

Independence

Spring 2017

walking in
the light

MISSION
AUSTRALIA

New beginnings

'See! The winter is past; the rains are over and gone. Flowers appear on the earth; the season for singing has come' – Song of Songs 2:11-12

Spring is a wonderful time of year. All around, new life and new hope seem to burst forth. The verses above encourage and inspire me when I think about the people who seek our help. They remind me that God can replace the darkest clouds with sunshine, and put a song of joy on our lips.

This edition of your Independence newsletter celebrates stories of lives made new. From seven-year-old Max to 56-year-old Brett and everyone in between and beyond, your support is making a tangible impact for people across the country every day.

Our Youth Mental Health and Homelessness Report shows we've got a big job ahead of us to adequately assist young people on their journey to adulthood. But I know that together we can help them – and all vulnerable Australians – take steps towards happy, healthy and fulfilling lives.

Thank you for standing with Australians in need. Together, we're making a real difference.

With gratitude,



Catherine Yeomans
CEO, Mission Australia



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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

The journey to adulthood can be an exciting adventure, but for many young people it comes with significant challenges

Youth mental health and homelessness



Spotlight on

Our Youth Mental Health and Homelessness Report reveals a worrying correlation between mental health, family conflict and homelessness for young Australians

Those with a probable serious mental illness are

3.5

times more likely to have spent time away from home than those without a probable serious mental illness (32.2% versus 8.6%)



Compared with their peers, young people with a probable serious mental illness reported higher levels of concern about:



Depression 55.8% 'extremely' or 'very' concerned compared to 10.4%



Coping with stress 73.3% 'extremely' or 'very' concerned compared to 29.4%



Body image 53.2% 'extremely' or 'very' concerned compared to 19.4%

Key policy recommendations

Mission Australia calls on Commonwealth, State and Territory governments to:

- 1** Commit to halving youth homelessness by 2020
- 2** Fund and expand proven programs
- 3** Invest in supported accommodation, and social and affordable housing

A funded, comprehensive service system for young people should provide:

- 1** Early identification and intervention services
- 2** Outreach support and a variety of housing options
- 3** Diverse, holistic wraparound services with input from young people



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Auto repairs shop turns young lives around

Synergy Auto Repairs is an Australian-first initiative that's repairing cars and restoring lives

Eighteen-year-old Mark spent much of his adolescence without a stable place to call home. In 2014, he was kicked out by his mum due to a family conflict. Mark admits now that he was "off the rails".

He spent a number of years couch surfing with friends, sometimes moving two or three times a week. He received help from the Department of Human Services, but even then was moved regularly from place to place.

"I felt terrible," Mark recalls. "I had no home, no support and no one to talk to."

Mark says he was confused about what was happening to him. He didn't know where to go or what to do. He became disengaged from support services and experienced anxiety and depression.

In March he joined the program at Synergy Auto Repairs in Melbourne. Synergy is a social

enterprise offering smash repair services to the general public while providing training and support to young people aged 16-20 with a history of motor vehicle-related offences. The program gives them the skills to start a smash repairs apprenticeship, equipping them for a career in the industry.

Mark's life has taken a dramatic turn. Surrounded by a supportive team, he's developed positive social connections and learned many new skills.

Synergy program manager Troy Crellin says all of the program's young participants arrive having faced significant challenges. Mark was no exception.

"He went through a lot of chaos and trauma at once. He had to ask himself questions no 16 year old should have to, like 'Where am I staying tonight?' If he had been put in touch with the right services early to reconnect him with his mum, he may never have missed school or been through so much trauma and homelessness."

Helping get young people back on track

Since starting the program, Mark's life has taken a dramatic turn. Surrounded by a supportive team, he's developed positive social connections and learned many new skills.

Mark is set to complete the program this month, and is excited to pursue a job as a spray painter as the next step on his journey towards independence.



Not a real image of Mark

Synergy Repairs program outcomes since 2014 launch:

Cars serviced

1,115



Traineeships

75



Ongoing opportunities*

70%



* Includes apprenticeships, further study, casual employment and other opportunities

Together we Trek

Larapinta Trail 2018

Join Mission Australia supporters and staff on the trip of a lifetime as we trek the Larapinta Trail to raise urgently needed funds for vulnerable young people in the Northern Territory

We already know you have a heart for helping Australians in need, but do you also have a heart for adventure? If the answer's an enthusiastic 'yes', you won't want to miss Together we Trek.

