

 **wesley**

Spring 2017

impact



**Wesley
Brighter Futures**

**Confident and
connected care**

**Laura's new life
A clear and
guiding light**

**A portrait
that speaks to a
city**

Features

- A portrait that speaks to a city 04
- Confident and connected care 08
- A clear and guiding light..... 10

Regulars

- Hello..... 03
- Wordwise 12
- Wesley News..... 14

Contact

Executive Editor: Rev Keith V Garner, AM
Superintendent/CEO

Editor: Graeme Cole

Writer: Graeme Cole, Jeanette Stephen

Design: Sally Ryan, Clarissa Cowan

Project Manager: Olga Korobko

Photography: Murray Harris, Tim Pascoe, Ivan Sajko

Printing: Finsbury Green

220 Pitt Street, Sydney NSW 2000
PO Box A5555, Sydney South NSW 1235
(02) 9263 5555
communications@wesleymission.org.au
wesleymission.org.au

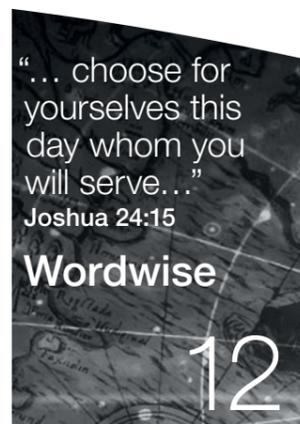
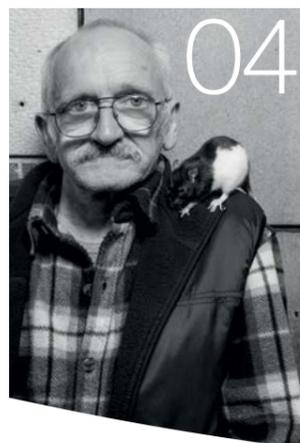
Superintendent/CEO: Rev Keith V Garner, AM

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.

“... for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”

Joshua 1:9



Hello

Since its beginnings Wesley Mission has been reaching out to some of the most in need in the heart of the city of Sydney. While our services spread far beyond the CBD and across the state and nation, it is in the city centre where our work began and continues to offer Christian compassion.

At the core of the teaching of Jesus Christ is the importance of the individual. In a society where the gap between rich and poor widens and people feel disempowered, those who stand to lose most are individuals and especially the poor and marginalised.

Our commitment to justice for the individual must never be lost. Each week, within the programs of Wesley Mission, our doors are knocked upon by individuals whose lives are destroyed by a greedy society bent on looking after itself – and not the needs of the weak. One of the key biblical ideas of justice is “right relating” – for justice requires a right relationship with God, our neighbour, our society and the earth itself.

In this edition of *Wesley Impact!* you will read about Chris, a homeless man who is cared for by our **Wesley Connect** program run from our Wesley Centre. The program embraces some of the city’s marginalised people, many of whom are dealing with multiple issues of homelessness, mental health and domestic violence. Around 45 people receive practical support and care each week from a team of volunteers drawn from our congregations.

Artist John Williams was so inspired by Chris’ story and the work of Wesley Mission that he decided to paint Chris and enter the work in this year’s Archibald. John turned Archibald convention on its head by painting a person experiencing homelessness rather than a famous public figure.

You will also read about Laura, a young woman who has overcome many challenges. After receiving support from our workers in our youth homeless service at Coffs Harbour she is now more confident and assured. Not only has the program assisted Laura with accommodation, it has organised reconciliation meetings with her mother, and provided emotional and financial support.

Melissa’s story is extremely encouraging. She has been part of Wesley Mission’s **Brighter Futures** program and has participated in its ground-breaking SafeCare program which provides practical skills on keeping children safe and healthy.

Thank you for your practical and prayerful support of our work here at Wesley Mission.

Rev Keith V Garner, AM
Superintendent/CEO
Wesley Mission

“Our commitment to justice for the individual must never be lost”



A portrait that speaks to a city

In the heart of Sydney's CBD a strange but unique sight greets shoppers and office workers.

Sydney's 'Ratman', known as Chris, and his entourage of pet rodents is a strange yet challenging, paradox in the heart of the city's business district.

Each day he sets up his makeshift milk crate stand amid the grey suits, tourists and the high rise offices of Pitt Street.

Lucy the rat takes pride of place. She busily feeds on lettuce and seeds. Distracted from their smart phones, business people and shoppers glance sideways for a double take. Rats and rough sleeping are far from strange bedfellows but the combination can be unnerving, even unsettling when encountered for the first time.

Japanese tourists stop for selfies with Lucy. Some part with their loose change for the privilege, others hot foot it away. It makes kids laugh and mothers grimace. "She's well behaved," Chris quips. "Never bitten anyone."

Lucy scampers up arms, sits on shoulders and whispers sweet nothings in the ears of whoever takes time to listen. It seems such innocent if not eccentric fun. The social

interaction is important for Chris. "I love entertaining people," he said. "The public love them."

However, Lucy and Chris are not just a CBD circus act. Behind their notoriety is a story that resonates with people embraced by Wesley Mission.

For the past few years, Chris has been homeless and living out of the back of a friend's van. A marriage breakdown and several job losses left him sorting through the remnants of his life.

