

Independence

Winter 2017



MISSION
AUSTRALIA

A love that knows *no bounds*

Years as the primary carer for her eldest granddaughter left Sue* feeling isolated and distressed. Then she was asked to drive interstate to collect her four other neglected grandchildren.

Before coming into Sue's care, the four youngest children were often left alone, witnessed severe domestic violence and missed out on most of their schooling, leaving them extremely developmentally delayed.

Desperate for help, Sue reached out to us and was connected with our Grandparents Raising Grandchildren support program.

The children were immediately enrolled in the program's homework club, where they study three afternoons a week with other children also being raised by their grandparents. Sue says the children get the professional tutoring they need, while the stress of school work is lifted off their home lives, allowing them to enjoy more quality time together.

Sue attends regular group meetings and workshops and gets advice navigating the child protection system. She has also formed

strong friendships with fellow grandparents caring for their grandchildren, making her feel more connected with the community.

The children have been linked with local mental health services to help them with their past, and enjoy joining with other families at social activities and weekends away.

They all love sport, and keep Sue very busy getting them to training and competitions, including some at state and national levels.

Because of Grandparents Raising Grandchildren, Sue is getting the help she needs, and her grandkids have been given the loving, supportive childhood they've always deserved. Another 67 families are also benefitting from the program right now, thanks to generous people like you.

"This program is a godsend for our family." Sue

Season of change

Change is in the air, and I'm not just referring to this icy Winter weather. Exciting change is upon us, and with it comes the promise of better outcomes for the people your generous donations support.

This year's Federal Budget delivered some welcome certainty to homelessness funding, with the government committing \$375 million and the promise of ongoing investment. The funding will give thousands of Australians the support they need to prevent falling into homelessness or to move quickly out of it.

Also encouraging was the inclusion of full funding for the NDIS, though concern still remains for vulnerable people ineligible to continue to receive the vital mental health supports they currently do.

Disturbingly, the Budget failed to offer adequate assistance for the 657,000 low-income households living in rental stress. My team is continuing to advocate for these people to

ensure they can pursue lives of independence.

I was thrilled to recently attend the opening of David Martin Place, our ground-breaking youth detox facility. We've also just opened Benjamin Short Grove, our new aged care facility, which we couldn't have done without your life-changing donations.

Since 2002 the annual Mission Australia Youth survey has informed policies and programs that support young Australians to be the best they can be. If you know young people aged 15-19, please encourage them to have their say at missionaustralia.com.au/youthsurvey

Thank you for your enduring support. **We're achieving so much together.**



Catherine Yeomans
CEO, Mission Australia



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Winter mailbox

Below is an email one of our mental health case workers recently received from the mother of a family we helped:

Hi Jane,

Just wanted to email with an update and thank you for all your support during our difficult time. We are in the best place we have ever been! The kids are excelling in school and absolutely love it. It's the happiest I have ever seen Aaron*.

"We are in the best place we have ever been!"

Since being at his new school he has been made a Year 5 leader and his grades have picked up dramatically. He also went into a competition for a poem and has made the finals. They will be publishing his poem next year! At the moment we are dealing with my Nan, who has terminal cancer. We're coping with it better than I would have thought. Thank you for everything you did for us. Without you, I don't know where we would be today.

Yours sincerely,
Helen Murphy* and family

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

Our recent youth survey revealed the three top areas of national concern for young people

Top 3 national issues:

alcohol
and drugs

28.7%



discrimination
and equity



mental
health

20.6%



Bex won't lie down in mental health fight

Physical abuse. Depression. Anxiety. Post-traumatic stress disorder. Self-harm. Attempted suicide. Homeless refuges. Drug and alcohol addiction. Bullying.

Heartbreakingly, Bex endured all this and more before her 15th birthday.

"It was a terrifying experience. I didn't know how to react and handle how I was feeling. I was suicidal because I didn't think anyone cared about me. I really don't know how I survived"

Thankfully, Bex did survive. She recently graduated from high school, and, now aged 19, is completing an artworks course at Mission Australia's Creative Youth Initiative, and is seeing a counsellor she trusts and feels comfortable with.

