



# wesley impact!

## news

Winter 2019

## Homelessness pledge to help families like Julia's

The NSW Government recently signed a global agreement to halve street homelessness across the state by 2025. Our Superintendent, the Rev Keith V Garner AM, was a signatory to the agreement signed at Parliament with Premier Gladys Berejiklian, and former Minister for Social Housing Pru Goward MP, alongside other major service providers.

The Premier spoke on the collective role we must all play to break that cycle:

“Homelessness is a complex social issue that cannot be solved by government alone – that’s why we will be inviting the best and brightest from the frontline and from the community to collaborate with us to find new ways of tackling street homelessness.”

Rev Garner said, “This is an exciting project which will help to set the



direction for the next five years in addressing the root causes of homelessness.”

Julia\* knows how it feels to be trapped in that vicious cycle after she escaped family violence with her little daughters when Evie was 8 months old, and Sara just 2. While they never slept in the streets, for years they had no place to call home.

Each day for Julia was an exhausting grind trying to find somewhere safe they could take shelter. Often it was on the couch of any friend who would take them in, and they had no idea where their next meal would come from.

It's only thanks to our donors like you that this family's years of

homelessness have finally ended. Living in a Wesley Mission transitional property, with ongoing support to become financially secure, they will be safe and warm this winter.

“I’m enormously thankful I had help to get back on my feet, because I never could have done it on my own,” Julia says. “To Wesley Mission and all the people who donated so my girls and I could have this support, I’m eternally grateful.”



# Spotlight on Taree's new 'hub'

Wesley Mission's new community hub opened in March in Taree, attracting a crowd of almost 100 people, including members of our management and staff, Taree Uniting Church, community groups and all tiers of government attended the opening.

Wesley Mission CEO, the Rev Keith V Garner AM described the opening as a 'watershed' not only for Wesley Mission but for the community.

**"By bringing together services and programs under one roof, we can improve the overall experience of the people we help," he said.**

"With shared services under one roof, Wesley Mission will also be able to offer greater service flexibility in areas of identified needs like mental health, child and youth services, drug and alcohol services, financial literacy, employment services, health services, housing, emergency relief, disabilities and aged care."

"This Wesley Mission community hub also has a broader purpose: to build community capacity and social resilience. We want to make it a place that the community can embrace and call home. We want it to be safe, warm and welcoming; a place that promotes connection for all."

Representing Mid-Coast Council, Councillor Kathryn Bell, said the opening was the culmination of dedicated workers bringing together integrated services delivered to the most vulnerable in the community. "Our broader community as a whole is for the better from Wesley's service," she said.



Cutting the cake to celebrate the opening of Wesley Mission's new community hub in Taree (from left): Mike Brunskill, Wesley Mission foster carer; the Rev Keith V Garner AM, CEO, Wesley Mission, Joedie Lawler, CEO, Purfleet Taree Local Aboriginal Land Council; Councillor Kathryn Bell, Mid-Coast Council.

# Celebrating our Aunties & Uncles

This fantastic day out last November brought together the community of mentors, parents, carers and children created by the Aunties & Uncles program.

The annual picnic celebrates the wonderful connections formed through this very special early intervention mentoring program in Sydney and the Central Coast. 'Aunties' and 'Uncles' provide children up to 12 years old with three years of care, and guidance in a stable family environment.

Everyone who came along enjoyed the chance to strengthen relationships, new and old. It was also a great chance to celebrate the six children and their Aunties & Uncles who graduated from the program in 2018.



Thank you for supporting life-changing Wesley Mission programs like this.

# Let's talk about the elephant in the room

Wesley Mission's 'Elephant in the room' campaign last October – starring Wesley the giant inflatable elephant – aimed to stomp out stigma associated with mental illness by raising awareness and sparking conversation.

1 in 5 Australians are affected by mental illness. Yet too often, fear of prejudice and judgement prevent people from reaching out and this can destroy families and end lives. Stigma also denies people with mental health problems the opportunity to live their lives to the full.

'Wesley the Elephant' spent some time at our office in Pitt Street as a symbol for the support Wesley Mission provides to our community, striving to get people talking openly and honestly about mental illness.