People who are sleeping rough often occupy non-descript sleeping places such as under bridges, in cars, shopping centres and train stations. The mainstream middle class often find this a threat to their security and place in the world, masking their own fragility and doubt. Yet it is the vulnerability of homeless people which make them open to the story of Christ, His suffering, His healing and His love and His concern for the marginalised and those grieving.

It is in this context and not through church structures or exacting theology, Jesus' message of good news finds traction and acceptance.

In previous years, Chris worked in a Southern Highlands saw mill cutting timber and lumbering in dust. He later worked as a process worker and a farm hand. However, the tide turned and he soon found himself unemployed and homeless.

When the day ends and the warm greetings of Pitt Street fade with the setting sun, Chris heads to an undisclosed location in south-east Sydney to sleep in his friend's van.

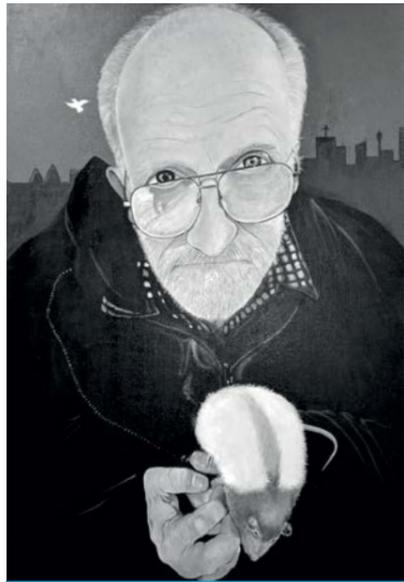
Food is a day by day proposition, often relying on the support of others, especially Wesley Mission's Connect program operated from the Wesley Centre in Sydney.

At **Wesley Connect**, Chris receives food, clothing, warm drinks, but most of all friendship. "A bit of clothing, a bit of food and jackets during winter, socks... anything like that, I'm grateful," Chris said. "I like their friendship and conversation."

Chris' story is not unusual for people experiencing homelessness. Lives are complex and nuanced. Answers are not simple although extending the hand of friendship has a potency and resilience more powerful than words.

Chris' story has not gone unnoticed and recently had its sequel in a most public way, posing a challenge for a man who prefers discretion amid public demonstration. Chris came to the notice of the Rev Vanessa Williams-Henke when she was an intern serving at Wesley Connect. Vanessa, who is now the chaplain at MLC School for Girls, developed a strong friendship with Chris.

Vanessa's father John Williams was better known in his early years as an Australian rugby union player who scored one of the most famous tries of all time for the Wallabies against South Africa in 1963. John played 14 of 24 games on that tour. A winger noted for his speed, he also narrowly missed inclusion in the Australian athletics



Archibald portrait: subject matter with substance.

team for the Empire Games in 1962 when he clocked 9.6 seconds for the 100 yards. These days John lives in Orange and enjoys painting. His passion has led him to enter the Archibald Prize for the past 20 years.

The restless eye of an art judge is a far cry from the maddening crowd of Ellis Park Johannesburg, although both can be equally critical and cynical. John, however, has never been one to err on the side of caution or worry about what the critics think. He is a latter-day advocate of the social realist school and focussed on the human condition.

When considering his subject for this year's Archibald Prize, John wanted to make a point about **homelessness** and the importance of supporting organisations like Wesley Mission. He turned to his daughter Vanessa for advice. Vanessa suggested that he contact Chris to see if he would be happy to be the subject of his Archibald entry.

John began groundwork a year before submitting his entry.

"The Archibald traditionally focuses upon the rich and famous – actors, poets, politicians and judges," John said. "I wanted to paint someone who was totally different.

"I thought with Chris, this would be a change of direction for the better. Most of the people they (the Archibald artists) paint... they don't have a problem with their lives virtually."

John had seen homelessness overseas, especially in America, but had become increasingly concerned about the Australian experience, particularly Sydney.

"Homelessness is a huge issue so I sought a subject matter which had substance," John said. "I wanted to make a statement and raise awareness about an issue which is on our doorstep."

John came to Sydney and made a number of hand sketches of Chris and his former pet rat, Kimberly, before completing a hand-brushed oil painting in his studio over several weeks.

"I like to meet the subject and know more about them so that was a good way, sitting down with him and having a bit of a talk and sketching him in the street," John said. "That gives you a better feel for the situation."

The painting also has a small Wesley Mission dove in the background and a Christian cross above the Sydney skyline. The symbolism was strong. "I wanted to remind people that there are people who care and are supportive in the middle of life's challenges," John said.

Chris was stunned by John's final work describing it as both "impressive and gorgeous".

While John's painting did not make the finalists for this year's Archibald Prize, he is determined to keep entering. John also submitted his painting of Chris to a couple of other exhibitions, including the Salon des Refusés, an exhibition that runs at Observatory Hill in The Rocks, shortly after the Archibald exhibition.

Chris is hoping to see the painting hung in the Wesley Mission Centre as a reminder to all people that we are only ever a few steps away from experiencing homelessness.

At the heart of the program is a commitment and passion to walking in Jesus Christ's footsteps: an authentic Christian discipleship which holds together Word and deed.

The team of **volunteers at Wesley Connect** will hold the painting in esteem, according to Wesley Connect Co-ordinator Lucy.

