



wesley impact!

news

Spring 2019

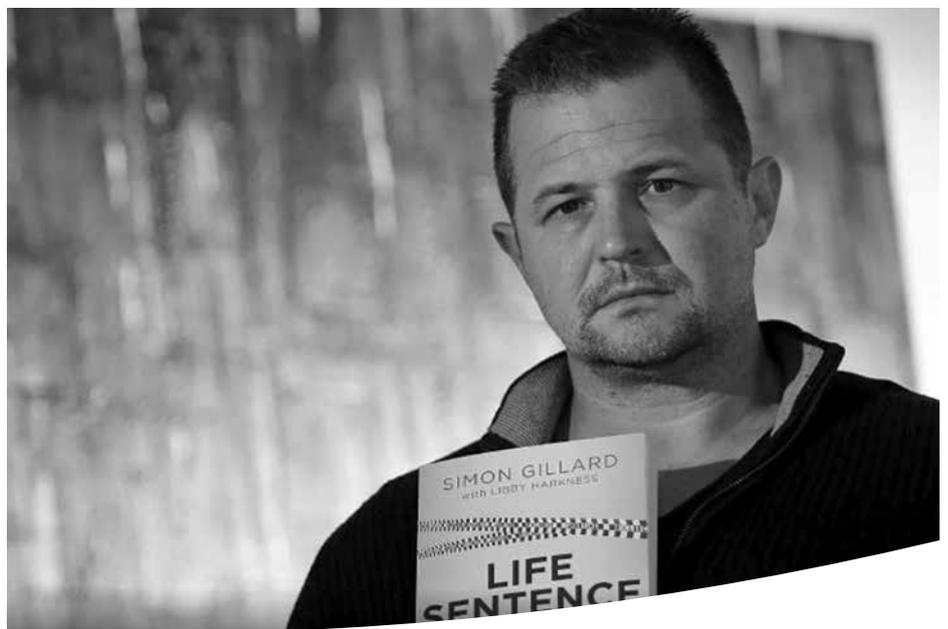
Simon's anchor in a storm

Glancing at his family's photo, Simon's plan was to say a final goodbye. Instead, those faces he loved so much were an anchor holding him secure while the waves of emotion tried to sink him.

Another time, Simon was brought back from the brink of suicide by a phone call. Guided by the Lifeline volunteer on the other end, he was able to focus on his surroundings, on the ordinary rhythm of his breaths. In, out. In, out. It grounded him – and saved his life.

Father of three Simon Gillard tried to take his own life four times after developing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, triggered by witnessing horrors in his 16 years as a police officer.

As Simon sought help and started to understand what was happening to him, he made the brave decision to assist others by telling his story in the media and as a motivational speaker. In 2017, he shared this heart-wrenching insight into his struggle, in his bestselling memoir *Life Sentence: A Police Officer's Battle with PTSD* written with Libby Harkness, published by Penguin Random House.



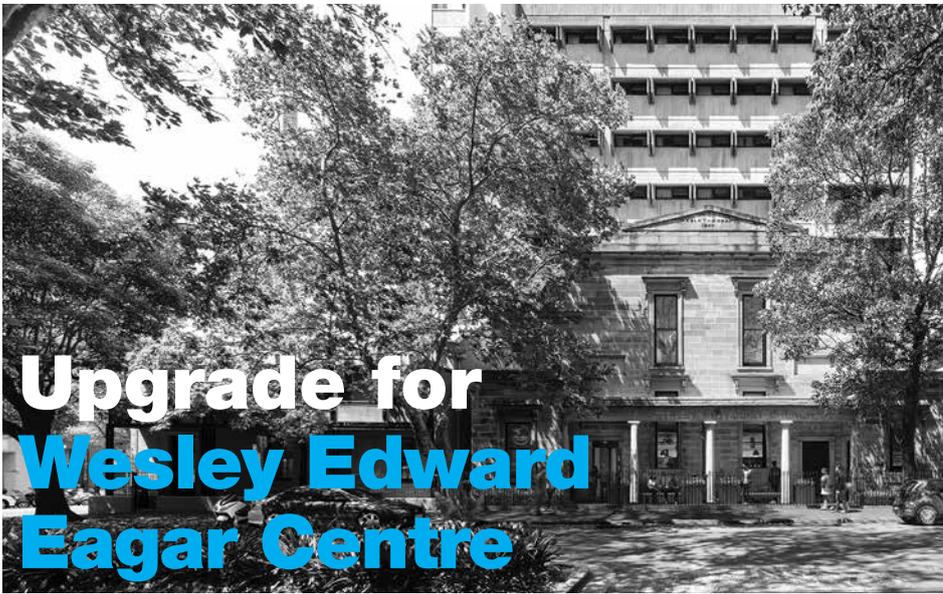
"I'm awake again, shaking, sweating. My heart is racing and I stare into the dark. I can't close my eyes. I fear the images. They swim behind my eyelids ... suicides, heart attacks, murders, car crashes."

