



wesley

Christmas 2019

impact

A foster family's  
**first Christmas**

Olympic star's  
**journey to freedom**

10 ways to **budget**  
**at Christmas**

home for  
**Christmas**

# wesley Christmas 2019 Impact!

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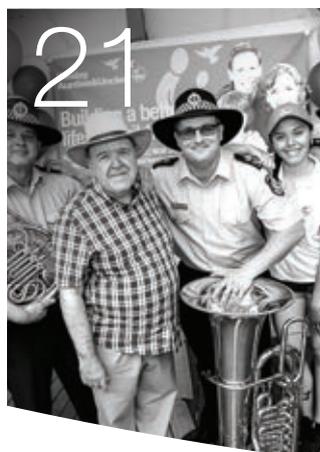
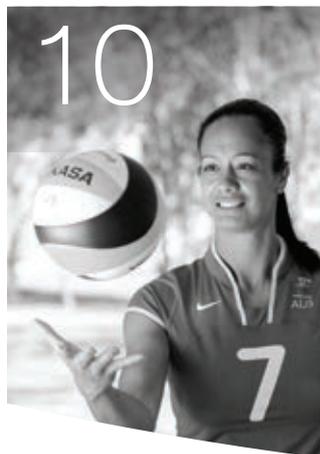
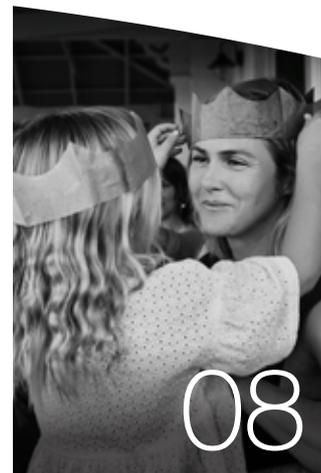
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Wesley Mission is a part of the Uniting Church in Australia.

**Wesley Impact!** is the magazine of Wesley Mission, Sydney, and is a member of the Australasian Religious Press Association. Articles from the magazine may be reprinted with the permission of the publisher.

**“Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come.”**

**Matthew 24:42 NIV**



## Hello

**In the lead up to Christmas, many of us devote time to preparing our homes to receive family and friends. Advent also asks us to prepare room in our hearts to receive a Child, born in a manger, who is the hope of humanity. But like Jesus' family that first Christmas, some people in our regional areas and cities across Australia are struggling to find secure accommodation.**

In the last edition of *Wesley Impact!* I shared with you a significant project that Wesley Mission is undertaking, to redevelop the Wesley Edward Eagar Centre in Surry Hills. This facility is one that allows us to respond to the urgent need for accommodation, when there is nowhere for a person to stay that night. I am pleased to share that the Development Application has been approved, which is an important milestone, with works to commence in the new year.

In this Christmas edition, the theme of family and finding home speaks of hope. You will read of Jemimah, who received support from three of Wesley Mission's many programs. When she and her young son wake up on Christmas morning, they will be celebrating for the first year in their own home.

For others like Rebecca, this Christmas will be particularly joyful. Having become a foster carer through Wesley Mission in 2019, Christmas will be very different this year with two children under ten.

We also share three stories of people giving back at this time of year. A family who volunteers each year at our Christmas lunches to serve those in need, a Chaplain who ministers alongside our Wesley Disability Services, and former Olympic volleyballer, Christie Mokotupu who shares her journey and why she donates to Wesley Mission.

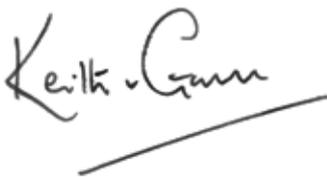
At Wesley Mission's Annual Meeting in October I gave my fourteenth executive report to staff, congregations and supporters who gathered to celebrate the good work of Wesley Mission, which last year assisted more than 200,000 people.

I made an important announcement at this meeting, that I will be retiring as Superintendent and CEO of Wesley Mission in February 2021. When the time comes it will be 15 years since I took on this role. My wife Carol and I intend to travel widely before returning to Sydney to seek to discern what God has in store for us in our next season of ministry.

We give thanks to God for all that this Word and deed mission has achieved. I am particularly grateful for the support of so many in our community like you, who enable our work to grow.

May you be richly blessed and find hope in the one who comes to us at Christmas, "the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us"—Jesus Christ.

I send you my warmest personal greetings for a happy and holy Christmas.



Rev Keith V Garner AM  
Superintendent/CEO  
Wesley Mission

“Advent also asks us to prepare room in our hearts to receive a Child, born in a manger, who is the hope of humanity.”



If you are considering giving a charitable gift at Christmas or making a donation in the name of a friend or family member, I commend the Wesley Edward Eagar Centre Appeal to you. Former Australian Prime Minister, The Hon John Howard OM AC has put his name to this project, as a long-term supporter of Wesley Mission. **To learn more, view a fly-through of the proposed concept design or to donate, visit [wesleymission.org.au](http://wesleymission.org.au)**



# Home for Christmas

Jemimah can't wait for Christmas morning. To see that joy on Arthur's face as he runs towards the presents under the Christmas tree. This is the first Christmas Jemimah and son, Arthur will spend together as a family in their own home.

**“I'm just so excited to sit by the Christmas tree, just him and I, watching a Christmas movie and making those little traditions together,” says Jemimah.**

It's been a year of firsts for Jemimah and Arthur: a new home, new study opportunities and new memories as a family.

At just 20, this young mum says her almost two-year-old son is the light of her life. “I love having a little sidekick,” giggles Jemimah. “We just get each other,” she continues. “It's beautiful. I can't even put words to it.”

Life however didn't always shine this bright for Jemimah. As a teenager,

Jemimah struggled with self-doubt. At first she found identity in her relationship with Arthur's father. “I think he fulfilled all of those insecurities for most of the time,” she reflects.

Then the unexpected happened. Jemimah became pregnant. While she always planned to have a family, it began much earlier than intended.

“I'm thankful that I've had my son. If I could have waited a few more years, I would have. But I would not take anything back,” she says.

But again, the unexpected happened. Jemimah will never forget that moment when Arthur's father threatened her life while she held Arthur tightly in her arms.

While no longer part of Arthur's life, Jemimah still hopes that one day Arthur and his father can be reconciled and even spend Christmas together.

Jemimah now faced the challenge of raising Arthur alone. But little did she know God had their lives in His hands and was moving behind the scenes, working for their good. It's something that she sees so clearly now.

Six months after Arthur was born, Jemimah received a call from Wesley ParentsNext—a program which helps parents achieve their education and employment goals. Unaware of the program, Jemimah had no idea of the amount of support she was about to receive.

“I went and saw Anita and she was just so beautiful. Anita’s always thinking of my needs and goes above and beyond in our time together,” she says. “She’s been there even through the tricky times with my son’s father.”

God brought Anita into Jemimah’s life, just at the right time. For Jemimah, Anita became the shoulder she could lean on and someone she could confide in.

“It’s so great to just know that there’s no judgement. She accepts everything and she gives great advice. It’s just a positive environment when I’m around her. There’s not tension. It’s just smiles.”