"The Archibald opportunity has been a great encouragement to everyone," she said.

"It underlines the importance of our relationship with all people. Working with homeless people is humbling.

"God has taught me to love his people and to treat every single person with love, kindness, respect and compassion. We are all the same. I think I have come to a point where I don't see differences between people who are experiencing homelessness and those who don't."

Lucy oversees a team of 12 volunteers from **Wesley Mission congregations** who unpack and distribute food and clothing, organise showers for clients, and sit, listen and pray with people in crisis. Each week the team supports and assists an average of 45, and up to 80 people.

"Some days we might only have five people but it will be five people in an emergency crisis who want someone to sit with them and pray with them," she said.

"It's easy to be a helper but it's hard to allow people to help you. People come in for food but behind their immediate need is a bigger need.

"Many of them have multiple issues like escaping domestic violence, mental health problems, unemployment and homelessness. We have an ageing



It is in this context and not through church structures or exacting theology, Jesus' message of good news finds traction and acceptance.

population who have been struck with an electricity bill and have no means to pay the bill so they come to us for food. We have to deal with these things very sensitively."

At the heart of the program is a commitment and passion to walking in Jesus Christ's footsteps: an authentic Christian discipleship which holds together Word and deed. It has been the hallmark of Wesley Mission – the church in the city which preaches the Word and cares for those on the margins.

"As Christians our faith and our salvation are important but we must also ask what it is to walk in Christ," she said.

"Working in ministry in this team we ask for support daily. Colossians tells us to clothe ourselves in compassion and righteousness. The work we do is a natural outflowing of walking with Christ but it's not always easy... that is why we spend a lot of time in prayer."

For Lucy and her team the clear motivation and example is found in Matthew 25:35-36, 40.

³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶ I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you

looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.

⁴⁰ The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

"The more you do it (supporting), the more you listen," Lucy said. "It's a great encouragement when someone turns around and says 'thank you for listening and thank you for helping'."

It's a sentiment shared by Chris and one enmeshed in Wesley Mission's 205 year history: "Always help out Wesley Mission because they are always helping others out," he claimed. ■

Melissa's confident and connected care

“Kiss Mummy,” Melissa says, gently nudging noses with her bubbly one-year-old Macy.



The little girl scrunches up her nose and throws her head back, giggling.

The playful bond between mum and bub is a far cry from circumstances that have unfolded over the past few years, testing the strength of this determined young woman and the promise and power of maternal love.

Macy is Melissa's fourth child, and her first with her devoted partner Mac, whom she describes as her 'rock'.

Other children Jarrad, 11 and Teresa, 13, were removed from her custody after experiencing abuse and domestic violence with Melissa's previous partner. Rydha, aged six, went and lived with his paternal grandmother.

“I do blame myself for what did happen,” she admits. “It was not a very good home environment.

“Teresa told me that my ex was abusing her. I didn't want to believe it. I just pretty much brushed it off. So I continued to stay in the relationship with him.”

Melissa says she realises now that she was ignoring all the warning signs as well as advice offered by Family and Community Services (FACS).

“He was grooming the whole family for what he wanted to do,” she reflects. “To me, domestic violence at that time was just physical, not mental or emotional.

“The children went to my sister's and she couldn't handle Jarrad so then he got moved to my brother's. Then allegations got made against my brother so Jarrad had to move into a foster home.”

Problems resurfaced with Jarrad's time in foster care and a decision was made to transfer him to move in with his dad's family.

However the plan did not work out and Jarrad has since been returned to Melissa's care with support from Wesley Mission's Youth Hope program. **Wesley Youth Hope** offers

voluntary tailored support to help young people remain with their families with a renewed focus on positive growth and development.

Melissa is also working through the court system to bring Teresa home, and is hoping to organise regular visits to see Rydha.

The family has been strengthened during the past year by a hands-on parenting course called SafeCare, piloted through Wesley Mission's **Brighter Futures** program in Western Sydney.

SafeCare is an evidence-based, behavioural skills training program for parents of children identified as being at-risk or who have been reported to child protection services.

It's about getting back to basics using the power of 'touch and talk' to help parents to better connect and communicate with their children.

As any mother will readily tell you, being a mum is a big job in a little person's world and real-life problems in parenting are not the sole domain of first-timers.

While Macy is Melissa's fourth child, both mother and daughter are now continuing on a path for life, learning how to grow – together.

The journey has also been one of rebuilding the confidence needed in herself and her ability to be a mum again.

“I think the main thing was bathing her – bath time was pretty hectic,” she recalls.

“She would just cry every time I washed her hair and then Sue suggested – put some toys in the bath, explain to her what you're doing, what's going to happen next – so that made it easier.

“She loves it now – she lies back so I can do her hair.

“I think the thing is sitting down and interacting with the child instead of putting the child in front of the TV or playing with your phone.

“They learn more from you than what they do others.”

Caseworkers visit participants in their homes weekly for about an hour to help them through the practical side of parenting.

Daily activities such as bath time or bedtime are broken down into stages for the child to better understand the process.

The parent learns transferable skills in preparing a child for a task, how to prompt better behaviour during the activity and finally how to wrap things up through communication techniques.

