

 **wesley**

Christmas 2016

impact!



wesley Christmas 2016 Impact!

Features

Ministry of care	04
A young mother's journey	08
Life changing program.....	10

Regulars

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

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**“When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of
the Lord had commanded him... And he gave him
the name Jesus.”**

Matthew 1:24-25

Hello

As millions of Australians gather around the dining table to enjoy a meal together this Christmas, many will have a variety of reasons for coming together. Some will speak of getting through another year, others will see it as an opportunity to consider the previous 12 months, some will talk of gifts while others will use it see it as an occasion to put their feet up following the demands of Christmas shopping.

Most people however will talk about being together as a family and to celebrate all that those relationships mean. As we remember the birth of Christ we are reminded that the angel's message to the unassuming shepherds in the field was one of celebration: "I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people." Luke 2:10

The birth of Jesus remains a reason for all people to rejoice. The good news is also personal: "I bring you...". No matter whom we are and what has happened throughout the year God has gifted us the joy of Christmas: the child born in a stable in an uncertain and traumatic time continues to immeasurably change lives and the world in which we live.

In this edition of *Wesley Impact!* you will read of Kathleen, a volunteer with Wesley Mission for more than 50 years. When her family gathers together this Christmas it will be a time of celebration. Kathleen will no doubt play the piano and encourage voices to sing in joyful unison as she has done with hundreds of people down the decades. It will also be an occasion to reflect upon a legacy of Christian love and her commitment to the needs of others which continues today in one of Wesley Mission's aged care facilities and in the care she provides for her husband who is facing the challenges of dementia.

For others like Natalie, this Christmas will be good news. Natalie was diagnosed with bipolar affective disorder in her early 20s and has had a long history of mental health issues. She has been in relationships complicated by domestic violence and illicit drug use. This Christmas will be different. Natalie entered Wesley Mission's Mums and Kids Matter program after giving birth to her baby son. The program has turned her life around: with the help of supportive staff she has learnt new skills and is now living independently.

Natalie is just one of thousands of people that Wesley Mission will support this Christmas and throughout the coming year. May you and those you love and know be drawn to the real celebration of Christmas—Jesus Christ.

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



Rev Keith V Garner, AM
Superintendent/CEO
Wesley Mission



“The birth of
Jesus remains
a reason for
all people
to rejoice.”



Ministry of care

A family's legacy of voluntary service

Kathleen Herring has the kind of warm smile you can't help but mirror, and as she recalls her long history of involvement with Wesley Mission—including more than 50 years of volunteering—she regularly punctuates her story with spontaneous bursts of laughter.

Kathleen's story goes beyond memories of volunteering though; from making a home in an unfamiliar country, to welcoming children and grandchildren into the world. From guiding and marking her family's journeys of faith, to finding her passion and purpose, and searching for comfort, safety and assurance later in life as she cares for her husband, Peter, who is living with dementia.

For Kathleen, Wesley Mission has been a steady and constant presence

throughout these milestones and experiences, which have added up to a life of Christian discipleship, devoted to serving others through what she describes as her caring ministry.

On her first visit to the Wesley Centre in 1959, Kathleen was distracted by two thoughts—whether or not her three-year-old son Nigel was settled in Sunday School and, "I'm the only one here without a hat!"

Kathleen and her husband, Peter, had only arrived in Australia a few days

earlier and most of their belongings were still making their way across the ocean by boat. Peter, who worked as a quantity surveyor for the English firm, George Wimpey Construction, had been transferred to Australia for three years, and when the young family left their home in Birmingham, England for Sydney, they didn't know what to expect.

"Before we left, there were a lot of prayers because we had no idea what we were coming to," Kathleen said. "When I was in junior school we did a short study on Australia and all I could see were these sheep. And that was all I knew about the country."

Kathleen laughs when she recalls, "We had seen a few pictures of little wooden cottages with little white picket fences around them, but when we got here, where we lived had moved on a bit from that".

So that first Sunday, in a whole new country she was yet to explore, Kathleen followed her father's parting advice. "I'm an only child, and when we left England the last thing my dad said to me was, 'the first Sunday you're there, you go and find your Church.' So we got ready for church and we said, 'where will we go?' And we went to Wesley Mission."

From not knowing what to expect, to finding a real sense of community and belonging—Australia made an impression on the couple and when they returned to England at the end of Peter's transfer period, they soon made the decision to come back.

"Peter and I were both thinking it would be better here for the children, and so we said to mum, if you would come with us, we'd like to go back," Kathleen said.

The family permanently migrated to Australia in 1965 and settled in Dundas. Just a year later, when she was 35 years old, Kathleen began volunteering at Wesley Mission's Lottie Stewart Hospital after her mother was invited by women from their church to join the Lottie Stewart Hospital Auxiliary.

"I had the job of taking her to the hospital and picking her up," she said. "And that's how I first became a volunteer, because I thought, 'Well while I'm here, I might as well get involved'."

But while Kathleen is humble about her service it clearly was, and continues to be, motivated by something much deeper. Her calling would see her volunteer at the hospital for more than 34 years. During that time she became president of the Lottie Stewart Hospital Auxiliary—only stepping down in 2000—and was even recognised for her service to the community with an Order of Australia Medal (OAM) in the 2001 Queen's Birthday Honours.