After recognising the need for mental health services, Simon also supported Lifeline Sydney & Sutherland through advocacy and asking guests at his 40th party to give donations instead of gifts. "I love what Lifeline does," he says. "I'm glad to help."

By supporting Wesley Mission yourself, you can ensure that every life matters. Your generosity helps us offer services including Lifeline Sydney & Sutherland and our Wesley LifeForce program, training people in suicide prevention.

Recently, our Wesley LifeForce team attended the Western NSW Regional Suicide Prevention Forum, contributing to vital discussions about ways to improve assistance to vulnerable people living outside major cities.

Thank you for ensuring our life-saving help continues for people experiencing mental health issues.



Upgrade for Wesley Edward Eagar Centre

Decades of care have taken a toll on Wesley Edward Eagar Centre, our accommodation in central Sydney for people in need of a safe bed, a hot meal and some kindness. It's been a part of the fabric of the inner city since the 1970s.

Wesley Mission lodged a Development Application mid-July with the City of Sydney to refurbish the facility over 12 months, with a planned start date of early 2020.

The upgraded building will include lockable rooms providing secure storage, with ensuite bathrooms to help restore our residents' dignity and the privacy they have lost.

"I found myself with a suitcase and homeless. I was met at Wesley Edward Eagar Centre by a total stranger. She just asked how I was and I broke down," says Rhonda.

A new community dining area will give lonely people a place to meet and find comfort in each other's company.

The refurbishment will allow Wesley Edward Eagar Centre to provide support, empowerment and advocacy that caters to all of a person's needs, not just their urgent issues.

"Staff will be able to help people experiencing homelessness in a way that is even more meaningful and individual and caring," says David Allen, our Executive Manager – Community and Family Care. "And to someone experiencing homelessness, a dignified interaction is everything."

We need help from people like you to carry out the planned refurbishment of Wesley Edward Eagar Centre. If you would like to offer those without shelter a feeling of home and services that can break the cycle they are trapped in, please consider a gift today.

Heroes United raises \$168,000 for homeless services

On 25 June, Australians from the corporate, sporting and entertainment worlds gathered at Doltone House in Sydney for a luncheon to support Wesley Mission's services to people experiencing homelessness.

Guests were inspired hearing from Australian heroes who have overcome great challenges and obstacles in their lives – interviewed by acclaimed TV journalist, Leigh Sales.

Among the stories of resilience and bravery, Lindt café siege survivor Louisa Hope told how she was shot in the foot – an injury requiring a three-month hospital stay that added to her mobility challenges from having multiple sclerosis.

"It helped me understand how to sit and be still with injury, and to just be quiet and to understand that there's no adversity that can come that is bigger than... my faith," she said. "I just have this true, deep conviction that all things work together for good."

The funds raised this year will help refurbish Wesley Edward Eagar Centre, a place where homeless and vulnerable men and women can get help in the heart of Sydney. Thank you to everyone who gave generously to ensure the centre is better equipped to meet the needs of those we help for years to come.

Amazing grace our Easter celebrations

On Easter Sunday, we commemorated that Christ is risen in a celebration like no other, broadcast live from the Sydney Opera House. Special guests were the singer Ellen Malone and the vocal group, Soul Purpose, with an inspiring Easter message from the Rev Keith V Garner AM.

"Jesus Christ's sacrificial love revealed on the cross sends a simple yet powerful message to all – you matter to God," said the Rev Keith V Garner AM. "Nobody is beyond the place of redemption and hope."

These celebrations followed our unforgettable Good Friday event in Martin Place, where hundreds of people placed red rose petals on the cross in memory of the sacrifice of Jesus. Every petal was a symbol of openness and thankfulness for amazing grace.