Melissa said she enjoyed the individualised course format with its personalised support from her SafeCare caseworker Sue.

“I didn't know that there were services

out there that could help you and I had no family support,” Melissa said.

“I'm more aware now of everything, all of her surroundings, how to keep her safe, how to see the signs when she's getting sick and find out if I need to take her to the doctor or do it at home or if she needs to go to the hospital.”

Caseworker Sue, who is a mum herself, adds the change is significant and visible in Melissa's confidence since she began the course in April last year.

“It's given you purpose,” she points out to Melissa, as Macy gives her mum a hug. I think it's safe to say Mel felt pretty angry about things.

“I see her as a much calmer person and lots more tolerance with Macy.

“Sometimes the beauty of SafeCare is that for parents that forget they know they can do it and get caught up in day to day stuff that goes on – it's a nice reminder that they're doing OK. They're not only meeting basic needs but they're going an extra mile to interact and be the child's first teacher really.

Sue says she wishes SafeCare had been available to her when she was a new mum, particularly learning about a child's stages of development.

The course has a key focus on the basics of looking, touching, talking, feeling and smiling as communication tools between parent and child.

“Babies change and getting used to babies changing,” adds Sue.

“I think (some) parents just grow children. They don't realise that there's developmental stages and kids don't cry because they're trying to push your buttons.”

The future is certainly brighter now for Melissa and one where she feels calmer and confident as Macy's mum, thanks to SafeCare.

“It's about appreciating what you have – don't take it for granted!,” Melissa said. ■

It's about appreciating what you have – don't take it for granted



A clear and guiding light

In many ways, Laura is a typical teenager.

She enjoys the odd sleep-in, her favourite subject is science and she spends as much time as she can catching up with friends after school.

But this 16 year old's story is one of a journey that has not only been building strength and resilience beyond her years but shaping a future of service and compassion for others who have faced difficulties in early life as well.

Unlike many of her peers, Laura can measure several significant milestones by her time at **Wesley House** – a refuge for youth at risk of homelessness at Coffs Harbour on the New South Wales North Coast.

There's her fourteenth birthday, her fifteenth and sixteenth birthdays, and the Christmases in between...

"What really helped me was that I just believed that everything happens for a reason," she said.

"It's really simple but it just got me through! And I want to carry that on for others."

Laura was barely 14 years old when she first found herself at risk of **homelessness** after her maternal great-grandmother became ill and Laura was unable to live with either her mother and siblings, or her father due to increasingly volatile experiences of domestic violence.



At the same time, she was trying out a casual job while at high school, she was also facing the prospect of life on the streets – daunting enough for any adult let alone a young person.

"I was scared to an extent," recalls Laura. "But I was also relieved that I had somewhere to stay."

That 'somewhere' in Laura's story was Wesley Mission's Homeless Youth Assistance Program (HYAP), which provides children and teens who are homeless or at risk of homelessness with an integrated system of personal support and crisis accommodation.

Family Reconciliation Workers were an integral part of Laura's path to better days, connecting her to mental health support through the national Headspace program, and involving her in regular meetings with Family and Community Services (FACS) to determine her next steps.

A move south to the beautiful coastal city of Port Macquarie and its Nautilus Senior College, provided an answer – allowing Laura to remain on the Mid North Coast.

Within a week Laura was on a train to Port Macquarie with a referral for crisis accommodation through the Mid North Coast's YPSpace youth service, thanks to the wraparound and support services of HYAP.

Laura has since secured an independent accommodation unit through YPSpace and is supporting herself and is taking charge of her mental health and wellbeing each day.

"I feel a lot happier that's for sure," she said. "I'm more resilient too when tough situations come along I'm able to handle them a lot better because I've done it a lot of times."

"Everything happens for a reason and now I'm thinking about the future and what it can be."

A total of \$27 million in NSW Government funding has recently been directed towards the HYAP among other FACS sponsored programs across the state for the prevention of youth homelessness during the next three years.

"Homelessness is a very big problem for the under 16s, but in all reality, what we find is that they don't have the maturity or life experience and the reality check of what it's like in the outside world sometimes is an eye opener," said Meena, **Wesley Youth Accommodation** Manager at Coffs Harbour.

"Often the expectation of leaving home is that they don't have to live by anybody's rules."

Meena said the main focus of the program's work is on family reconciliation, targeting younger clients in the 12-15 year old age bracket who fall through service provision gaps.

Last year, the centre recorded a 70 per cent success rate in reuniting its young clients with their families in the region.

"There isn't much of an exit strategy for these children," adds Meena, "and sometimes it's impossible for them to return to their homes and because of their age, where can we place them? What housing option is there for them if they can't return home?"

In Laura's case, a clear and guiding light has come in the form of the caseworkers at Wesley Mission's Supported Accommodation Services who have inspired her to a greater calling.

"I'd love to be a resi (residential) worker," she said, adding that Port Macquarie-based staffs - Tess, Joel and Andrew - have played a pivotal role in her journey.

"They look after us. We cook our own dinners and do our own chores, but they keep us company and give us advice and that's just really important when you live in a refuge.

"They've been a part of my early teenage life and have really impacted it. I couldn't see myself doing anything else other than what they've done for me."

At Wesley House in Coffs Harbour, there are four bedrooms, which mean there can be up to six teenagers housed together at any one time.