Straightaway Anita supported Jemimah with emergency relief, including food and fuel vouchers. “She told me that any time I needed anything, to just ask,” explains Jemimah.

Anita then organised for Jemimah to study a Certificate III in Community Services at Wesley Vocational Institute. Again, God was moving in her life. Jemimah couldn’t believe how

quickly everything fell into place. “It was literally the second time I saw her that she got me into the course.”

Giving up on her dream to have a career was never an option. So much so, it was her son who ignited a deeper passion inside of Jemimah to pursue a career to help people most in need.

“Without this little kid, I wouldn’t have the desire to be in the community services field as much as I do right now,” she says.

A six-month course, Wesley Vocational Institute was the perfect fit for this new mum. Still breastfeeding, the course gave Jemimah the flexibility she needed to balance her

studies around her parenting duties. Now finished, Jemimah has set her sights higher.

After juggling studying all while caring for an active toddler, Jemimah says she feels more confident. A confidence she now knows comes from her deep-rooted faith in God. She’s ready to take on the world and she’s already begun.

Jemimah is currently completing ‘Preparing for Success’, a program which equips students for tertiary level study at Southern Cross University. She plans to apply to study a Bachelor of Social Welfare next year. Jemimah hopes to have a career working in foster care.

“The course has got her inspired,” says Anita. “I know she had these career aspirations, but she didn’t know how to make these goals happen. It was so lovely to facilitate this alongside her towards her long-term career goals, and I know she will do great things as she is such a caring and empathetic woman.”



Jemimah and her son Arthur have a special bond which continues to grow daily.



Wesley Youth Accommodation Outreach Worker, Nicole adds, “I think finishing her course gave her insight into what she wanted to do and where she wanted to work and she’s moving towards that.”

Without Anita’s support, Jemimah says she wouldn’t have known where to start. “I probably still to this day wouldn’t have done the course if Anita hadn’t shared it with me. Wesley ParentsNext has totally changed my thinking and Anita has given me so many ideas of what to do next.”

Now set on a path towards her future, Jemimah is in awe of what God had done in her life. But God wasn’t finished yet. Living at home with her family, Jemimah’s family have been her central support since becoming a mum.

But since Jemimah arrived home from the hospital with Arthur, the house became overcrowded. Along with her parents, Jemimah and Arthur were sharing a space with her brother, sister-in-law and their four children in a four-bedroom house. Jemimah was ready to spread her wings but just didn’t know how.

Anita connected Jemimah with Nicole from Wesley Youth Accommodation who helped find a home just for Jemimah and Arthur. Nicole also

secured brokerage funds so Jemimah could buy furniture for their home.

Jemimah now knows God’s hand has been over her life throughout this whole journey. Having no rental history, it was a miracle that Jemimah secured the first property she applied for.

“I’ve prayed through the whole process of moving out of home and even with the abuse from my son’s dad. It’s been God’s grace given to me that I’ve been able to have all these providers come to me and give me support. I definitely don’t think it’s just come out of nowhere. It’s definitely God’s love coming through by sending these great people to help me.”

It wasn’t easy stepping out on her own. But knowing she had the full support of Wesley Mission and God’s blessing upon her life, made it possible.

“It’s just nice to be independent and knowing you do have support around you. That if you ever have a bad week, I can talk to Anita and Nicole. They always ask how I am and I can just be honest with them,” says Jemimah.

“I’ve been given a beautiful home and they’ve helped me in times where I needed it. In just the little areas, even in helping me write my rental resume and knowing what referees I should use.”

Since July, Jemima and Arthur have been making memories as a family of two in their new Coffs Harbour home. And Arthur loves having his own room. “Any time I have visitors, he runs to his room, goes to his bookshelf and he pulls out all his books to show people,” chuckles Jemimah.

Jemimah says, together they share a special bond. “Having our own space, it’s really helped bonding with him and teaching him. He has become so independent and his wording has gotten so much better since being in this home.”

“We just understand each other’s needs. When I’m tired, it’s like he understands that I’m tired and he can do his own thing.”

Anita adds, “Jemimah is such a beautiful mother as I have witnessed her interactions with Arthur—they have an amazing bond. She is so focused on him at all times, he is her world and she lights up when he is with her from pride and love.”

For Jemimah, sharing her faith with Arthur is an important part of their bond. Together they read Christian Bible stories, and sometimes, Jemimah even sings the Bible stories to him. And on Sundays, Jemimah and Arthur attend their local Presbyterian Church.

“I haven’t always been a Christian but since becoming a mum, it’s made me look at God and go ‘wow’. He loves us so much more than I can love my son. I think that’s my favourite thing about being a mum—understanding God’s love so much more.”

Since becoming a Christian, Jemimah says she now believes in herself. And it’s not just Jemimah who knows it. Her family and Wesley Mission community have watched her grow into the independent woman she is today.

“I knew being a single mum and living out of home was going to be tricky. But being an independent mum, I’m showing him it’s possible, even if you are single, to care for and love your child,” says Jemimah. “It’s been great, just to have our one-on-one together in this home.”

Anita adds, “Her confidence is growing. I think she always had that self-doubt because when you’ve been put down for as long as I suppose she would have been in a domestic violence relationship, it does mess with your confidence. She was always a beautiful girl, but I can see that she’s feeling that on the inside now.”

While Jemimah can’t wait to make Christmas traditions with her son, she’s most excited about sharing with him the true reason for the season—Jesus Christ.

“I want Arthur to learn that Christmas is not just about the presents and putting decorations on the Christmas tree. It’s more than that—that our Saviour, Jesus Christ was born on Christmas Day.” ■

## Together we can bring hope

Jemimah’s transformation journey wouldn’t have been possible without wraparound support. Here at Wesley Mission, we endeavour to meet an individual’s whole needs through multiple community services. For Jemimah, the support she received came from three vital services: [Wesley ParentsNext](#), [Wesley Vocational Institute](#) and [Wesley Youth Accommodation](#).

“I’m so privileged to work for an organisation where we have so many services under one umbrella that can help people so much,” says Anita.

Nicole adds, “Sometimes it takes just one referral to identify multiple areas a client needs support with. Often our clients don’t know how to access all the support that is available to them.”

In August 2018, we brought together two community services under one roof in Bowraville, along New South Wales’ Central Coast: Wesley Youth Accommodation and Wesley ParentsNext. These community services have been operating in the Coffs Harbour/Bellingen/Nambucca Valley area for over four years now and for two years in Bowraville. By joining together, our people, including Jemimah and Arthur, can access multiple Wesley Mission services to support all their needs. ■



Wesley Youth Accommodation Outreach Worker, Nicole (left) and Wesley ParentsNext Consultant, Anita (right) have supported Jemimah and Arthur throughout their whole journey.



# A foster family's first Christmas

It's been a long time since Christmas for the Barclay family meant waking up early to the happy sounds of young children. But this year will be very different with two new family members under the age of ten.

"In my immediate family, we're all adults, although you wouldn't know it if you met my older brother! But this year he will have to share his Lego and we couldn't be more excited," says Rebecca.

