

wesley impact

Easter 2016

In God's corner

Mitch's bout against ice

A new life from the shadow of trauma

Overcoming the struggles
of alcohol addiction

Generations baked with love

A family's joy in selflessly
helping those in need



wesley Easter 2016 Impact!

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**“But if Christ is in you, then even though your body
is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives
life because of righteousness.”**

◀ **Romans 8:10**



“In his great mercy
he has given us a
new birth into a
living hope...”
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“God surprises us...by
breathing hope into
what we thought were
fruitless situations...”

When Jesus Christ was crucified on Good Friday even his closest friends believed that was the end of his story.

Those who went to his tomb on Easter Sunday found it empty. Their immediate thought was that someone had stolen his body. Hope was almost lost as his downhearted followers were overwhelmed with grief.

Then came Sunday and the promises made by Jesus Christ made sense as he appeared to his friends. It is reassuring to know that the hope of Easter comes in the midst of people whose lives had been shattered and who were not expecting anything. Every day of the year Wesley Mission cares for people who have been overwhelmed to the point where they do not expect anything at all because hope has been lost. Many feel unworthy of kindness.

Yet God surprises us even in the most routine parts of life by breathing fresh hope into what we thought were fruitless situations. We can respond and take hold of this opportunity if we open our hearts and minds to his possibilities.

In this edition of **Wesley Impact!** magazine you will read stories of people doing remarkable and surprising things—from a volunteer whose life and selfless giving is a model for us to follow to a young man who found faith and new hope during his battle with drug addiction.

At the heart of Easter is a person who might even go unnoticed. This person—Jesus Christ—healed the sick, brought good news to the poor and loved those who were rejected by so many.

As Jesus considered his destiny at the cross, he told his followers that there was no greater love than to lay down your life for one's friends. That is the nature of the love that took him to the cross and still endures today. This can be seen in the ministry and work of Wesley Mission and those to whom we offer fresh hope.

May you and those you love reach out and grasp the hope and love of the Risen Lord this Easter.

Rev Keith V Garner, AM
Superintendent/CEO
Wesley Mission

**For more visit
Rev Dr Keith
Garner's blog**





In God's corner

The no-frills boxing gym in Sydney's south is a haven for the purist. The worn in ring, the smell of sweat and the thud of leather creates an ambience that is purely pugilist.

The owner, operator and trainer of the gym, has a heart for both boxing and people. He sees value in every drop of perspiration that his pupils exude. It is a place where folk of all ages come to train, learn new skills and test their abilities. Here, lives are both changed and sustained.

At his trainer's direction, 23 year-old Mitch strides into the ring. He shuffles and keeps his guard up, ready for the blows from his opponent. Mitch trains four times a week with his eye on the prize—his first competition bout in three months' time. It has been a hard slog for the kid with the intense eyes and dancing feet. The coming bout is the result of not only his relentless training but a preparedness to fight a bigger personal battle—addiction.

It has been more than 280 days since Mitch used cannabis or ice. It is a new beginning following a decade of dependence which took him to the depths of psychosis and violence. It is an achievement as great as any title fight that has left him wondering how he ever survived.

Many troubled young people like Mitch have been mentored at this gym. The trainer is a survivor of domestic violence himself and as such, he can empathise with what many of the young people are up against. "In the ring they gain confidence to overcome massive challenges in their lives," he said. "I see Mitch as David up against a Goliath. It's not necessarily about going up against an actual opponent but looking what scares him in the eye and wrestling it to the ground."

When Mitch was in primary school he was lonely and coming to terms with his parents' divorce and his mother's excessive drinking. Mitch had to contend with bullying at school and the verbal abuse of his mother's boyfriends. He longed to connect with the other young people but began to distance himself. "I always had this growing feeling of dread," he said. "And I was really uncomfortable around people."

To ease the anxiety, he became a daily cannabis user at just 15 years

old. Mitch would smoke a cone in the bushland across from his high school and then head in for roll call. Once that was done he would go home to be by himself. He said the drug was his constant companion and he carried a bong in his school bag for whenever he wanted to light up. "Cannabis calmed me down," he said. "I experimented with other drugs: MDMA, ecstasy, acid and speed. But they didn't do much for me."

Then on the verge of adulthood Mitch headed into much darker territory. What began as light banter with a friend, ended in crippling dependence. "We were joking about ice and I said I wanted to try it," he said. "My friend wasn't keen but I was determined, I don't know why."

Ice, the crystalline form of the stimulant drug methyl amphetamine, is more addictive the purer it is. A 2013 Australian Crime Commission Report on the illicit drug market in Australia reported significant increase in the importation and use of the drug after 2010.