A rotating weekly staff of around four 'resi workers', in collaboration with case workers, help the young residents to learn how to better live together despite their diverse backgrounds and home postcodes.

"Everything happens for a reason and now I'm thinking about the future and what it can be."

Laura also has a telling message which will resonate with others on a similar journey.

"I want them to know that it does get better eventually," she said. "Coming from my perspective, you always felt like no-one cared about you but these people did so much for us. The amount of stuff they do for us, no kid can do themselves."

"A lot of kids push this help away. I've seen a lot of kids go through the refuge because they don't like the rules and stuff but it's just a waste of their time. It can change your life." ■



Passing the baton

with the Rev Keith V Garner, AM

Joshua 1:1-6

At a recent important meeting held at Wesley Mission during the Easter season, I talked about the transformation of the people who witnessed the death and resurrection of Jesus into those who took up the challenge as a resurrected community of faith. The illustration of passing the baton in the relay race is something that I often reflect upon, when considering how God renews his people in each new period of mission.

My focus is the Old Testament book of the prophet Joshua. Even a casual reading of the book might cause us to question why such a large amount of space has been given to military victories and conquests. But it is not to these matters that I turn, though I acknowledge that some past generations of colonialists may have used the story of Joshua to confirm their plans to invade, conquer and possess lands.

The book opens with a very stark statement: *"After the death of Moses..."* (v.1) As a result of this, Joshua took up the call to leadership. There is a demarcation between what has gone before and what will now follow. I offer

to you four succinct aspects of this opening chapter of Joshua and verse 9 captures the overall message of this Wordwise:

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." (Joshua 1:9)

We are a people of purpose

Joshua gathered the people together, aware that he had learned well from Moses and realising that soon he would be on the move. This truth in the widest sense applies to every Christian community. Throughout our history, we at Wesley Mission have embraced God

as One who continually moves us into new and fresh challenges.

When Don Wright wrote his celebrated history of Sydney Central Methodist Mission, he concluded with an epilogue in which he suggested that the real way of assessing our future does not lie in facilities, offices and institutions but "in the continuing struggle by the Mission to remain true to its own nature".¹

The preacher and writer, Alan Redpath, helpfully suggested that the clue to interpreting this Old Testament book is found in the epistles to the Ephesians and Hebrews where Canaan is pictured as a place of spiritual rest: "We realise that Canaan was the goal to which God was leading his people."²

We are encouraged by a promise

The promise of God became the compass point which Joshua followed all his life. Sometimes the promise was blurred and he needed the new energy that God gave him. But the vision was always before him as he actualised the purpose to which God had called him. His succession to Moses is stressed throughout the book, "... they will know that I am with you as I was with Moses." (3:7) In point of fact God's command to Joshua to remain strong and display

courage "is reminiscent of the encouragement that Moses offered to Joshua (Deut. 3:23, 31:7)."³

Joshua is the leader that God has designated to enter the land that he had promised to Moses and his people. However, the leadership he must exercise is dependent upon God's promises. "Joshua is not free to lead the people in any direction he wants, but only towards the fulfilment of what God has already promised."⁴

We face perils on the way

The story of Joshua, and Moses before him, characterises what will be the continuing experience of those who seek to follow Jesus Christ. It is also part of our journey as a provider of services to help those most in need in our community. There are times when it seems as though we are speaking into a vacuum. The Christian concern to reach out in practical ways as our response to the gospel may seem very strange to many people, even to some within the wider Christian church.

The words "be strong and courageous" are repeated in a second charge in verses that follow and then in the people's response to Joshua. Jerome Creach suggests that these words "are not really a call to be vigorous in waging war. Rather, they are primarily an injunction to trust and depend upon the Lord (Psalms 27:14, 31:24)."⁵

Even in the 12 years of my leadership at Wesley Mission, there have been times when I have realised that we face numerous challenges. On every occasion, I have been drawn back to recognise that our mission does not depend upon human strength, business ingenuity or even courage, but on a particular kind of strength and courage that flows from our trust in God.

We are given the power of God's presence

The promise that was given to Joshua followed years of nurturing under the leadership of Moses. He had come to understand that irrespective of where he went, the powerful presence of God

will be the decisive factor in confronting every obstacle that might present itself.

It is not often that you remember one of your earliest sermons, but as I sit in my study to consider these words, I am reminded that I preached my first sermon from the concluding chapter of the book of Joshua and the notable text, *"But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve..."* (24:15).

Joshua was buried in the land of God's promise and the final chapter calls us all to make a decision which will flow from our willingness to pause and consider what God has done for us. David Firth writes with directness, "We need to hear the challenge that comes to us to *choose this day*: will we renew our commitment to Christ... and confess anew that we need to give our undivided loyalty and service, recognising that this is what defines the people of God? Or will we take the path of least resistance that is in the end no path at all?"⁶

As a community of God's people seeking to express our faith in Word and deed, we acknowledge that Wesley Mission is at its most authentic when we take hold of the promise that God is always with us. Let us receive the baton in our day and ensure that we do not behave like those unfortunate relay athletes who drop it and, in doing so, lose the race completely. Even though God had promised the land to the people of God, they (and we) must still respond with courage. God invites us to have confidence in the assurance that he "will be with us wherever we go." (1:9).