2019 was a significant year as this experienced primary school teacher began her parenting journey as a foster carer through Wesley Mission. "It has taken years to get to this point... it was something I considered doing for a long time," she reflects. "Becoming an approved foster carer requires you to do training and make preparations at home, with family and life in general to be ready."

At the same time, two young children were removed from their family because it was unsafe for them to

continue living at home. Sadly, stories like theirs are not uncommon with almost 18,000 children in out-of-home care in New South Wales. In the last year, Wesley Dalmar supported 665 children on average each day from across the state in foster care placements.

"Once I was accredited, there was a wait for a match. A few options were presented to me by the Carer Recruitment and Support Officer but waiting for the right match took about a year in the end," says Rebecca.

"I think it took longer because my preference was for a long-term placement that could lead to adoption. I prayed regularly for patience and the Lord's guidance that I would know when it was right. Two Christmases went by from the time I started the application process."

Details of the two specific children, siblings who needed a carer were shared with Rebecca, and as a single person, she discussed everything

with her close-knit family. "It was a difficult decision to make. I received a description about both children and it seemed like a good match, although there were some details that were concerning. Of course, that is to be expected considering the scenario," she explains.

"My family were behind me, and I knew as a primary school teacher that all children experience different challenges. So, I said yes."

The first few weeks were full of surprises as everyone got to know each other. **"I had never seen two small children eat so much. I was happy that they were eating though, and it didn't matter if it was just simple food. I wanted them to feel secure and know that there would always be plenty to eat with me."**

Decisions about bedtime and sleeping arrangements, schools and medical appointments were all discussed with the Case Manager

from Wesley Dalmar. A team formed around Rebecca and with her family's support, everyone helped the children to settle in.

"We went on a camping trip for a few nights away with my extended family. The children enjoyed being with others of a similar age. And even though it was still early on in our journey, I was able to cope well, and I had become a parental figure in their lives. I was already committed to them, but now I knew we could," she recalls.

Rebecca's sister-in-law fondly remembers the camping trip where new family memories were created. "It was a great opportunity to get to know the children better in a low-key environment. We rode scooters, played board games, sang songs and fed farm animals," says Lauren.

"There was a big trampoline where we were staying, and all the kids kicked their shoes off before going on to jump. There was a moment of hesitation when the older of the two siblings pressed their new shoes into my hands and, looking concerned, pleaded with me not to lose them. They were just regular kids shoes from Kmart, but they were a prized possession. Moments like this helped me to realise that they will need some support and encouragement to experience life in the carefree way that we hope all children get to live."

The year has gone by quickly, and family life has been full with school, extra-curricular activities, church and getting to know all the neighbourhood playgrounds. It was the older of the two sibling's birthday first and planning their birthday party was a family affair.

"We selected a venue, wrote party invites, planned games and chose a cake from the Australian Women's Weekly Children's Birthday Cake Book that my brother and I grew up with. I shouldn't have been at all surprised when the train cake was

selected, of course they chose the most difficult one! But when I realised that it was the first cake or birthday celebration they had had, my Mum and I willingly accepted the challenge," laughs Rebecca.

The party brought another moment of realisation for Rebecca. "I looked around as the children celebrated, laughing and dancing to a song from their favourite animated film. We were surrounded by community—family, church friends, people we knew from school, after-school care and sports—and it had all happened in the space of a year."

"Life is far from perfect, there have been and will continue to be some significant challenges to navigate, but we'll do it together. I love them."

They say it takes a village to raise a child and as Rebecca tells their story, her parents, now affectionately known as 'Nanny' and 'Grandad', play a critical part. A role that will no doubt come into its own on Christmas Day.

**"I prayed regularly for patience and the Lord's guidance that I would know when it was right."**

"We'll start the day with our church family, celebrating Jesus' birth," says Nanny. "We'll have lunch with one side of the family and then my son and daughter-in-law will come for dinner and probably bring their dog too. Between waking up early, church, family, lunch, swimming in the pool, presents, dinner and the dog... our first Christmas together is going to be one to remember."

\*Names and images have been changed to protect privacy.



Christmas looks very different this year for primary school teacher Rebecca.



# 'Tis the season to give back

As Christmas lights twinkle and presents pile under the Christmas tree, the festive season tends to bring out the generous spirit within Australians. And while Christmas truly is the season for giving, here at Wesley Mission, every day we choose to give back to those less fortunate than ourselves. We spoke with the 'Butcher Family', Wesley Mission Chaplain, Peter Cole and former Olympian, Christie Mokotupu, who share their stories of giving back to the community, whatever the season.

## 'Butcher Family' brings hope at Christmas

**Meet the 'Butcher Family', affectionately named for eight years of voluntarily carving the Christmas ham at Wesley Mission's Shepherd's Tucker Christmas Day lunch.**

There's the father, Graham, who every year brings his specialised butcher knives to carve the Christmas ham and chicken, after spending over 45 years working in the meat industry.

"He can cut it very economically for them too," laughs Lorraine, Graham's wife.

Graham chuckles, "You see how quickly the chicken and ham disappears."

Lorraine enjoys laying the Christmas crackers on the tables and their son Matthew, waits the tables and connects with the guests. Their daughter Heidi and son-in-law Morris, who come every second year, slice the fruit and Christmas pudding.

Amongst the hustle and bustle of Christmas, the 'Butcher Family' always make Shepherd's Tucker a priority in their calendar. And every year, Matthew even travels all the way

from his home in Tamworth to take part. "I wouldn't miss it," he smiles.

Here at Wesley Mission we encounter many people who don't have a home or family for Christmas. Shepherd's Tucker brings together people who are lonely or experiencing homelessness to share a meal and connect with one another.

"It's about putting things back into the community," says Lorraine. "It's so rewarding to see the look on their faces."

Matthew adds, "I'm just trying to make their day a little bit brighter. And we get to know a few of them. We see them come back again year after year."

For the 'Butcher Family', this Christmas tradition comes from their desire to serve others. Driven by their faith, they choose to follow in the example of Jesus Christ, who came to this world to serve others. For this family, they take this moment to pause and remember the true reason for the season.

**“I think that’s what the Lord would want us to do,” says Matthew.**

Lorraine adds, “You give them something and you serve them. And they don’t get many people serving them.”

For Lorraine and Graham, volunteering flows throughout their whole lives. Now retired, every week Graham and Lorraine volunteer at Sydney Adventist Hospital. Lorraine assists as a nurse’s aid and Graham supports at concierge.

Their son Matthew is also in the business of caring for people. He works on the advisory council at Flourish in Tamworth, a recovery service for people facing mental illness. “I’ve been in the helping profession for most of my life. I just really enjoy it.”

Eight years and counting, the 'Butcher Family' will be back at Shepherd’s Tucker this year and for many more years to come. ■

## Christmas is the season to serve others

Peter Cole, Wesley Mission Chaplain

**J Club is the highlight of my Christmas season. Every December, we bring a little more joy into the lives of people with disability through our J Club celebration.**

Every month J Clubs, which are made up of adults with disabilities from 28 to 70 years old, meet at Ashfield, Smithfield and St Helens Park to pray, learn about Jesus, sing Christian songs and do craft together. And at Christmas we all join for a barbecue lunch. It’s wonderful to see everyone having fun, singing carols and celebrating Jesus Christ, our Saviour.