Mitch's introduction to ice began in an auto shop which was also home to a known dealer. Mitch and his friend found the dealer sitting in the shop, toying with a handgun. When he heard what they wanted he asked if they had tried it before. "No," Mitch answered. The dealer shook his head and laughed, "Oh boy."

Mitch bought and tried half a gram then and there.

"When I first used ice, it calmed me down like no other drug," he said. "It also helped me feel connected with those around me."

But whatever calmness he first felt, was quickly replaced by a storm of aggression and paranoia as he became addicted, using up to one gram every day for almost three years. He regularly experienced psychosis, seeing apparitions of himself staring into his own eyes.

Like many users, Mitch said ice could make him extremely aggressive. "You really think people want to attack

you, so you start attacking them first," he said.

Mitch had stewed for years over how his stepmother had ill-treated his dad. "In the blink of an eye one day I decided to kill her and I grabbed the meat cleaver. It was the ice that made me really aggressive really quickly," he said. His dad managed to detain him in the house long enough for the police to arrive, preventing him from acting on the feeling.

Mitch was naturally thin, he had become even thinner because of the drug, and it still took several police to restrain him. "One policeman was holding a gun to my head, just because they weren't sure what I would do," he said. "Addicts are very unpredictable."

Even after this swirl of violence Mitch said he continued to use ice. "On ice, you can be willing to kill someone but it doesn't strike you that there's a problem," he said.

While in the midst of the addiction, he remembers trying to limit his behaviour, willing himself not to steal or hurt people. Despite the many contradictions and paradoxes in his

life, the Christian faith was always present—even as a moral compass in the midst of despair. It was a glimmer of hope.

In time, Mitch grew tired of looking at his incredibly gaunt self in the mirror and decided to try rehab. His initial attempt was unsuccessful but his family stood by him and encouraged him to try again—this time at **Wesley Hospital Kogarah**.

The day before the program began, he walked into Gymea Peoples' Church on a quiet suburban street. It was empty and he sat and prayed for almost an hour. "I sat and asked God to give me strength," he said. Mitch was determined to beat the addiction and throughout the rehabilitation he prayed for courage and resolve.

One of the health professionals who worked with Mitch was Dr Matthew Davies, consultant psychiatrist, **Wesley Hospital Kogarah**. Dr Davies said Mitch was diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and a phobia of people.

"Mitch had a propensity to anger before using ice," he said. "On ice

he could be homicidal."

Mitch's treatment started with a detox of the drug from his system and then Dr Davies worked to stabilise Mitch's mood. The psychiatrist said this was the young man's biggest challenge.

"Mitch's relationship with his parents could be a trigger for extreme behaviour but while in rehabilitation he worked on his connection with them," he said. "I'm really impressed by how far he has come."

Mitch said a key benefit of the program was the group sessions with a therapist that taught him skills and ways of thinking that he still finds very useful.

"We looked at Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) and how to challenge unhelpful thinking styles and negative thoughts," he said.

Mitch also learned mindfulness, the practice of staying focused and in the moment during difficult situations. He said this was particularly helpful as he experienced the normal stresses of life without drugs propping him up.



“ We need to go out into the world with love ”

"Addiction once made me think that drugs were a way to live, now I look back and see the insanity of those grim automatic thoughts," he said.

At first, Mitch found group work at the hospital difficult because he was anxious about meeting new people. However, the hospital's therapists and nurses put him at ease with their regular encouragement.

As the hold of ice eased, he began to feel a new sense of joy. "When you are

addicted nothing else gives you joy," he said. "And when you are without it and suffering the come down, you'd be happy to die. But I'm really feeling the joy now without needing to use anything."

Mitch is now part of the day patients program at the hospital, coming once a week for a day of group therapy and seminars. He meets with Dr Davies once a month and with a hospital psychologist much more frequently as he continues to resolve the deep-seated issues in his life.

When he arrived at the hospital Mitch could not even lift his arms above his head without feeling dizzy. Now he radiates physical agility and power.

Before Christmas last year he won the gym's Rookie of the Year award and accepted it to the cheers of his boxing peers. It was clear to everyone how far he had come. It was a great motivation to keep training for his first competition fight.

Mitch said his life now revolves around

training at the gym and studying for his Certificate III in Fitness. "I'm thinking about becoming a professional boxer and maybe one day I'll run my own boxing gym," he said.

Mitch continues to pray and give thanks to God for helping him through rehabilitation. Currently he is not part of a church but prayer is ever present.

Before each bout their trainer leads the boxers in prayer and they give thanks after their fights. It is in the confines of the ring that young people battle not only other boxers but their inner issues rising to the challenge to find a much-needed balance between physical fitness, emotional and mental stability, an attachment to those they love, and a spiritual way forward.

As their trainer stands leaning against the ropes, he reflects on what it means to live in a very difficult world. "Carrying anger around is not going to help us," he said. "We need to go out into the world with love."



