles Chambers Court. **She loved it and we loved her.** Read her story.

Studying can be a struggle for any teenager, let alone those dealing with learning difficulties or homelessness. Discover why these students are thriving at our learning centre in Adelaide, and why our Youth Beat van has become a beacon of hope for troubled teenagers in Tasmania.

We recently launched our Spring Appeal, which highlights how important early intervention is to children at risk of harm. Your donation is critical to breaking the cycle of abuse.

Thank you for providing others with hope.

With gratitude,



Catherine Yeomans
CEO, Mission Australia



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missionaustralia.com.au/news-blog

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

Values • Compassion • Integrity • Respect • Perseverance • Celebration

We've loved reading all your heartfelt responses to our Winter Appeal – read some of them below. Many thanks for supporting our Vote Home advocacy campaign. Together we are making a difference.

I have been thinking about the homeless especially on these cold nights. I hope this money will contribute towards blankets or warm clothes.

John, 44

It breaks my heart to think of young children losing their home because of domestic violence. Remember, people do care. You are in my prayers.

Emily, 66

35,917
signatures



supporting our
#votehome movement

There but for the Grace of God, go I. Thank you Mission Australia for the incredible work you do to help families who are homeless.

Max, 35

Your impact

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Youth Beat

Helping to break the cycle

Over the past 8 years, our Youth Beat van has become a trusted presence for some of Tasmania's most vulnerable communities. We act early, supporting at-risk kids before they feel let down or abandoned by society.

An icy wind whips across a grim-looking skatepark on the fringes of Hobart. A group of kids cluster around our Youth Beat van shivering. Billy, 7, doesn't have a jumper so he's wearing several t-shirts. **If he wasn't so hungry, he'd have stayed indoors, but as usual there's no food at home.** The free sausage sandwiches we are cooking up could be his only chance of a meal.

Tully, 11, is also at a loose end. As she eats, she opens up about her dad who has been in prison most of her young life. She thinks he has a mental illness. It's a great opportunity to talk about the importance of health and wellbeing. **Tully agrees that life might have turned out differently for her dad if he'd had some early help.**

Matt, 13, pulls out a penknife and casually asks what would happen if he stabbed someone. This offers a frightening glimpse of the violence that for many teenagers around here is a familiar way of life. Despite Matt's swaggering self-assurance, underneath he's vulnerable. He's looking for boundaries and we chat to him about the consequences of crime. He listens. He puts the knife away.

For many Australians, Tasmania is a paradise of breathtaking physical beauty with great food, wine and art. **But for a third of people who live here, life is unrelentingly hard.**

Issues such as joblessness, low levels of education, homelessness, domestic violence, drug addiction and chronic ill-health run through many families.

Every week we meet up with about 50 kids like Billy, Tully and Matt. This regular face-to-face contact helps us to spot the warning signs. **We act quickly to prevent issues like neglect or abuse from escalating.**

What we do

1 We connect with young people in their communities in places they like to socialise, gaining their trust so they openly talk about issues that are concerning them.

2 We help steer young people in a positive direction, raising awareness about substance abuse or other destructive behaviours that will affect their life in a negative way.

3 We act early to help young people before they reach crisis point. We engage appropriate services to address risk areas and involve family, school or the police to support them.

4 We form solid, ongoing relationships with these young people to help them stay focussed on their goals, steering and supporting them towards independence.

By providing support and mentorship at critical junctures in children's lives, we help them to learn from mistakes and avoid future problems.

We want the best for these kids. No matter how bumpy the journey is, helping them to achieve their dreams is our priority.

"We quietly guide these kids away from crime, disengagement with education and other destructive behaviours, steering them towards positive choices."

Amanda Beattie, Program Manager

"I don't get into trouble at school anymore. I want to do well."



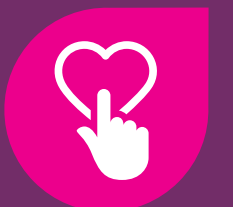
**Help us change lives by acting early:
donate to our Spring Appeal today**

Your donation safeguards vulnerable children from abuse, neglect or harm. By giving, you create opportunities for independence. **Thank you.**



1800 88 88 68

missionaustralia.com.au



MY STORY

A destitute funeral

A heartbreaking but very real part of our work is organising a funeral for people who have no next of kin.

These people are buried in an unmarked grave, forgotten and destitute alongside the headstones of those who are 'always remembered'.

