

Independence

Summer 2016

our
Christmas
wish

MISSION
AUSTRALIA

Our Christmas wish

Thank you for standing with us to help Australians in need move towards long-term independence. We are so grateful for all the donations we receive – you are making a life-changing difference to many thousands of adults and children across our nation.

Inside, Margaret and her husband Les share the personal story behind their lasting gift to Mission Australia. We really appreciate their generosity and are inspired by their determination to overcome tragedy and enables us to continue to offer vital services.

Our frontline staff encounter heart-breaking stories every day when they meet families and individuals experiencing homelessness. Your support brings hope and happiness to these children and adults in need. Read how our case worker Kevin helped Mark and his sons find accommodation just before Christmas last year so they could escape homelessness and celebrate together.

Scott, one of our Chaplains, also shares how we can look out and care for people who might otherwise be lonely or forgotten in our local communities at Christmas time.

Lastly, Mission Australia is proud to participate in the Kmart Wishing Tree Appeal, bringing gifts and hope to struggling families this Christmas. Please take part and help to bring a smile to families' faces on Christmas morning.

Thank you again for supporting Australians in need to move towards long-term independence.

With gratitude,



Catherine Yeomans
CEO, Mission Australia



Connect with Catherine:

 @cathyeomans  catherine@missionaustralia.com.au  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



Together, with your support, we made a difference to the lives of many thousands of Australians in the last financial year. Here are some highlights¹:

Your impact

131,015
Australians supported



18,529
 people assisted through **62** homelessness and housing services

 **27,877**
people assisted through **117** families, children and early learning services

7,657
 people assisted through **43** mental health services

"Does this mean I will finally have my own address?"

Nicole¹, on receiving keys to her own unit at Yaralla Cottages

 **18,744**
people assisted through **14** support services for alcohol & other drugs

1. See our full 2015-16 Annual Report at missionaustralia.com.au/AR16. * Name has been changed to protect the privacy of the person we helped.

Delivering hope to families in need this Christmas

Christmas can be an exceptionally difficult time for the children and families we support. Simply receiving a gift on Christmas morning can mean the world to struggling families.

After 29 years the Kmart Wishing Tree Appeal remains Australia's largest Christmas gift appeal. Thanks to the incredible generosity of Australians, more than 8 million gifts have been collected and distributed to children and adults in need.

This Christmas, 35 Kmart stores across Australia will collect cash contributions and gifts for Mission Australia. Our staff will deliver the gifts to vulnerable children and families across Australia who may otherwise go without on Christmas Day.

Thanks to generous supporters, last year Mission Australia delivered 57,600 gifts to families in need from

Kmart. This year, we would like to bring hope to many more families and individuals.

Visit missionaustralia.com.au/kmart for more information on participating stores around the country.

To participate and bring hope to struggling families this Christmas:

- 1** Give a gift at a participating Kmart store
- 2** Contribute cash in-store, or donate online at missionaustralia.com.au/kmartchristmas
- 3** Purchase Kmart Wishing Tree Appeal merchandise in store



*Client name changed to protect the privacy of the person we helped.

Classic festive fare for your loved ones

Special thanks to Ruth Murray, one of our loyal supporters, for sharing this delicious, no fuss Christmas recipe – one she's been making for family and friends for over 40 years.



When she's not making White Christmas for her family over the festive period, Ruth is busy creating teddy bears which she generously donates to our Grandparents Raising Grandchildren program. Over 200 lucky children received one of Ruth's teddy bears this year.

Thank you Ruth!

White Christmas

Ingredients

- 1 cup of full cream milk powder
- 1 cup of rice bubbles
- 1 cup of mixed fruit
- 1 cup of icing sugar
- 1 block of capha

Method

Combine all ingredients, add melted capha, mix well. Place in slice tray. Place in fridge to set. Store in fridge, cut and use for a delicious snack.

TIP: wrapped up in cellophane and festive ribbon, this makes a sweet and economical gift to have on hand at Christmastime



Send in your photos:

We'd love to see you preparing your festive recipe with your family. Please email to:

 supporter@missionaustralia.com.au



MY STORY



You don't have to be wealthy to make a significant difference to the lives of others

Leaving a lasting gift

for future generations of Australians

A gift left to Mission Australia in your Will is one of the most generous and lasting ways you can make a life-changing difference to Australians in need.

When Les and Margaret included Mission Australia in their Will, the sudden death of their daughter, Elizabeth, at just 26, was still raw.

Elizabeth had always spoken highly of Mission Australia, so it was a fitting way to honour her memory and realise her goal of helping people less fortunate than herself.

"Elizabeth was a social worker in the Emergency Department. She used to come across people all the time who just couldn't cope with life. She would often tell me how fantastic Mission Australia [then known as Sydney City Mission] was," Margaret says.

"Elizabeth told me Mission Australia always does what they can to look after people. She really admired their work. When she died and we had to redo our Will, we thought we'd like to leave something in there for them.

"Les and I are both Christian, and so was Elizabeth. We wanted to leave something to an organisation that really 'gets its hands dirty'. Mission Australia is on the ground out there doing good work all the time in many hard areas."

Although Elizabeth passed away more than 15 years ago, Margaret and Les continue to faithfully donate to Mission Australia every year and also know that ultimately their bequest will have a life-changing impact on future Australians in need.

"Elizabeth would have been very supportive of our decision. She always

wanted to help people - hence her career as a social worker. As a carer myself it hasn't been possible for me to physically help out, so it's nice to know there are charities like Mission Australia who do."