To find out more about how Wesley Mission can help with drug addiction visit wesleymission.org.au phone 1300 924 522 or email hospital@wesleymission.org.au

A new life from the shadow of trauma

The first thing you notice about sixty-one year old Tina Penny is her cheeky smile. Broad, bright and usually accompanied by a deep belly laugh, it is hard to reconcile this smile with the dark story she shares of her struggle with alcohol addiction and childhood trauma.



Tina overcame adversity

To find out more about how Wesley Mission can help with drug addiction visit wesleymission.org.au phone 1300 924 522 or email hospital@wesleymission.org.au

Tina was in her thirties when she went from being a social drinker to downing two bottles of wine a day, but the trigger for her addiction occurred much earlier in her life. As a child, a casual family acquaintance sexually abused Tina over a number of weeks. She did everything she could to block out the memories, but the trauma left shadows in her mind that sent her spiralling out of control in adult life.

After she married her husband Norm and had children, sex became uncomfortable and disconcerting because it gave her flashbacks of the abuse and she started using alcohol to cope. "I would start drinking at 5 to ready myself, by 8.30 I'd be slurring my words and by 9 I'd be literally stumbling off to bed," she said.

"Norm knew the problem I was having and has always been very understanding and supportive. In those days it was very difficult to find any sort of help."

Tina's story is not an uncommon one—different changes in life can trigger past traumas and it is then that many people seek solace in alcohol or drugs.

Mark Stevens, who is addictions recovery program coordinator at **Wesley Hospital Ashfield**, said the majority of trauma leading to addictions starts in childhood. "Childhood trauma and hereditary predispositions to addiction often requires a further traumatic event to turn into substance abuse," he said. "The trauma creates stress and then people seek something to contain that pain and stress."

There are two general types of responses by children to trauma: children who 'act in' and children who 'act out'. Mark said children who act in internalise dysfunction and tend to develop depressive disorders as they grow up. "Kids that are shy because of this may be attracted to drugs or alcohol because it helps them find their voice and lose their fears," he said. "Kids who act out the dysfunction often become bullies and are prone to violence later in life. They

sometimes seek drugs like heroin in an effort to slow themselves down."

As her three children became young adults, Tina remembers becoming argumentative with them as she became progressively drunk during the evening. She said they would leave the house at 5 pm and only come back when she was asleep. "I really wasn't a nice person at night," she said.

As bad as Tina's drinking became she didn't recognise it as a problem until she was in her mid-40s. She sought counsel from a psychologist for 10 years but the sessions did not help her resolve her trauma or drinking. It was only as Tina neared her 60s that a crisis brought the full nature of her problem home to her.

One Friday night, Tina was sitting with a glass of wine when she received an urgent call: her sister Karin had been rushed to hospital with a suspected heart attack. Tina had a few more drinks to ready herself to visit her sister but she was stopped in her tracks when Karin's husband called back and asked her not to come, knowing she would be drunk.

"I realised if she had died from a heart attack in hospital, I would never have seen her again because I was too drunk," Tina said.

On the following Monday, Tina went to her GP to ask about rehab and eventually booked into the rehabilitation program at Wesley Hospital Kogarah. She was terrified of going into the program but her husband Norm went with her on the first day, supporting her as he had always done.

During the program, Tina worked with therapists to understand and resolve the issues at the heart of her drinking. She learnt that she had Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) because of the abuse and **Wesley Hospital Kogarah** clinical psychologist, Dr John Kearney, helped her understand the complexity of PTSD and its ongoing effects on her daily life.

Tina found Dr Kearney's Trauma Focussed Cognitive Behaviour

Therapy helpful in processing her painful traumatic memories. "As a consequence of this intense work, Tina was able to have a better perspective about her past," he said. "She came to realise that her life had not been ruined and that there was in fact much to live for."

During her seven week's treatment, Tina's family would visit and take her on drives and picnics. It encouraged her and gave her hope as she confronted her problems. Encouragement from hospital staff was also crucial to her recovery. "Everyone was so supportive, understanding and caring," she said.

Mark Stevens said this connection is very much the launch pad for people as they rebuild their lives; often facing tough questions physically, emotionally and spiritually.

"This is where I see people come back to life," he said. "People re-enter their lives—that's the resurrection you see." There is no denying that in many rehab programs, as well as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), the sense of having the guidance of a higher power is a critical component.

"When people understand that there is something greater than them, it keeps them humble," Mark said. "They start to soften and accept they don't have to control everything. It's a huge relief for them."

"The story of Christ is an archetypal story for all men and women. Just as Christ surrendered himself to the cross, for all of us including people with an addiction, there is a surrendering to allow a transformation to take place."