Sharing the love of Jesus is my focus at Christmas. But it wasn’t always this way. Growing up, the festive season was always about family, food, presents and having fun. This changed dramatically when I became a Christian at 21. From then on Christmas was about celebrating Jesus, my Lord and Saviour. My life has radically changed since believing in Jesus—changed for the better as I daily experience forgiveness and new life through Him.

Now at Christmas, I am no longer self-focused. While I still enjoy the fun of Christmas with family and friends, there is a greater longing to give rather than receive. I’m blessed in my role as a Wesley Mission chaplain because it gives me opportunities to show others the love and joy I have experienced through Jesus.

During the weeks leading up to Christmas Day, I visit clients in their homes, many of whom are lonely and isolated. I hold Christmas church services at Wesley Mission centres to share how Jesus loves and cares for them. But no matter what time of year, I choose to share the love of God with those around me.

Christmas is certainly a joyous time of year. But if Jesus isn’t at the centre of our thoughts, we miss out on the best that Christmas offers. I am eternally grateful for that day I believed in Jesus and committed my life to Him. From then on, Christmas has always seemed brighter, more meaningful and a time of great joy. The love shown to us by God when Jesus came into our world as a baby, all those years ago, is certainly something to celebrate. ■

In 2018/19,  
Wesley Mission had

**6,537**  
volunteers

contributing **124,358** hours  
saving **\$5,287,887** in wages



Every Christmas, Wesley Mission Chaplain, Peter Cole shares the practical love of Jesus Christ with those around him.



## Olympics star's journey from addiction to freedom

**Standing in front of ANZ Stadium at Sydney Olympic Park, Christie Mokotupu effortlessly throws a volleyball in the air. She's transported back to almost 20 years ago when she competed with Australia's beach volleyball team in front of a crowd of 10,000 people.**

"Every time I come here I get these emotions running through my body that I'll never forget. I was very lucky and blessed," she reflects.

At just 17, Christie had the world at her feet. As a young girl, she'd always dreamed of playing in the Olympic Games.

In 2000, Christie donned her gold and green uniform and represented Australia in the Sydney Olympic Games. She had a promising future ahead as a professional athlete.

"Competing in the Olympics, I knew it was a huge honour to represent your country. It's such a rare thing for people to do, especially at 17 years old."

But three years later Christie left beach volleyball. Burnt out from competing internationally, Christie wanted to experience life outside competitive sport.

"I didn't have time to breathe. I was just exhausted and I lost vision. And at the time, no-one convinced me to stay in it. At 20, I let it go. I wanted to know what it was to live a normal life and be a normal teenager."

While a world of choices opened for Christie, not every choice she made was the right one. One reckless decision, taking an ecstasy pill, led Christie down a dark path to alcohol and recreational drugs. "It was such a quick 'yes' but that 'yes' was a huge decision," she says.

"I went through this slow, vicious cycle and I tell people it doesn't happen overnight. It's a slow thing. It's one tiny little decision and you end up one day in a weird place.

"Then all of a sudden you're looking back with regret and you're at a place of depression."

Like many before her, Christie remained silent about her drug addiction. But ten years on, she shocked the nation when she shared her story publicly for the first time.

"I kept my battle to myself. It's a quiet battle. You don't want to tell people you're going through things. You want to tell people, 'I'm doing great', but really, I was trying to fight it on my own."

Christie's breaking point came in her own reflection of her role as a mother. "I realised that I was not a good mum. I was letting my son down. I wasn't a good example to him, drinking, taking drugs. All these things I was doing behind the scenes, which I thought no one could see. But I think our kids can see all, so it was a lie that I wasn't hurting anyone."

Little did Christie know, God had other plans for her life. In that season, where Christie felt she'd lost everything, she found Jesus.

Standing in the middle of Sydney Olympic Park, she suddenly shouts the name "Jesus". It's a declaration of thanks and gratitude for her Saviour—Jesus Christ. For Christie, her faith was the catalyst for healing.

"I was really against the whole church thing but at rock bottom in

depression, my sister invited me. The timing was right.

“As I drew close to God, one by one, things fell away. Alcohol fell away, smoking and drugs—all these things I’d picked up in my 20s. The healing came as I started reading the Word of God. He began directing me to places of recovery and counselling.”

Sharing her story with the world opened up her life, her son’s life and family members, to criticism and scrutiny.

“That was very hard to walk through. The shame, the condemnation. But that was my journey to go through because after it, God healed the shame and the condemnation. It was incredibly liberating. That is why I want to help other people,” says Christie.

“Through every decision I made throughout my 20s, my family never judged me. As a family we walked through the hardest part. My sisters, my siblings, my brother, my parents, we’re very close knit. We’ve overcome that together. Thank God that they supported me through it.

“Sharing my story, I knew it was going to affect my son. Protecting my son is the most important thing. But I know he looks up to me and he says, ‘I love you’. He looks at me like I’m his hero. We have a beautiful partnership, my son and I.”

Two years after sharing her story with the world, Christie was invited to be interviewed by the Superintendent on *Wesley Impact! TV*, which airs every Sunday on Channel Nine.

“I thank God for that opportunity. Because at the time, when people Googled my name, all they saw was my story, my decline into drugs. And it was hard for me. So I’m so thankful for *Wesley Impact! TV* for giving me the opportunity to share my overcoming story, more than my pain story.”

No longer weighed down by her past, Christie continues to share her story with anyone who will listen.

“I don’t live there anymore. I feel so great that I’m liberated now to talk about drugs. I don’t carry any shame and I want to help other people overcome shame for good.”

Since becoming a Christian and finding freedom from her addictions, Christie has supported people through motivational speaking, at One80TC, a residential rehabilitation centre, and Candifest, a ministry Christie founded to help people overcome their addictions and find hope for the future.

“I asked God to use me in the best way he thinks I can be used. I have a story to tell. I like public speaking and I don’t think God gave me these gifts and talents to hide them.

