

Our Christian community

At the heart of all we do is our sense of Christian mission, offering good news in many different ways. Through strong worship services, chaplaincy care, small group work and multi-media ministries, Wesley Mission promotes the Christian faith at the centre of the city and in our various projects throughout Sydney and beyond. We seek to enable people to see a clear Christian commitment in action and to join in our work.

Genuine commitment

Wesley Mission, with 2000 members, remains the largest parish within the Uniting Church in Australia. Chaplains perform a vital function in our network of more than 150 homes, hospitals, hostels and services. Some relate especially to children in our care while others minister in retirement villages.

In the past year, chaplaincy services have been delivered in 27 aged care locations through Wesley Mental Health and Counselling Services, in Family Services through Wesley Dalmar, with homeless persons and with Disability Services.

Wesley Mission conducts 12 weekly services in six languages at the Wesley Centre in the Sydney CBD, as well as 40 other services catering for the aged, the homeless, the disabled and others needing special care. Each service strikes a different emphasis for the varying spiritual needs of the people to whom we minister.

Worship is varied and vibrant. Our Wesley International Congregation has built a fine reputation as has our university ministry, the Chinese groups and our work with seniors. There are more than 450 people engaged in Bible study from our morning congregations alone ... and many more from other congregations. An energetic music ministry exists throughout Wesley Mission. Much planning has gone into the *Jesus. All About Life* campaign where Wesley Mission has led the way with 1500 other congregations throughout Sydney and NSW.

Committed to succeed

Our multi-media ministries have seen some exciting results in the past year. *Rise and Shine* has developed a reputation as an exhilarating program, featuring people whose lives have been transformed, singers who inspire with their talent, and practical Christian teaching that both encourages and challenges viewers. Live guests join the Superintendent to share their stories of grace, from those who have tasted the heights of success to those who have walked in the depths of despair.

Wesley Mission produces over 40 new episodes of *Rise and Shine* each year at Foxtel Studios. The program screens on Sunday mornings at 5.30 am on Channel 9 and again at 8.00 am on the Australian Christian Channel. Ratings in the past year have risen more than 20 per cent.

Two Christmas documentaries found strong audiences during Christmas 2008. *Christmas Past and Present* considered the social isolation of the elderly, starting with Christmas during the Great Depression in the 1930s. Wesley Mission clients reflected upon those hard times and what Christmas was like for them then in comparison to today. Amid their description of isolation and loneliness, they also emphasised how Wesley Mission is helping them. This production was screened on Channel 7 at midnight on Christmas Eve to an audience of over 100,000. *Santa's Forgotten People*, first released at Christmas 2007, was repeated on Channel 7 on Christmas morning.

Always a highlight of the year is the Easter Mission which reaches a climax at the Sydney Opera House on Easter morning. This year the Sunrise Service was held an hour earlier and there was concern that our live congregation may well be depleted because of the long distances people travel. However, we had the largest congregation for many years – a sign of people's commitment to the service which was broadcast live on Channel 10 and simulcast through radio stations across Australia.

Ongoing commitment

Growing numbers of people are downloading from our website audio copies of the sermons of Rev Keith Garner and also from our Wesley International Congregation. The use of this technology is steadily increasing, with people registering at the website and receiving regular updates by subscribing and using an RSS reader. New technologies are making the Christian message widely accessible, including the availability of past resources.

We communicate the gospel message through the Sunday 6.00 pm congregation from the Wesley Theatre. The Superintendent preaches sermons which are telecast on the Australian Christian Channel (ACC) every Sunday at 6.30 pm, with a repeat every Monday at 1.00 pm. These programs are also broadcast on Shine TV in New Zealand and UCB in the UK.

One of the ways Wesley Mission remains 'up close and personal' is by presenting a message of wonderful possibility in Christ.