Tina is excited about becoming an imminent grandmother. She also knows how far she has progressed when her son and daughter-in-law presented her with a bassinet and cot so that she could look after their baby.

"There are so many positives in my life since I stopped drinking," she said. "Their gift was an inspiring sign of trust."

Generations baked with love



Robyn and Michelle

Robyn Jeney's kitchen seems to be almost permanently veiled in a soft white mist of baking flour, and the calendar on her fridge is a collage of tasty stains—a thumb print of icing here, a splotch of cake batter there—with not an inch of blank space. Every day is written over with details of a church, school or community activity that Robyn and her daughter, Michelle, are volunteering their time to organise or contribute to in some way. And it almost always involves baking!

Robyn is a mother, a grandmother and a life-long volunteer who is genuinely driven and energised by the joy she feels from helping people. "I don't want to rust out; I want to wear out doing good for others," she said. "People don't realise what a privilege it is to volunteer—your own problems don't seem as big, don't seem as overwhelming when you see what others are going through."

For the past three years, Wesley Mission has been blessed to benefit from Robyn's time and skills, and not just in the baking department. As a volunteer, Robyn provides invaluable support, drawing on 26 years of experience as a school administrator and a lifetime commitment to

volunteering and doing all she can to help and care for others. "You miss out on so much if you don't give," she said. "This is what Jesus teaches: it is about doing what you can for others and looking to their needs."

"I'm not the most adventurous person in the world but sometimes you just have to give it a go. This is what I say to people who are my age and say they are bored, they haven't got anything to do. 'Why don't you volunteer?' I say, 'Just give it a go.'"

Robyn began volunteering when she was just 15 years old, playing the 120 bass piano accordion on the street outside the local pub to support her church's outreach services. Since then, she has built up an extensive volunteer portfolio that includes fundraising for church activities, running a café through her church, and teaching Sunday School. "For me, this is what living the Christian faith is about; it is a natural part of your life—helping and loving others," she said.

Robyn and Michelle enjoy a partnership of deep trust and true love that expands well beyond the kitchen. "What we do, we do together," says Robyn. They are both legal guardians for Mia, Michelle's 10 year-old daughter

who has been diagnosed with autism. Robyn says the relationship works because Michelle and she are on the same page. She aptly describes it as a team effort in the "seamless flow in the care that Mia receives".

This mother and daughter pair share a very strong and special bond. They spend a lot of time together, from shopping or going on outings to, of course, doing volunteer and church work together.

Like treasured family recipes, the joy of volunteering and giving time to help others has been passed down via generations of women in Robyn's family and can be traced back at least to Robyn's grandmother, who was the organist for many years at the Methodist Church she attended on the Central Coast. Robyn's mother, Eve, continued the tradition of volunteering. She wrote birthday cards for every member in the church they attended for more than 10 years.

"My mother is at her very core, a giver," Robyn said. "She is the kind of person who you will give a birthday present to and the next thing you know she has given it to someone else because 'they need it more than I do'. Eve has led a life of servanthood, and at 91 and after

"I don't want to rust out; I want to wear out doing good for others. "

having three bouts of cancer, she is still fiercely independent, living on her own and remaining actively involved in her church. She even runs a weekly prayer meeting in her home.

It is no wonder the desire to do good runs so deep in Robyn, and no surprise that she has passed it on to Michelle who, until recently, also volunteered at Wesley Mission. When she is not volunteering, Michelle works at a local hospital and for her church.

For Robyn and Michelle, volunteering not only allows them to contribute and help others, but to spend time

together doing something they both love. They have been actively involved in volunteering at their church and visiting a nursing home monthly for 10 years where they play, sing and provide afternoon tea for the residents. The pair has also fundraised for youth projects at their church and Michelle has attended various mission trips helping disadvantaged people overseas.

For almost four years, Michelle has been volunteering at a local kids' club for disadvantaged children and over the past year Robyn has also started helping out, earning the name 'Gran Red' from the children because of her distinctive red hair. They play games with the children and provide food, do Bible study, sing and provide the children with the opportunity to access support.

It is obvious how much Michelle loves and cares for the children, "The kids need to trust somebody and they trust [Michelle] completely," Robyn says. "She understands them and because she has a daughter with autism, she has patience with those with special needs."

Wesley Mission is blessed to have thousands of people, just like Robyn, who are dedicated to helping people in need through volunteering—and who chose Wesley Mission as the way to

do that. If, like Robyn, you would like to join in serving Jesus Christ and in Wesley Mission's concern for those in the wider community who are in need of compassionate care inspired by the gospel, contact the volunteering team in Community Engagement: communityengagement@wesleymission.org.au

Last November, Robyn Jeney was honoured in Wesley Mission's inaugural Making A Difference Awards.