The program helps young people develop their creativity through art; building self-esteem and encouraging learning in a safe, supportive environment. A support coordinator offers students ongoing support and goal planning, as well as help finding work or enrolling in further studies.

With help from Mission Australia, Bex continues to work through her mental health issues, and is now an advocate for others facing similar struggles.

"It shouldn't feel shameful to talk about mental illness, but it still is and that needs to change. It's okay to ask for help, and that's why I'm sharing my story."



You told us...

In our recent supporter survey, you told us the three most important social issues facing Australia today are:

 **51%** Homelessness and shortage of affordable housing

 **47%** Alcohol and drug dependency

 **47%** Domestic and family violence

Your support allows us to help the people facing these challenges, so thank you.

You let us know the three key reasons you support Mission Australia are:

 **56%** I know Mission Australia will use my donations effectively

 **55%** Mission Australia is a longstanding, reputable charity

 **40%** Mission Australia and its work reflect my Christian faith

You also told us you like seeing how your donations are being used, and hearing stories of people overcoming hardship and achieving positive outcomes because of your donations. **We value your feedback, and look forward to sharing more of these stories with you in the future.**



Fresh hope for youth

We have just opened NSW's first youth detox facility, David Martin Place.

The \$3 million facility will support 10 young people at a time through a substance withdrawal and detox program for up to 28 days.

David Martin Place joins the highly effective Triple Care Farm youth drug and alcohol program in the state's Southern Highlands, adding another vital layer of support for vulnerable 16 to 24 year olds.

Triple Care Farm program manager Gabriella Holmes says the new service will help young people take the crucial first step out of the cycle of substance abuse.

"We have a dynamic and professional team ready to go, to ensure we are delivering effective and engaging support to assist young clients to withdraw from illicit substances and alcohol."

Young people are becoming increasingly concerned about alcohol and drugs, labelling it the top issue facing Australia today.#



“It was a gesture of gratitude to God for the freedom I was beginning to experience. I want to help bring that freedom to others in a practical way by my continuing support.”

Ian

Ian's lasting gift

My first encounter with Mission Australia's work with the poor and homeless was in 1981. I was just beginning to emerge from a time of great darkness and brokenness in my life. I went to Mission's premises and gave the staff \$20. Amazingly, what began as a small gesture resulted in me continuing to support them ever since.

For many years I felt I had been dealt a bad card in life. I was born 10 weeks premature. As I grew up I had learning difficulties, but an even greater problem of fear, abandonment and a lack of love left me unable to relate to people in a relaxed way. As a teenager I felt incomplete and unaffirmed and really wanted to die. I feared never having proper employment and a stable and fruitful future. But as a result of God's love

and the support and counsel of many people, the beautiful life I now have began to emerge.

Today, retirement enables me to volunteer with homeless and marginalised men. In talking with these men, I have come to realise that the wounds and hurt of my past help me to reach out and encourage them in a very genuine way. I find it a constant source of joy, and a great reminder of the support I received many years ago.

Every time I receive Mission Australia's newsletters and read about the broken lives that are being mended I am profoundly touched and know that my regular financial giving, and ultimately my bequest, are part of a much wider work of mercy and compassion.

Ian, regular giver and confirmed benefactor*

Considering leaving a legacy of your own?

To find out how you can leave a lasting gift to Australians in need, please complete the form below and return it to us in the reply paid envelope enclosed, or call us on 1800 88 88 68.

Name:

Address:

Phone:

Benjamin Short Grove opens its doors

The first 15 residents have just moved into our brand new aged care facility, Benjamin Short Grove.

Based in Orange in central NSW, the service offers 24-hour residential care and support for local men and women who are experiencing homelessness, at risk of homelessness, or are financially or socially disadvantaged. An official opening is planned for November, by which time the residence should be home to 60 people. We'll bring you more news from Benjamin Short Grove in the coming months.



Prayer diary

If you are someone who prays, we'd love you to join us in prayer for our work and the people we help. Please sign up for our prayer diary at missionaustralia.com.au/prayer



*Names have been changed to protect the privacy of our supporters and the people we help