Rev Keith V Garner, AM

1. Wright, Don, *Mantle of Christ*, University of Queensland Press, p.229.
2. Redpath, Alan, *Victorious Christian Living*, Pickering and Inglis, p.19.
3. Coote, Robert B, *The Book of Joshua, The New Interpreter's Bible, Vol.2*, Abingdon, p.585.
4. Firth, David G, *The Message of Joshua*, IVP, p.33.
5. Creach, Jerome FD, *Joshua, Interpretation Commentary*, John Knox Press, p.24.
6. Firth, David G, *The Message of Joshua*, IVP, p.226. ■

Mabo Justice Award to network leader



Gayili Yunupingu... Eddie Mabo Social Justice Award winner.

Gayili Yunupingu, an Aboriginal elder who established a **Wesley LifeForce Suicide Prevention Network** and helped reduce an alarming suicide rate in her Northern Territory community has been honoured with a major human rights award.

She was awarded the Eddie Mabo Social Justice Award by Bonita Mabo, wife of the late Indigenous land rights pioneer Eddie Mabo, in a ceremony in Canberra.

The lifetime achievement award was one of three National Indigenous Human Rights Awards.

It was a moving and memorable occasion with Ms Yunupingu and Mrs Mabo being moved to tears during a poignant embrace.

"The job is not finished," Ms Yunupingu said.

ACT Human Rights Commissioner Helen Watchirs commended Gayili and Wesley Mission's Suicide Prevention work.

According to Gayili, her community by necessity entered into the work of suicide intervention and prevention in 2007 and was extremely pleased to receive support from **Wesley LifeForce** in 2011. At that time completed and attempted suicides were high relative to the size of the community, particularly among young Aboriginal men.

At one stage the Gnyangara community had the highest per capita rate of suicide in the world. By this time, Gayili and her community were carrying the weight of the work. The Gnyangara (Ski Beach) and Galupa communities began to have open discussions on country to explore ways in which the community could mitigate suicide in a way that was in line with Yolngu protocols.

Discussions began and focused upon strengths based community capacity strategy. These discussions helped maintain community ownership and made people

feel they could deal with a crisis.

Under Gayili's leadership the people of Gnyangara also established night patrols to monitor people at risk in the community.

Since early 2011, Wesley LifeForce has worked closely with the community by offering it the opportunity to be part of a national community empowerment program – Wesley LifeForce Suicide Prevention Networks, increasing discussion and support for community-led solutions and promoting ways to help address suicide risk at an individual, family and community level.

By 2014 there had been no completed suicides in the East Arnhem community, according to Nhulunbuy Police.

Due to stronger networking the Galupa Marn Garr Suicide Prevention group became recognised for its work and continues to be invited to share its knowledge and expertise with other communities like Groote Eylandt.

In 2014 Federal members of parliament and senators heard about the work of the Galupa Marn Garr Suicide Prevention group and Wesley LifeForce during a presentation in Canberra.

The CEO of Wesley Mission the Rev Dr Keith Garner said Wesley Mission was delighted that Gayili had been recognised for her leadership, passion and dedication.

Wesley LifeForce has trained more than 40,000 Australians in suicide prevention and has helped establish around 70 community based suicide prevention networks across metropolitan, regional, rural and remote Australia. ■

University partnership to deliver job-ready psychology graduates

Western Sydney University and Wesley Mission have signed a mental health workforce training partnership, providing psychology students with formal workforce training at one of the region's largest service providers.

With around 2,000 staff, Wesley Mission is a key provider of **mental health** and other services in Australia, and is a Registered Training Organisation for certificates in mental health, **disability** and related fields.

Alongside their psychology degrees, the agreement will provide hundreds of students with the option of completing formal mental health workforce training from their first year of study through placements in Wesley Mission hospitals and clinics.

This practical experience and training will open up opportunities for Western Sydney University psychology graduates to be employed at Wesley Mission, as well as other major service providers.

In addition, it will help ensure that psychology students entering postgraduate programs have relevant hands-on experience.



Signed up: Wesley Mission CEO the Rev Dr Keith Garner and Western Sydney University Vice-Chancellor Professor Barney Glover.

Vice-Chancellor Professor Barney Glover said the partnership highlighted how Western Sydney University is working with leading organisations to help students gain crucial professional experience during their degrees.

"This partnership with Wesley Mission will give students the chance to experience professional working environments first hand, while also building relationships with staff and clients," said Professor Glover.

The CEO of Wesley Mission, the Rev Dr Keith Garner, said Wesley Mission was delighted to be partnering with Western Sydney University in a program which will

enrich the 'hands-on' skills of psychology students.

"Wesley Mission has a long history of practical care and support in the mental health area," Dr Garner said.

"From the establishment of Lifeline in 1963 to Wesley LifeForce suicide prevention services and delivering certificates and diplomas in mental health, Wesley Mission has been committed to addressing one of the nation's most important health and social issues.

"We are pleased that Western Sydney University has embraced this vision. Together we can build community capacity and a better skilled mental health sector." ■

You got it. We're just back up.

Wesley Home Care is that extra helping hand. When you want it.