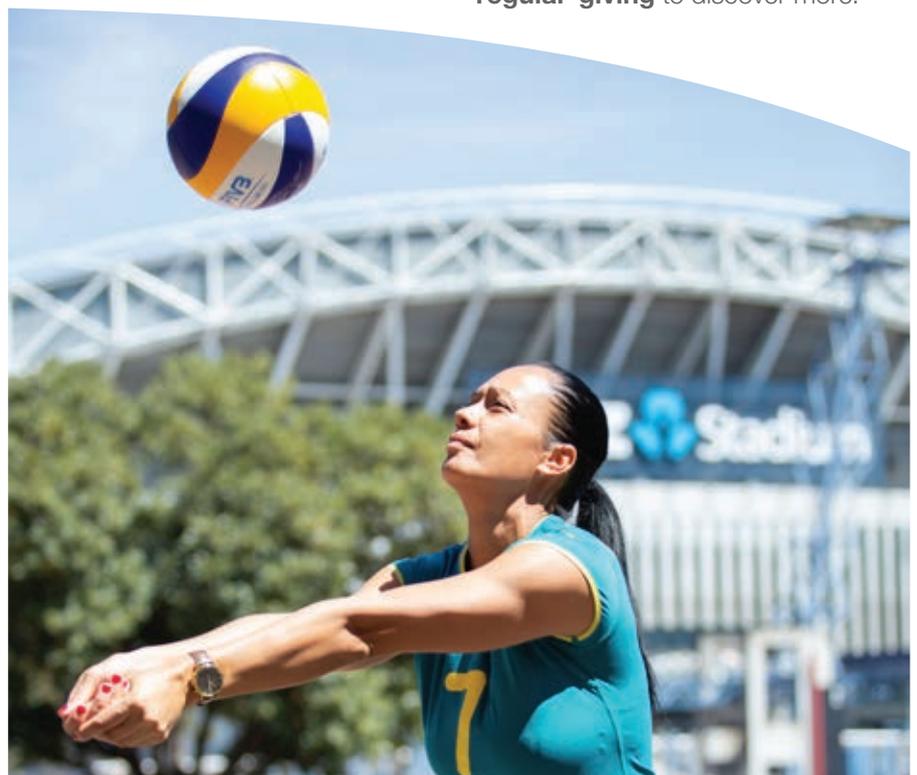
“I don’t have all the research, but I tell people I’ve got the life experience. I think that really helps them to connect with me.”

But at the core of her message and ministry is Jesus. “Supporting people with drug addiction without Jesus, it’s impossible for me. The only way I can do this is with Jesus.”

Christie partners with charities she wholeheartedly believes in. And that’s what drew her towards Wesley Mission. In September, when Christie was walking through Sydney’s streets she suddenly recognised Wesley Mission’s iconic cyan-coloured shirts, worn by our street fundraising team. Passionate about our work with homelessness and mental health, Christie signed up on the spot to become a regular monthly donor.

“I love that Wesley Mission has been around for more 200 years. It’s an iconic Australian charity. It’s trusted by the community, so I would encourage people to support it. Give what’s in your capacity and help people less fortunate than yourself.” ■

If you would like to become a regular donor, visit [wesleymission.org.au/regular-giving](http://wesleymission.org.au/regular-giving) to discover more.





# Beating financial stress at Christmas

**While Christmas is the season to be jolly, for many who walk through Wesley Mission's doors, it's not. Instead, Christmas festivities can bring extra pressures.**

Here at Wesley Mission, we're supporting more people with utility assistance to avoid disconnection, rental arrears are putting people at risk of homelessness and many are increasing their superannuation withdrawals to keep up with expenses.

"The biggest thing is people feel that they have to indulge their loved ones at Christmas," said Therese, Wesley Financial Counselling Team Leader.

Fiona, Senior Wesley Financial Counsellor added, "At Christmas we see people give more than they can afford. The pressure to buy gifts too often outweighs sticking to a budget."

With so much pressure to spend money during the festive season, no wonder many Australians feel the financial pinch this time of year. And as the holiday season ends and the credit card bills begin to roll in, so does financial stress.

"It's important to monitor your use of credit cards. Check your statements in January and make a plan to pay the credit cards down," said Fiona.

This Christmas, connect more and consume less. Therese said there are

simple and practical ways to avoid debt by setting and keeping to a budget.

"Keep it within your means. It's not about the gift and the price that you paid. It's the thought that counts."

## Need financial counselling support?

**Wesley Financial Counselling** will help you set a realistic budget and support you to stick with it. If you or someone you know needs financial planning support and advice, speak with a Wesley Financial Counsellor by calling **1300 827 638**. You can also call the **National Debt Hotline** on **1800 007 007** to speak to a financial counsellor.

## 10 tips to spend less at Christmas

**Reduce stress and expense this Christmas with these following budget tips:**

- 1. Create a budget:** Know your income and expenses to determine your surplus for Christmas purchases. Track your purchases via a spending app.
- 2. Gift limit:** Put a dollar limit on each gift.
- 3. Create SMART goals:** Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic

and Timely. Goals give you a timeframe to achieve them.

- 4. Find extra money:** Have a garage sale, get a part-time job or volunteer for overtime at work.
- 5. Shop smart:** Make a shopping list. Shop around, compare prices and use loyalty card points.
- 6. Share the load:** Share catering responsibilities and buy only what you need.
- 7. Beware credit cards, Zip Pay and AfterPay:** While convenient, know repayment and interest amounts before committing. Consider using your debit card (own money) instead.
- 8. Pay down debts:** Consistently pay down your debts, so you can start 2020 in better financial shape.
- 9. Start saving for Christmas 2020:** Open a separate account and have funds automatically transferred every pay day.
- 10. Connect with loved ones:** No one will remember if the napkins matched but they will remember if you didn't talk to them all day.

# Christmas Log Cake

By Ningsih Johannes

## Ingredients

### Cake batter

4 egg yolks, about 65g each with shell  
4 egg whites  
70g caster sugar  
30ml milk  
30ml corn oil  
1 tsp vanilla extract  
70g cake flour or plain flour sifted

### Meringue

4 egg whites  
50g caster sugar  
3-4 tbsp of strawberry jam for filling

### Buttercream

680g icing sugar  
340g unsalted butter  
50g cocoa powder  
pinch of salt  
10ml expresso coffee shot  
7ml vanilla paste  
1 tbsp of heavy cream

## Method

### Cake batter

1. Preheat oven to 180°C.
2. Line a 10cm x 10cm baking tray with baking paper.
3. In a large bowl, mix egg yolks, vanilla extract, caster sugar, corn oil and milk together with a hand whisk.
4. Mix well and add in sifted flour. Mix well again.

### Meringue

1. Whisk egg whites into a foam and gradually add in caster sugar.
2. Continue to whisk egg whites until mixture becomes glossy and foam peaks.
3. Gently fold half of the meringue into cake batter, then continue with the rest.
4. Pour batter into lined pan, then spread evenly with a spatula.
5. Bake in preheated oven for 15-17 minutes.
6. Remove baking paper immediately after baked and leave cake to cool on a wire rack.
7. Spread jam evenly across cake.
8. Place cake on baking paper. Use baking paper to start the rolling process, then tuck your paper, fold it over and fold it over again. Chill in refrigerator for a few hours before decorating.

### Buttercream

1. Mix and cream butter using a standing mixer, for 5 minutes at room temperature.
2. Beat in the sifted icing sugar.
3. Add cocoa powder, espresso shot, salt and vanilla paste.
4. Beat until you have an even, fluffy and consistency buttercream.

### Decoration

1. Decorate the cake with icing sugar using a spatula.
2. Spread the chocolate buttercream over the cake.
3. Add final flourishes with holly ornaments.

## About the chef

Ningsih Johannes is a mother, wife and long-time member of Wesley International Congregation (WIC), where she often offers her culinary gifts for special occasions, events or morning tea on Sundays. Her flavour is very diverse, implementing different herbs, spices and flavours she's learnt from her Indonesian background. After living in Australia for the past 20 years, Ningsih bakes up this seasonal cake whenever she misses her hometown and wants to reflect back on her childhood years in Jakarta, Indonesia.