The awards, which attracted countless nominations across seven categories, give us the opportunity to recognise the invaluable support of our 3,500 dedicated volunteers.

"We recognise and appreciate each and every one of our volunteers, but these awards allow Wesley Mission staff to nominate individuals that have gone above and beyond in their roles," said Wesley Mission Superintendent the Rev Dr Keith Garner.

The hope that sets us free

with Rev Keith V Garner, AM



1 Peter 1:3

“In his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

Once again we prepare ourselves for the unique and enormously important season of Easter. It should not surprise us that we return to some of the central words of our faith—and there is none bigger than the notion of ‘hope’.

It has been argued that there are four basic ingredients of Christian discipleship—worship, faith, obedience and hope.¹ When John Stott made this case, he did so in the context of responding to the word of God. All four basic ingredients would be irrational without an objective basis in God’s revelation. For me, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is that which makes sense not only of the ministry of Jesus Christ, but also our own personal discipleship.

The resurrection of Jesus gives us insight into God’s ultimate triumph. It is in direct contrast to the hopelessness that is often to be discerned in the world around us. In the early part of

the twentieth century, Bertrand Russell, when still a young man of only 30, expressed his conviction that “no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling, can preserve an individual life beyond the grave ... the whole temple of man’s achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins.”²

This hope which we encounter in Christ is what gives me as a pastor the confidence to reach out to those who are grieving. It gives me as an evangelist a message which can breathe new purpose into lives that are set on a journey in search of God. It gives me as a Christian engaged in social welfare a vision that takes me beyond mere ideas and thought patterns into a conviction that this world can actually be transformed into something refreshingly new.

The hope of Christ opens up the possibility of new life

Our forthcoming Easter Mission will focus on the new life which Christ brings to us. This is the message that the author touches upon in the early section of this epistle and suggests

that this is the basis for our praising God and a new birth which makes all things possible.³

During his earthly ministry, Jesus was well aware that the disciples were dependent upon him. Without him they were often faithless, fearful and foolish. It is what gives context to those words of Jesus, “O you of little faith.” After the events of the cross, there would be a sense of utter futility had it not been for the fact that the risen Lord came alongside the disciples and opened up for them the possibility of a new beginning.

The humanist, Walter Lippman, made this perceptive comment after the Second World War, “We ourselves were so sure that at long last a generation had arisen, keen and eager to put this disorderly earth to right ... we meant so well, we tried so hard, and look what we have made of it ... what is required is a new kind of person.”⁴

In the past year, we have lived through the huge difficulties of trying to understand a world that is marred by human selfishness and torn apart by the evil that such self-centredness breeds.

God offers us in Jesus Christ a

freedom from all that would spoil life. This has two aspects to it: the saving power which releases us from the guilt of the past, but also a transforming spirit which has the capacity to change the present.

The hope of Christ sets us free to enjoy God

It was the Apostle Paul who reminded us, “You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness.”⁵

As Christians we are confident about the future and we understand our Christian hope in terms of a sure expectation. Apart from Christ, the fear that we have about death and disillusion is almost universal. I have often heard Woody Allen quoted when he jokingly said in the New Yorker magazine, “It’s not that I’m afraid to die, I just don’t want to be there when it happens.” Once again it was Stott who pointed out that Allen in

a 1977 article talked directly and less flippantly about the futility of life, “The fundamental thing behind all motivation and all activity is the constant struggle against annihilation and against death. It’s absolutely stupefying in its terror, and it renders anyone’s accomplishments meaningless.”⁶

Thankfully the living hope of the New Testament is not merely that of survival, but of a whole new way of looking at life. We can be released from the power of fear and gain a transformation through the redemptive work of God which we know in Christ.

The hope of Christ enables us to confront all fear

Fear has an extraordinary ability to hold a powerful sway over people’s lives. I discover this fear in the lives of many people. Invariably it is expressed in a fear of the future and in those things which cause us great uncertainty.

We cannot of ourselves live the Christian life. It requires the liberating power of the Holy Spirit who sets us free and, in doing so, enables us to handle the impossible, deal with the unthinkable and confront the most

distressing of human experiences. Is there anything more fearful than death? The Apostle called it ‘the last enemy’. In Paul’s great chapter on the resurrection, he explores the link between resurrection and hope and clearly sees our hope as related to that which is eternal. “If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.”⁷

The Christian knows that because of the death and resurrection of Jesus that even when death comes we will never be separated from God’s love. On Martin Luther King’s memorial are these simple words, ‘Rev Martin Luther King, Junior 1929-1968 Free at last, free at last, thank God Almighty, I am free at last.’