Call our lifestyle advisor
1300 086 906

wesleymission.org.au

Leading sports stars united in tackling homelessness



Good sports... some of Australia's leading sports identities packed down and pitched in for Wesley Mission.

More than \$120,000 was raised for Wesley Mission's **homelessness** support services by some of Australia's leading sporting identities at a luncheon at the Royal Automobile Club of Australia in Sydney.

Hosted by former Wallabies captain, Nick Farr-Jones, and Wesley Mission supporter, Phillip Hartog, the annual Sports United event broke a previous fundraising record.

Sports stars from rugby league, rugby union, wheelchair rugby, cricket, AFL, surf lifesaving and swimming participated in the event.

"I've come along to Sports United for a number of years now. It's a great event and a better opportunity to help those doing it tough."

Many of the athletes who attended Sports United shared why they choose to support Wesley Mission, including retired AFL and Sydney Swans player, Jude Bolton.

"I've come along to Sports United for a number of years now. It's a great event and a better opportunity to help those doing it tough," he said. "I see a lot of homeless people in Woolloomooloo. Some of them are wearing three piece suits. It makes me think where they've come from and realise that homelessness can happen to anyone."

Australian and NSW cricketer, Nathan Lyon, echoed similar sentiments and inspired others about the importance of financially supporting homelessness accommodation services.

"I'm always happy to support and look for ways to give back to community," he said. "I have two young girls of my own and I'd do anything to steer them away from that life but it's scary to know that

there are this many children doing it tough. It really hits home."

Other sports stars that supported the event included retired Australian and Manly Sea Eagles rugby league player, Steve Menzies, former rugby union players, Mark and Gary Ella, and Sydney FC A-League manager, Graham Arnold.

A special guest at the luncheon was a former client of Wesley Mission's Edward Eagar Lodge. Wesley Mission CEO the Rev Keith Garner shared his story of hardship to hope.

Help came when he was referred to **Wesley Edward Eagar Lodge**. During the next six months Wesley Mission helped him get back on his feet and into long-term housing.

Sports United was made possible through major sponsorship: Toyota, and other corporate supporters including Westpac, Anchorage, LDO, Goodman, Impact Group, Martin & Ollmann and Midson. ■

Wesley Disability Employment Service expands support to the Lower Hunter

Job seekers with a disability are being supported by a new and free employment service in the Lower Hunter, which will not only get them job ready but provides on-going support.

Wesley Disability Employment Service (WDES) has been operating a five-star rated service in the Manning and Great Lakes area since 2010 and following this success has been asked by the Department of Social Service to extend its support.

The Disability Management Service will specialise in psychiatric disability and reach Wallsend, Charlestown and Newcastle West, with an outreach to Salamander Bay, Raymond Terrace and Toronto.

The Lower Hunter team are supporting and providing information to job seekers as they

move towards employment. They are also helping clients meet their Centrelink obligations and are addressing any barriers to employment.

Wesley Employment & Training Program Manager, Les Chant, said his team of five are helping job seekers set achievable goals and undertake realistic and genuine job searching.

"We want job seekers to become productive employees in local business," Mr Chant said. "Once employed, we can provide support for up to 52 weeks. Our aim is not only for our clients to find work but to stay in work.

"When vocational training is an option for a client our team can assist them in making an informed choice to ensure that it's the correct course for the person.

"Securing employment is empowering and life-changing not only for the client but their family, friends and the community."

WDES local staff have a wide range of employment backgrounds. They help clients develop employment and training plans and suggest alternatives or strategies to achieve their goals. They also work with other service providers, doctors and allied health professionals in supporting a job seeker.

"If aged over 55, job seekers have the option of volunteering to meet their Centrelink obligations. Our team can help them identify recognised organisations and show them how to lodge their forms with Centrelink," Mr Chant said. The free service also supports employers by short listing candidates and tapping into subsidies to assist with the cost of hiring. ■



wesley impact! tv

An insightful and inspirational faith-based TV program

Hosted by the Rev Keith V Garner, AM
Sundays 5.30 am on Channel 9 and
7.30 am on Australian Christian Channel

Visit wesleymission.org.au to view online

Sunday 10 September

Jeannie Mathews, program co-ordinator for Wesley School for Seniors, speaks with the Rev Keith Garner about the vibrant activities being offered in the community. Erica Crocker returns to perform Simple Living.

Sunday 17 September

In this episode the Rev Keith Garner stops by the Wesley Vickery Sylvania residential aged care facility to chat with Executive Manager, Cathy Beverley. Emily Rex performs in the studio Jesus Paid It All.

Sunday 24 September

Sydney based artist and Pastor Michael Henderson speaks with the Rev Keith Garner and Leah Brett sings an uplifting version of a hymn.

Wesley LifeForce at the frontline of suicide prevention on NSW North Coast

Wesley Mission's suicide prevention program, **Wesley LifeForce**, will deliver training to 280 health, allied health and community 'gate keepers' like teachers and social workers on the NSW North Coast following the recent announcement of funding by the Federal Assistant Minister for Health, Dr David Gillespie.

North Coast Primary Health Network (NCPHN) is providing \$110,648 to Wesley LifeForce suicide prevention training. This training program is supported by funding from the Australian Government under the Primary Health Network Program.