In June 2018, we're hiking the Larapinta Trail to raise funds for vulnerable young people. If we hit our fundraising target, the money will go directly towards launching a new Missionbeat service in the Northern Territory to support youth experiencing homelessness or in need of assistance.

Highlights

- Discover the beauty of Central Australia, exploring the mountains, valleys, rivers and desert landscapes
- Learn about unique Aboriginal culture from local guides on traditional lands by day, and sleep under the stars at night

- See firsthand how Mission Australia works locally to reduce homelessness and strengthen communities

The adventure in detail*

DAY 1 Arrive in Alice Springs, share a meal with your guides and fellow hikers, and participate in a Welcome to Country ceremony

DAY 2 Visit a Mission Australia service to see how your fundraising dollars are changing lives across the country before trekking 20km from Alice Springs to Simpsons Gap. End the day with a 3-course meal featuring quintessential flavours of the bush.

DAY 3 Tackle a challenging – but breathtakingly beautiful – trek from Serpentine Gorge to Serpentine Chalet Dam

Together we Trek

4-10
June 2018

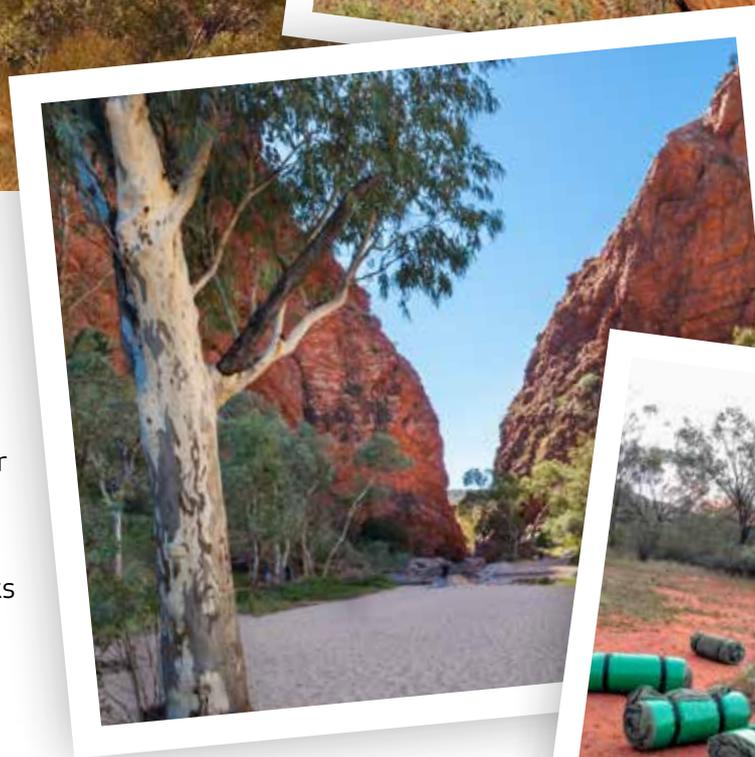


64 km Total hike length

 Moderate difficulty



“There’s something truly timeless and magical about the Larapinta Trail...”



DAY 4 Traverse the low-lying regions surrounding the spectacular Ormiston Gorge

DAY 5 Rise early for the arduous climb to the summit of Mt Sonder (1,380m)

DAY 6 Trek the Ormiston Pound circuit, one of the best small walks of the Larapinta Trail

DAY 7 Return home feeling inspired and determined to inspire others

Ready for an adventure?

To sign up for Together we Trek or for more information:



missionaustralia.com.au/trek



1300 905 188



TO SHARE

Slice of heaven

Loyal Mission Australia supporter Judith Yeats recently baked a batch of her famous Caramel Walnut Slice for our Bequest Coordinator, Christine. Judith kindly agreed to share the recipe with us – and we can't get enough*.

Caramel Walnut Slice

Ingredients

Base

½ cup self-raising flour
½ cup desiccated coconut
¼ cup caster sugar
60g butter

Topping

2 eggs
½ tsp vanilla essence
1 cup desiccated coconut
90g walnut pieces
1 ½ cups brown sugar, lightly packed
½ tsp baking powder

Method

Sift the flour into a bowl and add sugar and coconut. Mix well. Melt the butter and add to the dry ingredients. Mix well. Press the mixture into a greased tin (approx. 28cm x 18cm). Bake at 180C for 15 minutes.