Rev Keith V Garner, AM

1. Stott, John R W, *The Contemporary Christian*, IVP, p.176
2. Russell, Bertrand, *A Free Man’s Worship*, Unwin, p.p.10-17
3. Perkins, Pheme, *First and Second Peter*, John Knox Press, p.29
4. Quoted by Billy Graham in *World Aflame*, Doubleday, p.138
5. Romans 8:9-10, NIV
6. Stott, John R W, *The Contemporary Christian*, IVP, p.84
7. 1 Corinthians 15:19, TNIV

Thousands in need touched by Christmas generosity



Thanks to volunteers like the Commonwealth Bank staff, Wesley Mission delivered more than 2,500 hampers of food and toys to struggling families last Christmas.

Thousands of individuals and families in need were helped by Wesley Mission at Christmas 2015.

The church and community responded to Wesley Mission's call for support with more than 2,500 hampers of food and toys delivered across Sydney and the Hunter region.

Many of these were supported by local businesses, corporations, including the Commonwealth Bank, individuals and churches.

"Each day at Wesley Mission we help people who face up to enormous personal challenges: poverty, homelessness, mental illness, loneliness, fear and family breakdown," said the Rev Dr Keith Garner in his Christmas message which was broadcast to millions on television and radio news across Australia.

"These people choose hope and move forward in life. They can teach each of us not only about the

power of redemptive love but how despair can be acknowledged and finally overcome. No matter how bad things get, God's presence means that He will be with us and help us."

People eager to contribute at Christmas dropped off beautifully wrapped gifts and hampers at centres including **Wesley Centre Sydney, Wesley Counselling Services, Wesley Family Services, Wesley Auntie & Uncles** and **Wesley Youth Accommodation Coffs Harbour**.

Fifty eight dedicated Wesley Mission volunteers continued our ever-popular gift wrapping stall at Sydney's Kinokuniya Books and Piccadilly Centre, raising \$17,009 as shoppers flocked to finish their Christmas shopping.

Wesley Mission's Lifeline volunteers were also busy. **Lifeline Sydney & Sutherland** answered around 100 phone calls from people in crisis on Christmas Day.

People phoned counsellors on issues ranging from loneliness and being estranged from family, to dealing with grief and loss experienced during the year to financial stress and its impact on family members at Christmas.

Others phoned about coping with parenting, visiting extended family and difficult relationships. Some are overwhelmed by sickness and chronic pain others discuss anxiety and depression.

Wesley Mission reconnected more than 325 children in foster care with their birth parents on Christmas Day across western Sydney, the Hunter and Central Coast. Rev Keith and Carol Garner welcomed large numbers at the Shepherd's Tucker and Christmas with Friends lunch. Worship services were held at the Wesley Centre, **Wesley Edward Eagar Lodge, Wesley Mission's residential aged care** centres and many other venues across Sydney.

Plight of Coffs homeless opens hearts



Frankie Mayes (left) delivering care bags to the team at Wesley Youth Accommodation Coffs Harbour: (from left) Julee Townsend, Sally Hudson, Lisa Johnson, Allison Fleming and Meena Johnson.

In 2015, Frankie Mayes formed a hamper collection group through Facebook called *Care Bags for Coffs Coast Homeless*, rallying the community to donate anything from toothbrushes to clothes and gifts to be distributed to people who are homeless in the area.

In the days leading up to Christmas last year, Meena Johnson Team Leader **Wesley Youth Accommodation Coffs Harbour**, was waiting on a truck that would deliver gifts, food and clothes for homeless young people in the area. This delivery was a boost to local

young people in need.

"They were facing a rough Christmas with no family around and without anything good to look forward to," Meena said. "We wanted them to have some nice things on Christmas day."

However the truck did not arrive and things were looking bleak until Frankie arrived with 23 care packs she had gathered.

Frankie met one homeless young man who was staying at the centre when delivering the care packs to Wesley Youth Accommodation.

"It really hit home to me the situation young homeless people face daily," she said. "All that young man had were the clothes on his back."

Frankie had also given clothes she had collected to three teenagers at the centre.

"I took the clothes in and now those teenage boys get to wear fresh clothes," she said.

It was an emotional meeting for Frankie and afterwards she made a heartfelt **Facebook video** to talk about that special day.

Downsize your cares not your lifestyle

Enjoy community living with daily social activities, care and comfort. Join people with similar interests and values at a Wesley Mission village:

- Alan Walker Village, Carlingford
- Wesley Taylor Village, Narrabeen
- Frank Vickery Village, Sylvania

For more information or to visit please call (02) 9857 2789 or visit wesleymission.org.au



New program unites elderly, disabled

Residents of Wesley Mission's **Frank Vickery Village** and clients of **Wesley LifeSkills Woolooware** are showing how aged care and disability services can work together to achieve mutual and complimentary outcomes.

Frank Vickery Village is an independent living village located at Sylvania in Sydney's south. Also located in Sydney's south is Wesley LifeSkills Woolooware, a day program for adults aged 18–42 with a disability.