Wesley LifeForce training is evidence-based and designed for gatekeepers. Gatekeepers are community members who are well positioned to recognise a crisis and the warning signs of suicide risk and respond appropriately.

"We have a program that is shown to work," Dr Gillespie said. "Wesley Mission has the runs on the board. Their LifeForce support, education

and training of gatekeepers, whether it's GPs, nurses, ambulance men, policemen, teachers, sporting groups, is a great way of practically intervening and getting strategies in place to prevent major mental health issues.

"On the North Coast we have seen unfortunately an above average incidence of suicide... we want to have practical strategies in place to intervene because education, awareness, and intervention strategies is the way to go."

Dr Gillespie encouraged other Federal MPs to get practical programs in place that have evidence-based outcomes and are known to work.

"The taxpayer and the Health Department like to support programs that have an evidence base and a proven efficacy," Dr Gillespie said. "If you haven't got one (suicide prevention program) in your local electorate and you have a problem... that would be the strategy I would look at. Go to your

PHN and make sure they are aware of programs like this."

The training aims to improve understanding of suicide, increase the participant's ability to identify suicide behaviours and intervene in the best possible way. The training locations selected will be done in partnership with the community and the health sector to ensure maximum reach and delivery to regions of highest need.

"We work with local communities helping them to find local solutions to one of Australia's most pressing problems."

Wesley Mission CEO, the Rev Dr Keith Garner, said since 1996 Wesley LifeForce training had been delivered to more than 30,000 people across Australia.

"The program includes educating people about suicide, challenging attitudes and teaching basic engagement skills," Dr Garner said. "We work with local communities helping them to find local solutions to one of Australia's most pressing problems."

Manager of Wesley LifeForce, Tony Cassidy, said Wesley Mission would deliver five Community Suicide Prevention Training Workshops, three General Practitioner and Practice Nurse Suicide Prevention Training Workshops, three Practice Staff and Managers Suicide Prevention Seminars, six Specialist Clinical Practitioner webinars covering subjects that may include anxiety, depression, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, eating disorders, alcohol and other drugs. ■



Manager of Wesley LifeForce, Tony Cassidy, and Assistant Minister for Health Dr David Gillespie at the announcement.

Farewell and welcome at anniversary service

Wesley Mission celebrated its 205th anniversary farewelling its Chair of Wesley Community Services and welcoming its new Chair at a thanksgiving service at the Wesley Centre, Sydney.

Mark Scott AO, became a Board member in 2009 and Chair in 2013. Michael Anderson succeeds Mr Scott in the position.

Reflecting on his passion for Wesley Mission's work, Mr Scott said Wesley Mission was bringing hope to the lives of others while transforming the Australian community.

Wesley Mission Superintendent, the Rev Keith Garner, paid tribute to the work and support of Mr Scott.

"Mark's contribution to the life of Wesley Mission has been enormous," Mr Garner said. "His wisdom and leadership of the Board has been deeply appreciated by the entire Wesley Mission family."

Mr Garner said he was pleased to have Michael Anderson as the new Chair of Wesley Community Services. "He brings to us vast



Michael Anderson, the Rev Keith Garner and Mark Scott.

business skills as well as strong Christian commitment," Mr Garner said. "The combination of these two factors makes him an excellent choice to be the second Chair of our Board."

Mr Anderson said he was excited about serving in the new position and had a desire to pursue Wesley Mission's vision of continuing the work of Jesus Christ through both Word and deed. "Congregations actually need community service as part of their commitment to serve God," Mr Anderson said. "And community services need congregations."

The service was also a time to welcome another new **Wesley Community Services Board** member, Bernard Boerma.

"Loneliness creates many of the societal challenges in our

community, such as the increase of fear, the reality of **homelessness**, and an increasing incidence of mental health issues," said Mr Garner in his address on John 14.

"We are called as a community at Wesley Mission to live alongside those who are facing the future with no real confidence. Seeking to embrace the future with no conscious sense of being able to influence its outcome. Endeavouring to handle life's challenges without adequate support and resources.

"We must work through faith in the living Lord Jesus Christ to alleviate suffering, to offer compassionate care and to bring hope to people's lives."

Deputy Chair of Wesley Community Services, Meredith Scott, and Wesley Mission's Chief Financial Officer, David Cannings, both shared in the service. Prayers of intercession and the Lord's Prayer were led by other senior staff.

Staff and members of our congregations joined together to lead worship. The Wesley Samoan Congregation choir gave an inspirational musical performance of Victory Belongs to Jesus. A talented violinist from our Wesley Mission Chinese congregation closed the service by playing the Hallelujah chorus, accompanied by a video performance of the piece by the London Symphony Orchestra. ■

NEW

Certificate IV Chaplaincy & Pastoral Care (CHC42315)

Provide ethical, moral and spiritual support in areas such as aged care, community outreach and local churches.

Date: from September **Location:** 220 Pitt Street, Sydney

Price: \$4,000

Contact Wesley Vocational Institute on 1800 676 039 or email training@wesleymission.org.au

RTO Code 90091



1 in 3 young people are homeless within 12 months of leaving foster care.

Your donation will help provide crisis accommodation for young people who are homeless after leaving care and the support they need to break the cycle and build a better future.

Please donate today
wesleymission.org.au/donate
or 1800 021 821

Do all the good you can
because every life matters