Somewhere in the world perhaps, there are people who once knew them, however their identity is lost in time. To have no one there at the end of a human life is absolutely tragic. We always go to their funeral, along with one of our chaplains. **To us they are special.**

So thankful for you

With your generous donations, we are building another 60-bed aged care facility in Orange for vulnerable Australians just like Ivy. Thanks!
Kelly Golik, Quality & Compliance Manager, Aged Care



Grandma

The new face of homelessness

Imagine if your grandma had no place to call home. Sweet and frail Ivy spent 20 years sleeping in the tunnel of a train station, swept aside like a piece of rubbish. Sadly, she is far from alone.

At the age of 60, Ivy should have been basking in the autumn glow of a happy life. She'd been a stay-at-home mum, primarily involved in her children's school activities and volunteering.

But when her husband of 35 years suddenly divorced her, Ivy found herself on a frighteningly fast downward spiral.

With no savings, no super and no job skills, this family matriarch who had once held everyone together, had nowhere to live. Not wanting to be a burden on her adult children and too ashamed to ask for help, Ivy quietly

disappeared from her family's life, exchanging the picket fence on which she'd once gazed for a dark and dirty railway tunnel. The trains came and went, but Ivy went nowhere.

A ticket to nowhere

When you start to scratch the surface of a glossy city like Sydney, you'll see many older women just like Ivy who are homeless and in desperate need of help. An estimated 1 in 5 of the total homeless population are over the age of 55. This depressing statistic is

made worse by a housing crisis that has forced thousands of older women into refuges, hostels or onto the streets.

But the statistics are easily glossed over. To understand what they really mean, we need to listen to stories like Ivy's.

Surviving on the street is a full-time job. How do you shower? Where's the next soup run? Where's the safest place to sleep? Who is going to help you and who is going to assault you?

Ivy wasn't streetwise. She was often attacked by passers-by who didn't

like the "old bag" sleeping on the floor. She was kicked, punched and spat on. She quickly learnt that the only way to survive was to pay other rough sleepers to protect her from the ruthless predators that saw her as easy prey. But she always slept with one eye open.

Ivy's one small pleasure was to feed the pigeons with the leftovers she'd scavenge from the bins of a nearby food-hall.

The days quickly became weeks, then months, then years. **Dehumanised and alone**, the thought of re-entering mainstream society was terrifying to Ivy.

A home with heart

Ivy was approaching her 80th birthday when a bout of pneumonia led to a hospital stay. Against her will but too fragile to survive another winter on the streets, she was brought to Mission Australia's Charles Chambers Court.

One of our residential aged-care facilities, it offers a safe and caring environment to disadvantaged Australians like Ivy who rightly want to have their individuality and life stories

respected. For the first time in 20 years, Ivy had access to regular, nutritious meals, hot showers, her own toilet, a warm bed and 24-hour medical care. She was safe from the violence and hardship of the streets.

But it's hard to adjust to structure and organisation after the chaos of homelessness. For more than 20 years, Ivy had been stripped of every sense of security. She'd been completely alone. She didn't trust anyone and her mental health had deteriorated.

At first Ivy didn't think her life would improve at Charles Chambers Court. Every day, she would put her possessions into a shopping trolley and wheel them to the park where she would quietly feed her beloved pigeons.

She didn't speak to the other residents or staff. She avoided all eye contact.

It took time to earn this sweet and frail lady's trust. **But gradually, Charles Chambers Court became Ivy's haven.** She liked the warm and welcoming atmosphere here and became a much loved part of our community.

Ivy died peacefully in her sleep this year.

Sadly, there had been no contact with Ivy's family. It had all been too painful and it had been easier at the time, to disappear from their lives. Time had marched on and mental illness brought on by the trauma of homelessness meant that for Ivy, her family had simply slipped away from memory.

We miss her.

We celebrate each person's life story

Renewed hope for a meaningful life

Simon lost his childhood to the horrors of sexual abuse. Now 36, he's still battling the dual despair of mental illness and homelessness.

Thanks to you, things are finally starting to change.

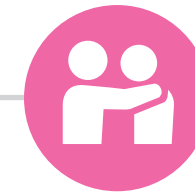


"I just want to live without fear and shame."



1 in 5

experience mental
illness each year¹



34

specific mental
health services²



4,021

people
assisted³

Simon was 5 years old when the sexual abuse started.

Growing up, drugs and alcohol dulled the distressing core beliefs that had been forged in his childhood: shame and worthlessness. When he left home, he lurched from one crisis to the next: failed relationships; financial setbacks; homelessness. He started to hear the voices of the paedophiles that molested him when he was a child and was diagnosed with schizophrenia.

