

Independence

Autumn 2017

A new
beginning

MISSION
AUSTRALIA

An Easter reflection

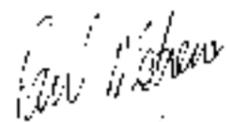
With Easter upon us, our CEO Catherine has given me the honour of acting as **Guest Editor for this Autumn edition of your Independence newsletter.**

The Easter story is one of trial and sorrow, but ultimately new life. It's particularly relevant to our work, where we stand alongside disadvantaged Australians as they journey towards new beginnings and independence. Jesus himself said: "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)

This month you'll meet Janine*, who was forced out of work after an accident, but overcame many challenges to return to the workforce in her dream job. I'll also introduce you to Skye, who was struggling in a disruptive home, but is now repairing family relationships and pursuing her passion for dancing. And lastly there's Meredith, who's endured lifetimes worth of pain, but is now finally enjoying the safety and dignity she deserves.

All three women know how different their lives are with the support of caring people like you, and are grateful beyond words. Thank you for seeing the value in every Australian and giving generously so that they may experience the grace of new life.

Happy Easter and God Bless,



Paul Molyneux
National Chaplain



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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

Your generous support helps us make a positive difference to the lives of many thousands of Australians every month. Here are some recent examples of our work in action:

Christmas Lunch in the Park in Perth welcomed over

2,000
guests for lunch



21,846
young Australians shared their hopes & fears in our annual Youth Survey



13 young people graduated from Creative Youth Initiative's Sounds of the Street program in February



2 program impact reports released: Reconnect & Room to Grow



more than **3,000** people attended the 9th annual Family Day at the Zoo in Melbourne

your impact

* Name has been changed to protect the privacy of the person we helped.



“I can’t believe where I am today. Thank you for caring enough to help me when I was going through tough times.”

Janine

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

A new sense of purpose

An accident forced 55-year-old Janine* to leave her job as a domestic care assistant for elderly clients. As she discovered, with a disability the road back into work is challenging, but achievable with the right support.

Janine’s accident left her with a disability, and her lack of formal qualifications and job skills made getting back into the workforce a real struggle. Months of fruitless job hunting led to crippling depression and anxiety.

When she joined Mission Australia’s Disability Management Services program, Janine had no hope for her future. Through vocational counselling sessions, we helped her identify that her passion still lay in working with elderly people. With a little encouragement, we convinced Janine that even though she hadn’t studied since high school, she was still capable of achieving her Certificate III in Aged Care.

After just two weeks in the course, Janine was like an entirely different person. She had renewed self-confidence, a new sense of

purpose, and optimism as she looked to the future.

Dedicated disability management

With our support, Janine successfully completed her studies and work placement. We then gave her one-on-one support to help her find a job, providing assistance as she wrote her resume, helping her dress appropriately for interviews, and coaching her on interview techniques.

Soon after, Janine was offered her dream job at a leading aged care facility. She loves her new job and the people she works with and cares for. She can’t believe how much her life has changed for the better despite the challenges she has faced.

How we helped in 2016: a snapshot

Disability:#

8,196
people assisted



59
services



Find out more:

Our disability services provide dedicated support to help our clients get back on track.



1800 88 88 68

missionaustralia.com.au



GET INVOLVED

5 REASONS TO JOIN THE 2017 MISSION AUSTRALIA SLEEPOUT

The 2017 Mission Australia Sleepout is launching, and this year it's going to be bigger and better than ever!

For 28 years, thousands of Australians have taken part in our Winter Sleepouts. But homelessness isn't just a problem in Winter. So this year, we're welcoming schools, churches, teams and individuals to host Sleepouts all year round! Will you join us?

Here are five great reasons to host your own Sleepout this year:

1 Educate yourself
Homelessness isn't just old men sleeping rough in parks, it affects 105,000 people across the country every single night. Solving homelessness isn't just about building more homes either. Learn what it takes to make a lasting impact.

2 Raise awareness
Advocate for positive change in your community. Become a voice for the 17,845 children under 12 years who will be homeless tonight. Tell your family, friends, colleagues, school, church, and local influencers that things need to change.

3 Create real impact
Raise funds to help Australians who desperately need your support. As little as \$22 can buy a set of sheets so a child can be tucked snugly into bed and \$299 can fit out a whole bedroom with basics to feel safe and secure.

4 Grasp what it's like
Sleep and wake up somewhere uncomfortable, and grow in compassion for those forced to do it night after night. Appreciate the comforts too many of us take for granted.

5 Gather with friends for the greater good
Spend the night with people in your community, share a meal, tell stories and know you're doing it for a very worthy cause. There's nothing more satisfying!

If you're not able to physically sleep out but still want to get involved, there are plenty of other ways to join in. Why not invite your family and friends around for a sleepover, or host a morning tea or a film night with friends? Get creative, and make a difference!

Register today

Lock in a date for your Sleepout and get all the information you need:

 masleepout.gofundraise.com.au

For any questions, please contact us:

 **1800 88 88 68**

 sleepout@missionaustralia.com.au



PROJECT

HAPPY EASTER Colouring in

Why not share this fun Easter colouring activity with your children, grandchildren or a young neighbour?