When Frank Vickery Village manager Jodie Hopkins was approached by service coordinator Wesley LifeSkills Woolooware, Michelle Rogers, with an idea for clients and residents of both centres to socialise together and do projects, they both knew it was the start of something good.

The idea was to enhance the lives of each client and resident through socialising, working on projects, forming friendships and sharing

experiences. Out of these social gatherings there was only ever going to be positive outcomes for everyone involved: having more fun, helping others, and the clients and residents feeling positive about themselves and their new found friendships.

The social events have been held at the two centres and have been supported by staff, with more gatherings planned.

Activities are planned around the seasons. The spring gardening project involved selecting and planting the seeds, watering, harvesting and then eating the crop; and the summer project included creating murals, calendars and birthday cards to be displayed at Frank Vickery Village.

The gatherings will continue in 2016 with some great events already planned including an Art Exhibition and morning tea on Wednesday 30 March at Frank Vickery Village.



Residents of Wesley Mission's Frank Vickery Village and clients of Wesley LifeSkills Woolooware unite to have fun and share experiences.

Village life snags Japanese students

Japanese nursing students are regularly visiting Australia and making **Wesley Mission's Alan Walker Village** a priority place of learning.

Nursing practices in retirement villages in Japan are very different to those in Australia. In Japan, only the most prestigious families can afford to live in retirement villages. The students are always amazed at the diversity of village residents and the professional support and care they are given.

Apart from seeing aged care nursing practice first-hand,

students also enjoyed the lighter side of village life. Students were pitted against residents in indoor bowls, croquet, snooker and table tennis. The Japanese were novices in croquet and indoor bowls and the residents always had the edge.

The students also performed a song and dance much to the delight and enjoyment of the residents. Afterwards, Alan Walker Village residents shared with the students another typical Australian tradition—a barbecue. Snags and sauce and not Sashimi were on the menu.



Students enjoyed the lighter side of village life including playing table tennis.

Wesley School for Seniors showcase their talent

Students from **Wesley School for Seniors**, situated in the heart of Sydney's CBD, showcased their array of talent at their End of Year Concert held at the Wesley Theatre.

The school offers people over the age of 55 the opportunity to extend their skills and keep active through a variety of leisure, lifestyle and educational courses.

The Rev Keith and Carol Garner attended the sold out event which was a great success. The audience was dazzled by the talent.

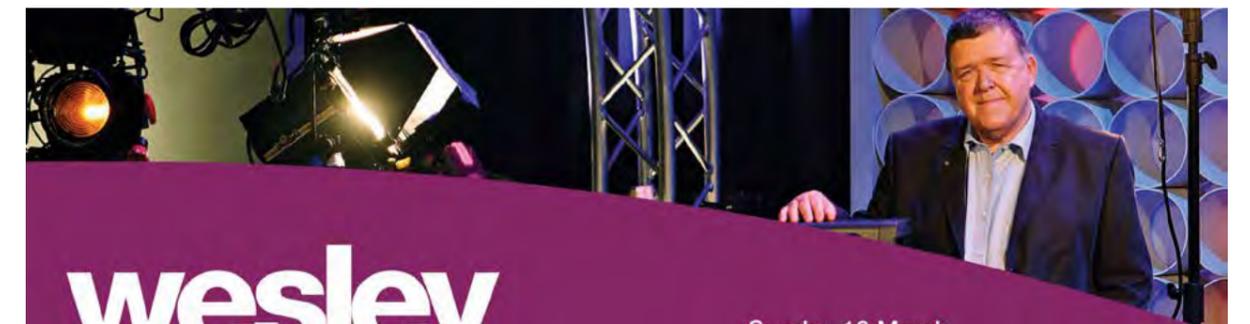
Acts included a performance of

Oliver by Serendipity Singers; Winter Vivaldi by The Music Theory Class; The Evergreens Rumba by Latin & Social Dance; Monologues by Voice & Theatre Acting; What's Bugging You? Effective Speaking & Forum; a guitar rendition of His Hand is Mine; Brooklyn Baladay-Gypsy's Black Peares by American Tribal Style dance and many more.

Performers and guests mingled after the concert as they enjoyed light refreshments. Handcrafted beaded jewellery and Tunisian crochet items were also on display and available for purchase.



Performing the Haole Hula (Hawaiian Hula).



wesley impact! tv

An insightful and inspirational faith-based TV program

Hosted by Rev Keith Garner
Sundays 5.30 am on Channel 9 and 7.30 am on Australian Christian Channel

Visit wesleymission.org.au to view online.

Sunday 13 March

James Mooring is a member of Wesley Mission's 6 pm congregation and works with Studio J to raise funds to help provide clean drinking water for people in Nepal.