Thank you to our amazing City2Surf team

Wesley Mission's team braved the windy weather in their singlets to run in the City2Surf on 11 August in support of our vital homeless services. Cheering them across the finish line, our volunteers had to pull on their beanies and scarves to fight off the cold!

But the chilly temperatures couldn't cool people's enthusiasm or the excitement in the air. Especially when our runners and walkers finally made it to Bondi Beach after their 14km effort from Hyde Park in Sydney's CBD – via the notorious 'Heartbreak Hill'.

Nearly \$11,000 was raised in support of people in greatest need. Their incredible effort will give relief to people without shelter this winter, helping fund our services including crisis accommodation at Wesley Edward Eagar Centre.



A huge thank you to everyone who ran, walked or donated to support this vital work, including our fantastic supporters from Ernst & Young, and all our staff who took part and fundraised.

"I did it for the camaraderie and it's fun, just to get to enjoy the city while you help the homeless," says fundraiser Benito Lopez.

50 years of seniors' wellbeing

Wesley Mission marked a fantastic milestone this June. Together with community members, special guests, Wesley School for Seniors students and tutor volunteers, we celebrated 50 years of working with seniors across our various services.

Patricia Imbesi has been a student at Wesley School for Seniors for almost a third of the time that its doors have been open. She first heard about it after she retired from full-time work, and a friend gave her a program.

"I found I needed extra things to do to keep me occupied," she says. "Over the years, I've tried different things. I've done history, I've done poetry, gardening, English country dancing, Scottish dancing. I love the gentle exercise classes. I feel that my health has been very good because of the things I do at Wesley Mission. I'm very blessed to still be so healthy."

Now Patricia is 81 years young, and she is enrolled in indoor bowls, public speaking and her favourite – square dancing every Friday.

"As I was aging, I wanted to get as much weight-bearing exercise into my life as I could, and the dancing and music is wonderful for that," she says. "To have to move very quickly with seven other people, and answer to all the calls, and perform – it's quite good for the mind and the body. It keeps the brain active. And the social contact is so wonderful. To be able to come in and meet all your friends, it's great."

"Wonderful people come in to Wesley Mission, and they come from all over Sydney so you meet people from all over the place," says Patricia.



Over 55s can choose from around 90 courses, from beginner to advanced, at Wesley School for Seniors in Sydney's CBD and in Carlingford.

If you'd like to learn new skills and socialise in a safe and supportive environment, phone 1800 959 099.



A legacy of impact Mark's story

Mark was raised on a farm south west of Sydney by his mother and grandmother. His mother had always been a supporter of Wesley Mission and the pioneering advocacy work of the then Wesley Mission superintendent, the Rev Alan Walker.

Following in his mother's footsteps, Mark has supported Wesley Mission for more than 20 years. "In that time, I have come to understand more about the diversity and

the range of their services, and the vital impact they have had in helping, improving and even saving people's lives," Mark says.

Mark's particular interest is the work of the David Morgan Centre, which provides employment opportunities to people living with disability. The centre is named after the late David Morgan, a former Wesley Mission board member and businessman whose generous gift in his Will helped establish the centre.

"I was privileged to personally visit the David Morgan Centre and see firsthand the loving, caring environment," says Mark.

"I have seen and experienced the care and dedication of the Wesley Mission staff and I am certain that leaving a gift in my Will to Wesley Mission is the right thing to do."

Wesley Mission relies on gifts that our supporters include in their Wills – supporters just like you. Without this, much of our work would not be possible. Your gift of any size can help people in the greatest need into the future.

After taking care of your loved ones, please consider including a gift to Wesley Mission in your Will.

If you feel inspired by Mark's decision and you'd like to discuss how you can support people the way he is, phone Stephen Burfield on (02) 9263 5561.

Need help to prepare your Will?

At our Wesley Mission Wills Days an independent solicitor can give you advice or prepare you a simple Will, for a small fee that will go towards our services. It's a great way to make sure your Will reflects your wishes, while you help those who are lonely, sick and disadvantaged.

Friday 20 September	Blacktown Worker's Club
Thursday 3 October	Wesley Mission Centre, Sydney CBD
Thursday 31 October	Campbelltown Catholic Club
Thursday 7 November	Tradies Gynea
Thursday 20 February	Manly Warringah Rugby League Club

For more information or to book a solicitor to prepare your Will, call (02) 9263 5548 or email willsdays@wesleymission.org.au



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