Lightly beat the eggs and vanilla. Add coconut, chopped walnuts, brown sugar and baking powder. Mix well. Spread the mixture over the partly-cooked base and return to oven for a further 25-30 minutes, or until the topping is cooked. Cool in the tin, and cut into squares. Serve and enjoy!



Sharing is caring

Do you have a recipe you'd like to share with the Mission Australia family?
We'd love to try it!

 supporter@missionaustralia.com.au





Drug and Alcohol Youth Service program outcomes since 2014 launch:



1,518

young people supported to access DAYS treatment programs



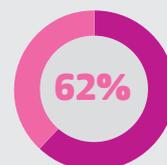
399

young people supported with short-term residential detox services



198

young people accessed a longer, three-week residential treatment service



62% of young people report improved confidence in reducing or ceasing their drug use when exiting DAYS

Brighter DAYS ahead for Perth youth

We've expanded our Drug and Alcohol Youth Service (DAYS) facility – the only one of its kind in Western Australia – to meet increased demand for in-patient drug and alcohol detox support.

The expansion of the East Perth-based service increases the number of beds from six to 10 and doubles floor space to create a more youth-friendly living area.

Mission Australia WA state director Jo Sadler says the expansion and refurbishment has been driven in part by a reported increase in methamphetamine use.

"In the first six months of 2017 we have provided accommodation to 47 young people, a significant increase on the same period last year," Sadler says. "Ensuring that appropriate detoxification and rehabilitation facilities are

available at the time they are needed is essential."

DAYS provides 12-21 year olds with access to a range of free and confidential alcohol and other drug services. These include assessment and case management, detox, counselling, mentoring and creative programs.

The three-week residential program provides 24-hour supervised care from experienced staff, creating a safe environment for young people to receive treatment and transition back into the community.

Celebrating the little wins

At Mission Australia, celebration is one of our core values. Throughout our organisation, we're committed to recognising and celebrating the efforts and achievements of the people we help, our volunteers, our staff, and generous supporters like you. Here are a few recent stories from around the country worth celebrating...

One of our families and children services runs a Duplo Club to help young children build their confidence and develop healthy social skills.

The team recently celebrated a breakthrough with a seven-year-old boy named Max*. Max wouldn't speak a word in the group, and didn't play or socialise with the other children or the staff. Recently, however, he built a Lego aeroplane at home and asked his mother to bring it to Duplo Club for show and tell. He was so excited to show it to the group, and when his turn arrived he spoke and smiled and answered questions about it with confidence. It was a fantastic moment for Max, his mother and the staff who have worked so patiently with him for many months.



A 56-year-old man named Brett* was referred to one of our homelessness services from a local hospital. Brett's life spiralled out of his control after the tragic death of his long-term partner.

The initial grief of loss spiralled into severe depression and anxiety, which drove him to destructive alcoholism. After detoxing in hospital, Brett moved in to one of our transitional accommodation properties and started participating in one-on-one counselling. Over time he took part in a range of programs to assist his recovery holistically, including therapeutic groups with other people in similar situations, art and yoga classes, and a meeting that helped him quit smoking. As Brett's health improved, our staff helped him



apply for social housing. In time he was approved for a small flat, and we helped him move in and furnish it. Staff at the service recently received this letter from Brett:

"I am writing in appreciation to you and all the staff of Mission Australia. The journey I've been on while here could not have been so successful and positive without the help

of you all. It has been like being invited into a family and I believe everyone has put in a lot of effort to make it feel this way. I was a real mess when I got here and I have received exactly the right help that was needed to start the healing - mentally and emotionally - following the death of my partner and the terrible horror of addiction. Thank you everyone."



Maree* adores children and recently completed her Certificate III in Education Support. Despite her passion and qualifications, Maree

was concerned that she wouldn't be able to find sustainable employment due to her mental health issues.

A Mission Australia case worker helped Maree obtain a Working With Children Check, complete a cover letter and resume, and reach out to small local schools about volunteering opportunities. Maree and her caseworker attended an interview together with a school principal, and Maree was thrilled to be offered the opportunity to complete 100 hours of volunteer work. Having not worked for more than two years, Maree now has a regular volunteer position, and is hopeful that this could lead to paid employment sometime in the future.



“I don’t want to
be here. What am I
doing with my life?”

Help young
people overcome
mental illness **and**
lead fulfilling lives

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Please donate today to give hope to youth
missionaustralia.com.au/springappeal