Skye's the limit thanks to Reconnect

Seventeen-year-old Skye wasn't coping at home or school, and came close to running away from both. Our Reconnect program gave her the support and skills she needed to turn her life around and begin to chase her dreams.

During year 10 at high school, Skye moved to Sydney to live with her dad for the first time.

Sadly, adjusting to living with her dad and being semi-independent proved more difficult than she expected.

"I would usually eat dinner alone," Skye said. "There were always different people coming and going from home who I didn't know. It was very disruptive."

Skye eventually moved out to live with her uncle, and was referred to Mission Australia's Reconnect program for extra support with school and communicating with her family.

Turning young lives around

Reconnect assists young people aged 12 to 18 years who are homeless or at risk of becoming

homeless, encouraging family reconciliation where possible. Our experienced staff help young people stabilise their living situation, maintain family relationships, and increase engagement with education, training, employment and the wider community.

"My counsellor provided a really comfortable space for me to ask for advice and support to get through my HSC and fix my family relationships."

Skye

Among many things, Skye's Reconnect counsellor helped her realise that she was neglecting school subjects that she wasn't doing so well at.

She helped Skye create time schedules and develop study skills, which resulted in an improvement in her academic results.

Skye says Reconnect gave her the resilience to complete her studies in the face of several challenges.

"I would have definitely pulled out from completing my HSC [without Reconnect]. But my counsellor helped me ... and supported me to focus on my future and push through."

Skye recently started a full-time dance course (she's been dancing since age two) and works in a cafe. She hopes to fulfil her ultimate dream, to study dance interstate and become a dance teacher.

Importantly, Skye's relationship with her family is improving. "Now I actually talk to my family about issues and I communicate how I'm feeling. Before, I used to hold it in on my own."



"They don't teach life skills in school. I found it to be so helpful!"

Skye

Advocacy in action!

As a result of our dedicated campaigning, the Federal Government has extended funding for Reconnect to mid-2018. This is a major win for young people at risk of becoming homeless, as well as their families and communities.



Reconnect program snapshot:

Personal wellbeing improved by **↑ 9.5%** 

Permanency of housing improved by **↑ 17.7%** 

Lack of crisis support reduced by **↓ 7.1%** 

Home at last

A series of devastating events left 60-year-old Meredith distanced from her family, homeless and desperately unwell. Out of money and ideas, she didn't know where to turn for help.



Image changed

When Meredith first arrived at a Mission Australia Housing service in northern Sydney, she was suffering chronic health conditions including cancer, lupus, and Hepatitis C caused by a blood transfusion. She also had multiple brain lesions, nerve damage, and she wore a colostomy bag.

Heartbreakingly, these were just the tip of the iceberg when it came to pain in her life.

Years earlier, on the same day as the funeral of her grandmother, Meredith's father drowned in the family pool. Meredith moved in to look after her elderly mum and at the same time underwent three rounds of treatment for cancer, forcing her to give up work as a nurse.

Adding even more pain, Meredith's mum was later hit by a car and died. Meredith sold the house they shared, feeling that it "held too many sad memories". Much of the money from the house disappeared into paying for her treatment.

Struggling to pay the bills, she moved into shared accommodation but fled when her male housemate became violent. She moved in with her adult son and his girlfriend, but felt she had overstayed her welcome and spent time moving between Airbnb share houses.

"I'd been scared for a long time and I was wondering where my life was going," Meredith said. "It was stressful, isolating and incredibly overwhelming.

"I didn't know what to do or what resources would be out there to help me. I was even going to live in my car, but I had to sell it."

Providing dignity & independence

Mission Australia supported Meredith's attempts to apply for priority permanent housing, though the process was drawn out because her failing health caused her to miss important appointments. We also helped by providing supermarket vouchers and assistance with her rent.

In the meantime, a unit in one of our short-term transitional housing properties became available. Case manager Lisa visited Meredith a week after moving in and was

overjoyed to see the improvement in her appearance and outlook.

Meredith said she felt a huge weight lift off her shoulders after moving into the unit. For the first time in a long time, she was able to manage her daily expenses and enjoy her life.

Meredith was now able to complete her housing application. Her submission was approved, placing her on the waiting list with

thousands of others. Though people can often be forced to wait years, she miraculously received an offer just a few months later, and moved in during February.

Meredith is so appreciative of all the help she has received. She's particularly grateful for the people who support Mission Australia, who have given her the opportunity to live with dignity and independence.

"It was amazing to see the look of relief on her face a week after she had moved in. She's a kind, wonderful lady who has had to deal with so much."

- Lisa, Meredith's case manager

Find out more

Meredith shared her story on the ABC's 7.30 report recently as part of a report on the rising rates of elderly people experiencing homelessness. Watch the video at:



missionaustralia.com.au/meredith





The silent battle

Every Australian, no matter their age, deserves hope for the future. **Please help today.**

 missionaustralia.com.au/easterappeal

 1800 88 88 68

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