# Anticipating his coming

Matthew 24:36-44

There are a number of occasions when we welcome a new year. Obviously, we think of January and also the beginning of the tax year in July. However, the first Sunday of Advent is the beginning not just of a new season, but also a new year in the Christian calendar.

In the season of Advent, we sit on the brink of something utterly new. There has been a long-expected hope brewing down the centuries. Advent invites us to awaken from our sleep and capture the hope.

Our gospel passage can appear to be rather intimidating. However, it does give us a picture of a journey outwards and forwards. The words enable us to hold in our minds a readiness to embrace the way we ought to live our lives.

*“But about that day or hour no-one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father”,* (verse 36).

I want to take three phrases which fall from this passage and suggest that they each encapsulate something of our Advent message.

## No one knows – v.36

It is unfortunate that some people have used the Advent theme, which declares the truth of the unexpectedness of God, to construct a privatised theology full of secret information about the end of the world. It becomes an exact contradiction of its purpose. Craig Keener, in his commentary on Matthew, drew attention to the fact that Jesus’ coming would catch most people unawares and “such a warning prevents suffering believers from building up undue expectations that would set them up for exploitation.”<sup>1</sup>

God breaks into life in unexpected ways. The Advent message makes a claim on us which violates our modern reliance on rationality. The God we meet in Jesus Christ can come to us in failure and despair, as much as ever he does in our success.

Advent reminds us of the fact that we cannot control life any more than we can know all about it. In such a context, we must hold to the reality of uncertainty and, at the same time, engage in trust. This message will

constantly challenge us, as we seek to live out our lives.

The fact that Jesus and the angels do not know the hour of the Son of Man’s coming provides a sharp warning against those who would unhelpfully speculate in this realm. In fact, I would go as far as to say that claims to special insight about the future tend to expose our human arrogance and pretence. There have been those who have set the date of the final coming of Jesus and ignored the very pull of scripture. Even the most faithful follower will be taken by surprise.

Keeping hope alive can be one of the most difficult of challenges. I was reading a few years ago the story of a man called Herman. He was at a university theatre when a distinguished pianist fell ill during a concert performance. Herman got up, walked onto the stage and took over. He gave a magnificent performance without a single mistake. Later that evening, he went to the post-performance party and was asked how he managed to give such a performance without any notice at all.

He replied, “In 1939, I was a budding young concert pianist. I was arrested and placed in a concentration camp. Putting it mildly, the future looked bleak. But I knew that to keep a flicker of hope alive, in order that I might play again, I needed to practise every day.” Of course, he did not have a piano. “I began by fingering a piece from my repertoire on a bare board late one night. The next night, I added a second piece—and soon I was running through my entire program. That constant practice kept my hope alive. Every day I renewed my hope that I would one day be able to play my music again on a real piano—and in freedom.”

## Keep watch – v.42

We must live in readiness to welcome God’s kingdom. We continually live within the tension of knowing that all is in God’s hands, yet we have an abiding sense of responsibility. These are not easy days and, for many people living with a sense of readiness to welcome, life is far from simple. Verna Holyhead, commenting on the season of Advent, writes: “Our ‘paper flesh’ can often be torn as we plough our way through Christmas shopping or grind through the pressures that the end of year demands. But can we find a few moments each Advent week when we ‘make ready for Christ’?”<sup>2</sup>

In the 1920s, an epidemic of ‘lethargic encephalitis’ swept the Eastern United States of America. Oliver Sacks, the British neurologist, described the symptoms of a modern expression of this ancient “sleeping sickness” as “apathetic, dull, devoid of emotional expression and listless”.<sup>3</sup> There are many ways in which we might say our modern society has been spiritually afflicted with a similar condition.

‘Watch’ is a concept which resonates with looking forward earnestly and anticipating some impending event. In the biblical context, there is certainly a watchfulness described in the next

chapter and a half in Matthew’s Gospel. Watchfulness must never degenerate into a matter of scrutinising signs, but rather living with a faithful preparedness. For centuries, people had waited for the coming of the Messiah and this sits at the heart of our Christmas message. Our anticipation of his coming is not about either waiting quietly, or a frantic response, but the regularity of faithful stewardship. Matthew has a distinct take on this passage, which Eduard Schweizer comments upon: “Unlike Mark and Luke, Matthew uses the idea of pairs of people separated by the sudden Last Judgement, to make the discourse seem a warning before which no-one can stand secure.”<sup>4</sup>

## Be ready – v.44

We can be so immersed in the present that we forget what is part of God’s bigger picture. Of course, ‘Be prepared’ was the early Baden-Powell boy scout motto, but it has a message for all of us.

At Wesley Mission, we must remind ourselves continually that we have a priority to support those who are most in need. We have a special place in our hearts and mission for those who are hurt and broken. To be effective in this glorious mission, we need to be ready for all that God is able to do in the most difficult of circumstances. Our lives as Christians are fed by the devotional truths, nourished by a pattern of worship and devotion. Some people fail to grasp the fact that, “Some Christians have taken Jesus’ apocalyptic language literally in order to try to identify this or that war or rumour of war as the birth pangs of the end. They fail to see that Jesus uses such language, a dramatic language necessary to understand the radical transformation that the kingdom names, to announce that the kingdom has come and is present.”<sup>5</sup>

Eighteen years ago, my wife and I shared in an evangelistic mission in the State of Iowa. It was a very

different kind of America than we had ever visited before. It is from this State that I heard the story of a man whose wife was soon to give birth to a baby. As she neared the time for the child to be born, every night he took the battery from his car, wrapped it in a blanket and took it into the house. His reason was to keep the battery warm, so the car would start. Thankfully, in general, our car batteries are more reliable today!

It is because we do not know when Jesus will come that we must remain ready for his coming. It is this very readiness that will empower us in our mission to reach out with the good news of Jesus Christ, and also in the commission to express compassion to the marginalised in our community.

When I began my Formation Training in Bristol, we had a very eccentric academic member of our teaching staff. He was a single man and had a housekeeper who was a very direct Yorkshire woman. One day, she was going to the hairdresser and she asked him to “have the kettle on” for when she returned. Now, the kitchen was not his usual domain. When she arrived home, all the windows were steamed up and you would have thought our kindly tutor had been running a marathon. The kettle was on and he said to her, “You have been so long, I have had to fill the kettle three times!”

Our tutor was ready, but we are all called to a spiritual readiness for the coming of Jesus Christ and there is no season in the Christian year that speaks more directly to this issue than Advent.

## Rev Keith V Garner AM [n](#)

1. Keener, Craig S, *Matthew*, IVP Academic, p.354
2. Holyhead, Verna A, *Building on Rock*, Liturgical Press, p.4
3. Sacks, Oliver, *Awakenings*, Duckworth & Company
4. Schweizer, Eduard, *The Good News According to Matthew*, John Knox Press, p.461
5. Hauerwas, Stanley, *Matthew*, SCM Theological Commentary on the Bible, p.204

## Growth that strengthens our future



Strengthening our future - Annual Report 2019

**“We’ve been laying foundations and building bricks and pillars. Now we’re starting to see some of the growth that we anticipated,” said the Rev Keith V Garner AM, Superintendent and CEO of Wesley Mission.**

At Wesley Mission’s Annual Meeting on 27 October, Mr Garner released Wesley Mission’s 2019 Annual Report: *Strengthening our future*. The report celebrates Wesley Mission’s significant growth

throughout 2018/19—the third in our five-year strategic plan to achieve 50 per cent growth by 2021.