A gift that truly changes lives

A gift, like Les and Margaret's bequest, enables Mission Australia to effectively plan for the future so that the next generation of Australians have every chance to succeed.

"We decided it was important for us to give something of value back"

Les and Margaret

Find out more

If you'd like more information about leaving a bequest, please go to our website or contact Pat or Christine, our friendly Bequests Coordinators:

 missionaustralia.com.au/mywill



Pat Brennan, Bequest Coordinator

 02 9217 1064

 brennanp@missionaustralia.com.au



Christine Thomas, Bequest Coordinator

 0409 315 062

 thomasc@missionaustralia.com.au





2. ACOSS, Poverty in Australia, 2014, 3. ABS (2007) National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing: Summary of Results

Want other ways to spend Christmas Day helping others?

Contact your local church or community group, or for other volunteering opportunities, go to missionaustralia.com.au/volunteer



Showing love

this Christmas

I watched the guests wandering in the warm summer sun towards the marquee, to enjoy a free lunch, entertainment and gift at Mission Australia's Christmas Lunch in the Park in Perth.

A rough sleeper. An elderly woman on her own. A young mum with two children who had outgrown their tired clothes. People I'd expect. Then I noticed others, who at first glance didn't seem to be struggling. It got me thinking. Who are the needy? Who deserves a free lunch and a gift? What about people who've lost someone dear to them? A single mum battling illness? The refugee released from detention just last week? The violated teen who uses drugs to cope? I began to wonder about the different kinds of need that surround us. Christmas is traditionally a family time and a time for giving. But for those with little to give or only negative associations with family, it can make the Christmas season daunting, fraught with grief or even conflict.

This highlights the diversity of need we can all face in a society that seems increasingly individualistic and isolating. The reality is that at first glance we never know what others are going through.

Christmas is also a time when we remember a particular baby born into poverty. Born in a backyard to poor parents, Jesus had been welcomed into the world by farm animals and shepherds. His family were soon forced to flee and became refugees (Matthew 2).

Yet, we also hear of Jesus' rich life, a life given away in service to others. It reminds me of Mother Theresa's feet - deformed from a life of giving away all the best fitted shoes to the poor, putting other people's needs before her own.

Need comes disguised in many forms, as does wealth. All people should be valued for who they are.

All of us yearn for friendship and love. And for people who come to Christmas Lunch in the Park, that meal among strangers who become friends, at least for a time, means so much.

This Christmas let's all open our eyes to need in our local communities: the elderly, the lonely or forgotten, those estranged from family, those suffering illness. There are many ways we can serve others. We can pray, share a meal, write a card, or buy a gift and so much more.

As Jesus said, "...love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends" (John 15:12-13).

By reaching out and showing others that we truly do care about them we can make an even greater difference to people in need this Christmas.

**Scott Vawser
Chaplain, WA & NT**



1 in 6 
children are living below the poverty line²

1 in 5 
Australians experience mental illness every year³



Your wishes for our clients this Christmas...

I wish you the knowledge of your own importance and worthiness. Be defined by all that is good in you, not the circumstances that engulf you. God bless you.

Gillian, WA

Have a Merry Christmas. I'm sorry your situation is hard. Please know there are people who care. I wish you health, peace, fortune and hope.

Irving, NSW

Know that there are people in this world who care and are willing to help you know the true meaning of Christmas and be able to celebrate Jesus.

Elizabeth, Qld

May you find comfort in knowing people do care. God bless you and may the new year bring you lots of joy and happiness.

Ethel, Vic

I hope that Christmas brings hope and good luck. May next year see you enjoy greater happiness and security.

Sylvia, NSW

A bright future thanks to your support

Your donations are truly life-changing for struggling Australian families like Mark* and his sons, Noah and Will. Mission Australia Caseworker, Kevin Kingsbeer, shares their story.

We heard about Mark from a social worker at the hospital. Mark had terminal cancer. No longer able to work, he and his two young boys lost their home and were living in a van.

Mark had worked hard all his life just to provide for his boys. His biggest concern was that his boys were going to be cared for.

It was just before Christmas and all Mark wanted was to see his youngest son, Will, get into a good high school the following year. But living in a van and seeing his father get sicker and sicker was really affecting Will.

Knowing his son couldn't study properly and might miss out on going to a good school was adding to Mark's stress.

As a father myself, I couldn't help but be affected seeing the children in distress. It was heart-wrenching. I thought 'We've got to do something. We have to help this family.'

Finding accommodation for homeless dads and their children is difficult. When we didn't have an immediate place to offer Mark and the boys, I felt helpless.

*Client names have been changed to protect the privacy of the people we help.

That's when the call went out to Mission Australia staff, local businesses, our corporate partners and supporters for donations to help. We phoned around for suitable accommodation and finally, with all the donations, we found them a tiny flat.

A fresh start

On Christmas Eve, I visited the family to deliver Christmas presents donated by our supporters. It was so beautiful

seeing the boys' faces — relieved to be in a safe home and amazed to be receiving the gifts. I've got to say, it was one of the highlights of my career.

It was incredible how everyone pitched in. Mark was so thankful. I just want to thank all our supporters.

Their generosity really can mean the difference between a family becoming homeless or being supported into safe accommodation where they can celebrate Christmas together.

Send a message of support

Please send your messages of encouragement for our clients, like Mark and his sons, or our frontline staff like Kevin, and we'll pass them on.

supporter@missionaustralia.com.au





**“Because of my
cancer we are
homeless”**

Independence is precious

Help us support families facing
homelessness. Donate today.

 missionaustralia.com.au/christmasappeal

 1800 88 88 68

**MISSION
AUSTRALIA**