Short stretches of stability have been interrupted by frequent mental health crises. Without the support of a family who long ago drifted from his life, Simon has fallen victim to the violence and chaos of the streets. In the last 12 months, Simon has been stabbed twice and had his throat cut. Sadly, Simon's story is all too familiar. The current system often fails to protect people with a serious mental illness. Having a safe and stable place to live and a range of treatment is vital.

Giving Simon a future

Simon is now at Mission Australia's Roma House in Brisbane. This 31-bed temporary accommodation service offers trauma-informed care, hope and support to people experiencing homelessness. Many, like Simon, suffer from mental illness.

Roma House is a sanctuary for Simon. He is responding well to treatment and tackling his addiction. But the long-term impact of child abuse is far reaching. It will take intensive therapy and support to unearth the buried shrapnel of repressed pain that has impacted

Simon's day-to-day functioning for so long.

Our hope is that Simon will recover enough to move into permanent, supported accommodation where he can live a full and meaningful life.

From the heart of Mission Australia

Noel Wason
Chaplain, Queensland

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

(Jeremiah 29: 11-13)

Before I joined Mission Australia, I wasn't able to work because my wife had breast cancer and I needed to look after her. Fortunately, she recovered and I decided to look for a job, but I was worried that nobody would want to employ a washed-up counsellor and former minister. Thankfully, God had other ideas. His plan for me was to work at Mission Australia and to support others.

Here in far north Queensland, people face many different social and economic problems: family violence; drug abuse; unemployment; mental illness; homelessness. I try to support them in any way I can.

One of the most rewarding aspects of my role is to see someone who was homeless move into a home of their own. **To help them settle in, I'll perform a 'house blessing' and invite God to be part of their new home.** That sense of home often takes them back to childhood when home was their place of refuge from the world. A house blessing reminds them that God is always present, which is very comforting.

We all have difficult times in life. I encourage everyone who is suffering or feels past their use-by-date to remember that God has a plan for each and every one of us.

Find out more:

Check out missionaustralia.com.au for details of our mental health services or contact Lifeline.



Call Lifeline on 13 11 14

lifeline.org.au



Flexible learning

Re-engaging the disengaged

Welcome to the happy place. Our Independent Learning Centre at St Marys in South Australia actively challenges, supports and inspires reluctant and disengaged learners, preventing them from slipping through the net.

For the 72 young people who study here, there is no catch-all solution that will ignite their thirst for learning. Most have a range of complex needs and a history of being told they are bad students. Having exhausted traditional routes to learning, many arrive here feeling inadequate and confused. **We know how critical education is to breaking the cycle of disadvantage. Our philosophy is simple: when there are so many negatives in your life, why not let education be the positive. We offer:**



Friendly staff

Staff form warm, personal relationships with students. We understand that acts of defiance often mask deep-seated insecurities. We work hard to build trust and rapport, adapting the curriculum to meet each student's interests and needs.



Significant support

Our case managers work with students, their families and wider support networks, helping with housing, transport, legal issues, health and childcare so that a student's personal circumstances do not prevent them from achieving their goals.



Tailored approach

We recognise that every student has unique strengths. We offer individualised learning that captures their skills and imagination. For example, aerosol art or recreational fishing can be a powerful catalyst for change.



A happy place

We celebrate difference and diversity. This is an inclusive place where everyone belongs. Some students face immense adversity, but here they can feel safe and secure with adults that genuinely care for them and celebrate their progress.



Relevant learning

We offer accredited subjects linked to the South Australian Certificate of Education, such as maths and english. But we also provide learning opportunities that involve real-world scenarios such as cooking, gardening and parenting.



Work-focussed skills

Our flexible approach incorporates vocational opportunities to equip students for the workplace. This includes hairdressing, car maintenance and physical exercise, again all linked to the South Australian Certificate of Education.

Find out more:

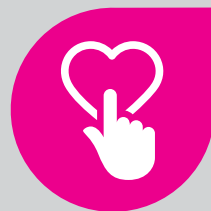
Our youth-focussed services support every young person to achieve their potential.



1800 88 88 68



missionaustralia.com.au



Names have been changed to protect the privacy of the people you helped



"We'll do whatever it takes to help each young person develop into an adult who can pursue a fulfilling life." Gerry McCarthy, Program Facilitator



You can change her future

Help us in the fight against child abuse
and neglect. **Donate today.**

 missionaustralia.com.au/springappeal

 1800 88 88 68

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