Over 2018/19, we’ve supported more than 240,000 people, including providing 105,681 nights of accommodation to people most in need. Lifeline Sydney & Sutherland answered 32,523 calls from people in crisis and Wesley Hospital Ashfield & Kogarah treated 7,659 patients.

This year we launched our first

community hub model of service in Taree, offering a client experience that embodies the principle of ‘no wrong door’. People can walk through our doors, receive immediate help and access multiple community services, depending on their needs.

“There should be ‘no wrong door’ for anybody when they come to you in need to find the service that they’re looking for. And equally, people should only have to tell their story or need once,” said Mr Garner.

Mr Garner thanked General Manager Corporate Services, Graham Harris for over 26 years of service to Wesley Mission, who is retiring at the end of 2019.

To read our report, visit [wesleymission.org.au/annualreport2019](http://wesleymission.org.au/annualreport2019) ■

## Annual Meeting celebrates achievements and commences search for successor

**On Sunday 27 October, at Wesley Mission’s Annual Meeting, Superintendent and CEO, the Rev Keith V Garner AM announced that he will be retiring from this leadership role in February 2021.**

“It is hard to believe that it will be 15 years in 2021 since I took on this role. My wife Carol and I intend to travel widely immediately following our leaving Wesley Mission, and for a year we will be away from Sydney to give the new person time and space to establish their own leadership of this great mission which is unique in both its reach in Australia and across the world. Following this we will be making our home in Sydney and will seek to discern what God has in store for us by way of Christian service in our next season of ministry,” said Mr Garner.

Wesley Mission is currently engaged in a search for the next leader. ■



Wesley Mission CEO, the Rev Keith V Garner AM and Carol Garner at the Annual Meeting.

## Wesley Hospital helps dispel the ‘elephant in the room’

**‘Wesley’, a giant inflatable elephant became a conversation starter to raise awareness about the importance of mental health at Avalon Beach, in Sydney’s northern suburbs on World Mental Health Day.**

On 10 October, Wesley Hospital teamed up with Surf Life Saving NSW to encourage the Avalon Beach community to talk about the ‘elephant in the room’ and remove stigmas surrounding mental health.

“Wesley Mission’s own research has shown that around eight in ten Australians will know someone with a mental health issue. All of us have a role to play in dispelling the silence surrounding mental illness and to support the people—friends, family and colleagues—who are suffering,” said the Rev Keith V Garner AM, Wesley Mission CEO.

Wesley Hospital is Wesley Mission’s mental health hospital network in Sydney’s Ashfield and Kogarah. Dr John Kearney, clinical psychologist and Director of Psychological Services at Wesley Hospital Kogarah said he’s increasingly become aware of the importance of



Wesley Mission CEO, the Rev Keith V Garner AM helps raise awareness about the importance of mental health with ‘Wesley the elephant’ and Avalon Beach Surf Living Saving Club.

providing peer support and mental health first aid training to frontline community and healthcare workers.

“Around one-fifth of emergency service workers report high levels of psychological stress and do not always recognise the signs and symptoms of depression, anxiety or PTSD in themselves.

“It can be prolonged over many years, and often people don’t realise that it’s affecting their

everyday lives until it impacts their relationships, work and daily activities.

“By joining with Surf Life Saving NSW, we’re encouraging the public to talk more openly about the ‘elephant in the room’ and increase public awareness and appreciation of the unique and challenging role fulfilled by emergency service personnel and staff.” ■



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Plan your weekend church camps or retreats at beautiful Wesley Vision Valley.

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[wesleymission.org.au/wvchurchgroups](http://wesleymission.org.au/wvchurchgroups)

## Annual Wesley Fair supports Sydney's homeless

**Sydney shoppers, city workers and tourists were invited to 'shop for a cause' at Wesley Fair on 7 November to raise funds for people experiencing homelessness.**

This year Wesley Fair raised \$28,000, with all proceeds going towards the refurbishment of Wesley Edward Eagar Centre, our vital inner-city emergency accommodation.

Hungry shoppers stopped by for French crepes, homemade cakes or a delicious bacon and egg roll, all while searching for hidden treasures amongst books, DVDs, plants, fashion and other items on offer.

Amongst the vintage bargains, Sydneysiders were dazzled by a special circus performance from Dance Central, a solo Tibetan dance by Elaine Wang and entertained by

live music from talented songwriter Greg Cooper.

Editor-at-large for Vogue and GQ, Melissa Hoyer interviewed Australian fashion designer, Amy Taylor who shared sustainable fashion tips for shoppers searching for vintage

clothing. They both encouraged Sydneysiders to 'shop for a cause' and support those most in need.

"I think Wesley [Mission] has been one I've always looked at and thought of homelessness, which is such a huge issue nationally, not even just Sydney and I just think whatever I can do in my humble capacity to draw attention to it," said Melissa.



Wesley Mission CEO, the Rev Keith V Garner AM led the Wesley Fair auction, which raised over \$4,500 alone.

Amy added, "Everything that we're given should be given back... I think a good starting point is helping a charity like Wesley Mission."

Thank you to everyone who participated throughout the day, including our incredible volunteers and those who donated by shopping at Wesley Fair. ■

## Wesley International Congregation celebrates 40 years

**In September, Wesley International Congregation (WIC) celebrated their 40th anniversary and recognised their wide-reaching impact through two campuses in the City and at Ryde.**

"It was a wonderful celebration of God's faithfulness throughout the life of the congregation," said Andy Chin, Senior Pastor for Wesley International Congregation.

The service was opened by Wesley Mission's Superintendent, the Rev Keith V Garner AM, alongside Rev Rick Dacey, Senior Minister for Wesley Congregational Life. The celebration also brought

together former WIC ministers including Rev Dr Tony Chi, Rev Dr Barry Chant, Rev Wilfred Chee, Pastor Ian Forest-Jones and Pastor Brett Glover, along with current pastors including Senior Pastor Andy Chin, Pastor Jeane Finnegan and Pastor Cory Schut.

Worship and prayer filled the celebration as the congregation reflected on its history together. Many stories were shared of God at work in individual lives and communities. Thanksgiving was given to God for what He has done locally at both campuses and globally in the mission-field through missionaries and mission partners across Asia and beyond.

The service closed with a challenge to continually run the race ahead with our eyes fixed on Jesus, in the hope of a transformed world. ■



Rev Dr Keith V Garner AM and the Rev Dr Tony Chi cut the celebration cake.

# Connecting at-risk kids with positive role models for 45 years

**Wesley Aunties & Uncles recently celebrated its 45th anniversary of mentoring children who come from disadvantaged circumstances.**

“We’re Australia’s longest running child mentoring program for a good reason,” said Michelle, Wesley Aunties & Uncles Program Manager.