Pocket sized Wesley 'stress elephants' were distributed across Sydney, highlighting the high quality and compassionate mental health care on offer from our



Wesley the Elephant in our Pitt Street office.

internationally recognised mental health services at Wesley Hospitals in Kogarah and Ashfield.

The little Wesleys went on many adventures across Sydney, visiting Rugby Players Australia, beauty and lifestyle influencers and many others, shared across social media with messages of compassion and support.

**Your generosity helps us shed a more positive light on mental health.**



Little 'stress elephants'.

## A night to remember

Over 300 people filled the Wesley Theatre for our Wesley School for Seniors End of Year Concert in December, for performances ranging from ukulele recitals to Spanish skits to stand-up comedy.

The concert was the product of months of hard work by the School for Seniors students. Their effort shined through in performances like the dance acts, where the tutors and students prepared everything from the choreography to the costumes.

Rev Keith V Garner AM delivered a special Christmas message for the students, while Dr Keith Suter spoke on the importance of initiatives like Wesley School for Seniors in encouraging seniors to participate in the community and look after their mental health.

Wesley School for Seniors offers learning opportunities to over 55s, with more than 90 courses covering a diverse range of learning experiences, from beginner to advanced. Term 3 (22 July to 27 September) enrolment commences on 25 June. Term 4 (14

October to 20 December) enrolment starts 16 September.

**Interested in a course? Visit [www.wesleymission.org.au](http://www.wesleymission.org.au) and search for 'School for Seniors' for more information including timetables.**



# Team Wesley Mission runs to support those most in need

Last September, Wesley Mission staff had the privilege of participating in the 2018 Blackmores Sydney Running Festival.

In the iconic Sydney fundraising event, our runners persevered through a variety of courses (from a 3.5km fun run to a full marathon) to raise money for those most in need in our community. Some of our incredible volunteers also showed up to cheer the runners on.

“It was my first time at the Sydney Running Festival, and it was exciting to do the 10km run with the family,” said Jeannie Mathews, a Program Coordinator at Wesley School for Seniors.

“I have an 11-year-old daughter and 7-year-old son. It was a proud moment for the children and myself to wear the Wesley Mission gear and

bond over running the event. Towards the finish line, we were glad to see the Wesley team cheer on the runners!”

Our corporate partner AMP once again threw their support behind Wesley Aunties & Uncles, getting closer to their goal of raising \$22,500 for Bottles for Bikes – a project that aims to supply every child at the annual Aunties & Uncles Picnic with a bicycle.

Rose Burnley, a Wesley Mission Case Manager, managed to break her fundraising goal of \$600 this year. She even managed to complete the 10km run despite entering it by accident.

“I was really happy to be able to take part in the Sydney Running Festival this year. 10km is something I’ve never run before, I had intended to run the 3.5km!”



“But when I thought about all of the people Wesley Mission supports, as well as the staff who push themselves on a daily basis, I thought I could do the same.”

**Thank you to all the volunteers, supporters, partners and staff who have supported Wesley Mission in challenge events by donating or participating. Your incredible efforts make a real difference to people in the greatest need.**

## Be a hero for homelessness – Join Team Wesley Mission

Would you like to fight hardship with the amazing people who in 2019 will help us raise thousands for homeless services? Team up with friends, family or workmates or be one of our solo superheroes in your chosen challenge, and show the most vulnerable in our community how much we care.

### Pick your challenge event:

**City2Surf 2019**  
Sunday 11 August  
14km run, walk or wheel

**Blackmores Sydney Running Festival**  
Sunday 15 September  
Family fun run, bridge run, half or full marathon

**Tough Mudder – Sydney Classic**  
Saturday 16 November  
5km in mud and obstacles

Register now



[Anthea.Charalambous@wesleymission.org.au](mailto:Anthea.Charalambous@wesleymission.org.au)



[www.wesleymission.org.au/get-involved/events/](http://www.wesleymission.org.au/get-involved/events/)



(02) 9263 5595



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## YES, I want to help thousands of Australians take their first steps towards a better life.

### Please accept my payment:

\$25  \$50  \$100  My choice \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### My contact details:

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

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- Cheque/money order made out to Wesley Mission OR
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**Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible.**