Sunday 20 March

Rev Eden Fletcher is a Methodist missionary from the United Kingdom who stopped by Wesley Impact to talk about his upcoming five years missionary work in Vietnam.

Sunday 27 March

A special Easter edition featuring selected songs by Sarah Toth, Debra Byrne, Daniel Kay and Tanya Riches, filmed at the Sydney Opera House.

Special live broadcast

Easter Sunday 27 March 6 am on Channel 9 from the Sydney Opera House. Also simulcast on Sydney's Hope 103.2 and live streamed on wesleymission.org.au

Food challenged students



Wesley Community Engagement Manager, Richard Duncan (back right) pictured here with students from Knox Grammar School who participated in the Wesley Homeless Food Challenge and generated enough food to feed over 30 families in need.

Forty students from Knox Grammar School became the latest group to successfully complete the Wesley Homeless Food Challenge, donating over \$1,500 worth of food to Wesley Connect food and care program.

There are 17,000 children under the age of 12 without a safe place to sleep in Australia. The Wesley Homeless Food Challenge helps teach students about this important community issue while underlining the practical role they can play.

School and community groups who take part in the Wesley Homeless Food Challenge are tested to see if they can feed a family for three days with just \$10.

As well as resourcefulness and encouraging team work, the challenge helps participants understand more about the hardship facing homeless people.

Wesley Connect offers people experiencing homelessness or facing hardships non-perishable food items and personal care items, and helps connect them to other sources of assistance within Wesley Mission and beyond.

This is not Knox Grammar's first though. Their most recent efforts mark the school's ninth year working with Wesley Mission.

"The staff and students of Knox

Grammar are long term supporters of Wesley Mission's work," said Wesley Community Engagement Manager, Richard Duncan.

"Their most recent efforts generated enough food to feed over 30 families through Wesley Connect and resulted in them being finalists in the 2015 annual volunteer awards."

For more information or to find out how you can take part in the Wesley Homeless Food Challenge contact Wesley Mission's **Community Engagement team** (9263-5555) or visit weselymission.org.au for more information on other fundraising opportunities.

Meeting the needs of more than 200,000 Australians

The number of people in need who were helped by Wesley Mission increased to over 233,000 during the last financial year—a 12 per cent growth on the previous year.

Wesley Mission experienced substantial increases in the people assisted through **Wesley Out of Home Care, Wesley Help at Home, Wesley Family Services, and Wesley Suicide Prevention Services**, all of which saw their client base grow by approximately 25 per cent.

"We also performed strongly in a number of areas including implementing Consumer Directed Care—a new model for aged care delivery that allows clients to choose their own packages of services," said Superintendent and CEO the Rev Dr Keith Garner.

"This will set a pattern across all our services as the future of community care takes shape.

"Wesley Mission returned a sustainable annual surplus which will enable us to continue helping more people in need in the future.

"We recognise that to achieve our goals, we need to focus on supporting and developing our staff and volunteers, continuing careful management of our finances, identifying further operational efficiencies and exploring opportunities to grow our income."

Lifeline Sydney & Sutherland answered more than 34,860 crisis calls from people in desperate need.

Gambling continues to be one of Australia's greatest social problems. **Wesley Mission gambling counsellors** helped 636 people and their families through 2,597 counselling sessions during the year, addressing issues such as dependence, addiction and debt.

More than 1,330 people received **Wesley Financial Counselling** and 145 individuals and families received legal support, while the number of families supported through **Wesley Family Centres** grew by 58 per cent to 2,853.

Other highlights included:

- **Wesley Hospital Kogarah**

and **Wesley Hospital Ashfield** experienced a combined total of 881 in-patients and 5,009 day-patient visits during the year

- the number of young people who engaged with **Wesley StreetSmart** program grew from 1,277 to 1,773
- **Wesley Homeless Services** assisted 1,696 homeless people and provided 73,735 nights of accommodation
- **Wesley LifeForce Suicide Prevention Networks** increased from 37 to 57 nationally
- eleven new programs were implemented by **Wesley Disability Services**
- the number of older people who enjoyed social interaction through **Wesley Seniors Social Hub** grew from 161 to 531—a 230 per cent increase
- **Wesley Foster Care** helped organise more than 2,750 visits between foster care children and their birth parents.

Wesley Gift Shop

...because every life matters



\$10

will provide breakfast for two hungry students who would otherwise go without



\$35

will provide a haircut and a shave for an interview for someone 'sleeping rough'



\$80

will provide emergency accommodation for a family in times of need

Give a gift to help someone in need
visit weselymission.org.au



We help where others can't because every life matters

Your donation will help people living with disability to build independence, achieve their goals and lead more fulfilled lives

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

◀ **Do all the good you can** because every life matters