“[Wesley] Aunties and Uncles works. By matching children-at-risk with positive role models we introduce them to a world of possibilities and they soar. Behaviour improves, academic results pick up, children who may have shut down, open up and children who had no hope, suddenly dream of the future.”

Over the past 45 years Wesley Aunties & Uncles has impacted over 4,000 lives, by connecting children up to 12 years old with an extra family environment through ‘aunties’ and ‘uncles’ who invest in their lives and provide mentoring, care and guidance.



Wesley Mission CEO, the Rev Keith V Garner AM and Wesley Mission staff celebrated 45 years of Wesley Aunties & Uncles with performances from the Hornsby Police Band.

At Wesley Aunties & Uncles Annual Picnic in November, Wesley Mission CEO, the Rev Keith V Garner AM shared the long-lasting impact of the program.

“When you look back over those 45 years, the truth is that many, many people have been in [Wesley] Aunties & Uncles and are now grown up and very different but they’ve never forgotten the time, the concern and the love that’s been shown to them in practical ways.”

Held at Wesley Vision Valley in Sydney’s north-west, Wesley Aunties & Uncles Annual Picnic celebrated the connections families have made over the last 12 months, all while creating new memories. Swimming, a waterslide, face painting, flying fox and canoeing were just some of the activities the families enjoyed together. The Hornsby Police Band also joined the celebrations and offered entertainment throughout the day. ■

**Spend your Christmas with US**

Tune into Channel Nine 5.30 am on Wednesday 25 December 2019, to watch the Wesley Samoan Congregation perform in a special Wesley Impact! TV Christmas episode.

**A great Christmas Gift!**

**The Man of Galilee – \$24.95 each**

Experience the Sea of Galilee with a first-hand look at the locations that Jesus Christ called home, and explore how his teachings remain relevant today.

Shop now at [wesleymission.org.au/wesleygiftstore](http://wesleymission.org.au/wesleygiftstore) to purchase your DVD.

The Man of Galilee is also available at Koorong Bookshop.

## Third memorial lecture celebrates the legacy of Gordon Moyes

**The Hon Bruce Baird MP AM honoured the trailblazing leadership of former Wesley Mission Superintendent, the Rev Dr Gordon Moyes on 18 November.**

Recognised for his dedication to Christian ministry in both Word and deed in Australia and beyond, this commemorative lecture was an opportunity to engage with and celebrate those topics which were close to Mr Moyes' heart.

"Gordon Moyes exercised a remarkable 27 years of leadership at Wesley Mission. During this time, new innovations and partnerships were formed to help those most in need," said Wesley Mission CEO and Superintendent, the Rev Keith V Garner AM.

At the Gordon Moyes Memorial Lecture, Mr Baird, a former Liberal

Party Federal MP and NSW Minister, reflected on Mr Moyes' influence in sharing the gospel message on television, expanding employment services, establishing family centres to meet needs in local communities and developing financial counselling services.

"Gordon Moyes to me was always charismatic, empathetic and articulate," said Mr Baird. "He was a great advocate for those in need."

During Mr Baird's political career, he held a leadership role in the Parliamentary Christian Fellowship and since leaving office has taken a



The Hon Bruce Baird MP AM reflected on the inspiring leadership of former Wesley Mission Superintendent, Rev. Dr. Gordon Moyes.

strong interest in the issue of asylum seekers. Mr Baird reflected on his role of releasing asylum seekers from Australian detention centres.

Mr Baird helped Joseph, a young Syrian Christian and asylum seeker receive permanent residency after being placed in detention for 18 months. ■

## Wesley LifeForce Conference empowers suicide prevention at a local level

The 2019 Wesley LifeForce Conference recently shed light on the increasing suicide rates of older Australians and other high-risk population groups across the nation.

Held in Hobart, the conference brought together 145 delegates including Wesley LifeForce Network representatives, Wesley LifeForce staff, key suicide prevention stakeholders and community mental health organisations to connect, share, learn and advocate for suicide prevention services within Australia's diverse communities.

The conference had a two-fold purpose: to develop a strategy to engage high-risk communities and provide support to representatives from across the country, who work at the coalface of suicide prevention.

Speakers representing different high-risk groups shared their stories, tools and strategies supporting youth, men, older people and First Nation Australians. The presentations also reflected practical information from work with culturally and linguistically diverse groups and grassroots approaches delivered in remote communities. Delegates also participated in

working groups to connect and build relationships across regions to look at these issues and how they can work together to better support their communities.

"Our intent was for them to go back to their communities with a network, knowing they're not alone in tackling such a prominent and prevalent issue," said James, Group Manager for Wesley LifeForce Suicide Prevention Services.

The conference included a memorial service to remember those who lost their lives to suicide. ■

## Opportunity Pathways brings careers to life in Wollongong



Wesley Mission CEO, the Rev Keith V Garner AM interviews Paige about her journey with Wesley Mission's Opportunity Pathways.

**In the heart of Wollongong, a new Wesley Mission office is providing increasing community services to people most in need across the Illawarra and Shoalhaven regions.**

The office was officially opened on 22 October, which coincided with the launch of Wesley Mission's Opportunity Pathways program. The new office is also home to vocational training, home care, counselling, mental health support and suicide prevention.

"Bringing these services together under one roof is a new chapter in our support of people in the region:

to give people greater access to our broad range of community services," said the Rev Keith V Garner AM, CEO and Superintendent of Wesley Mission.

Unemployment in the Illawarra South Coast region is at 5.8 per cent, which is higher than the NSW average\*. Opportunity Pathways is helping change these statistics by supporting people who receive community housing assistance to access education, training, work and housing.

At the launch Mr Garner interviewed Opportunity Pathways client, Paige, a single mother who suffers from social anxiety to the point where

she struggled to leave her own home. Not only can Paige now leave her house, but she confidently engages with customers at her newly acquired job at Coles.

Thanks to Opportunity Pathways, Paige completed training to develop the necessary skills for her to thrive in the workplace. Paige said she is now more confident in herself and as a parent.

"My son has noticed a change in me. He always says, 'You're so happy mum'. He can definitely tell the difference."

Wesley Vocational Institute student, Emma also shared how her life has transformed since completing a Certificate III In Individual Support (Ageing) in Wollongong.

"I'm a mum of two young children under the age of three and obviously without the help of all these guys I probably wouldn't have finished," said Emma. "I've now got a job out of my course."

\*Source: ABS Labour Force Survey



## Christmas Day 2019 church service

Join us this Christmas to celebrate the birth of Jesus and the real meaning of the season. Celebration morning tea will follow.

### Christmas Day

Wednesday 25 December 2019  
10am, Wesley Theatre  
220 Pitt Street, Sydney

You're always welcome at any of our Sunday services in Ryde, Ashbury and at the Wesley Centre.

Visit our website for times, locations and languages  
[wesleymission.org.au](http://wesleymission.org.au)



Do all the good you can  
because every life matters



**No child  
should wake  
up here on  
Christmas  
day.**



A series of life events forced Zoe and her mum Anna to pack their belongings and move into their car.

**People in crisis desperately need our help this Christmas.**

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[wesleymission.org.au/christmas2019](https://wesleymission.org.au/christmas2019)  
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