Kathleen exudes a quiet radiance and humility, and it is no surprise she almost didn't mention her OAM at all: "It's an honour but I don't usually tell many people. I'd be in trouble if I didn't tell you though".

Kathleen says she loved the friendship and connection she found through volunteering at the hospital: "You not only got to know the patients, you got to know their families," she said. "What I get out of volunteering is the love of talking to people and being with them and if they get better I think, well, perhaps I helped a little bit there."

For Kathleen, helping people through voluntary service is a powerful expression of her faith in Jesus Christ.

"I see it as part of the ministry. I'm not a person that can get up and talk about my faith, but I call it a caring ministry, because I like to go and talk to people and help them if I can," she said.

Music is another of Kathleen's passions, and one she has also used to serve and help others.

"I've expressed my faith all my life through my music," she said. Kathleen regularly played the piano and led sing-alongs at the hospital, and today she continues to "tickle the ivories" as a volunteer at Wesley Mission's aged care facility, **Wesley Rayward**.

"We have two children, six grandchildren and four great grandchildren and they're all very involved in their churches and music seems to be the tie right through the family," she said. "When I look at their faith journeys, the whole family, it was music that kept them together."

Kathleen's 'caring ministry' has always been a family affair. Peter served on the Board of Lottie Stewart Hospital and Chairman of the Board for five years, and their daughter Pamela grew up helping Kathleen sell lollies and refreshments at the hospital kiosk. The Spring Fair, now known as the **Wesley Fair**, was a major fundraising event and one year, Pamela even appeared as runner up for Miss Spring Fair as a result of their fundraising efforts.

Wesley Mission has played a significant role in the family's faith journey and for their son, Nigel, a particularly memorable one. Kathleen and Peter both worked very closely with the Rev Sir Dr Alan Walker during his time as Wesley Mission Superintendent. Kathleen recalls one particular activity that Dr Walker conducted, which involved travelling around Australia engaging in short missions in different towns. In Sydney, the mission took place in Parramatta and while it only ran for about a week, it holds a special place in Kathleen's memories.

"They held it downstairs in David Jones. Our son first gave his life to Jesus through Alan Walker in the David Jones car park," she recalls.

They all remain a part of the Wesley family today, with Pamela employed as a member of staff and Peter and Kathleen living at [Alan Walker Village](#).

When Peter retired in 1997, he and Kathleen moved into a self-care unit at Warnervale on the Central Coast. They were there for 13 years, but when Peter started developing dementia, Kathleen knew they would need to find somewhere that could cater for higher care needs.

"I'd known Peter had been sick for a long time and that's why we moved back from up the coast," she said. The choice to live at Alan Walker Village, though, was also a personal one driven by the friendship Kathleen and Peter had shared with Alan Walker and the memories of working closely alongside him and his wife.

Kathleen and Peter have been living at Alan Walker Village in Carlingford for

Kathleen and Peter have been living at Alan Walker Village in Carlingford for seven years, and Kathleen has continued to follow her passion for volunteering and serving others...

seven years, and Kathleen has continued to follow her passion for volunteering and serving others while ensuring she is there to care for Peter. She was on the Resident Committee for three years and, until earlier this year, was president of the Social Committee. Recently, Kathleen has had to step down from some of her volunteering responsibilities.

"We've both had to give up some things that we love doing because other things take up the time," she said. But through their faith in God and the strength of their love and devotion to each other, Kathleen and Peter have an outlook on their future that is both hopeful and realistic.

"Peter has always had a sense of humour and he's retained that and it's made things a lot easier," Kathleen said. "But, we do pray about it. We talk, we know he is going to get worse, but we don't keep secrets from one another.

"I don't think we have any fears; we're all going to go to our Saviour at some time, and I think the main thing is we pray that there won't be a lot of suffering. We will overcome anything because we have a loving God."

Kathleen and Peter are still finding ways to serve. When Wesley Rayward opened close by, Kathleen and Peter both began working with the centre's chaplain, the Rev David Van Acker. They both continue to volunteer, with Kathleen playing the piano for the Monday service each week and Peter socialising and providing company to the residents.

As Christmas approaches, Kathleen is looking forward to spending the precious time with family.

"The family, they grow and grow and it becomes harder to all get together but we manage to come together on either Christmas Day or Boxing Day," she said.

"Christmas is a lovely time, and a special time if you're a Christian. I think one of the important things we have done with our children, is that we always told them the Christmas story, the true story. And that has gone on through all the family.

"They are all dedicated Christians for which Peter and I are very blessed to know." ■



"We will overcome anything because we have a loving God."

To find out more about how you can get involved and volunteer with Wesley Mission, visit wesleymission.org.au, [YouTube](#), call (02) 9263 5551 or email volunteering@wesleymission.org.au

A young mother's journey

Hanging on to the little things that matter



“I loved prison. I had so much fun in there.”

It is not a phrase you expect to hear from anyone, let alone a young mother who spent the better part of her pregnancy in prison detoxing from hard drugs.

“I know it sounds weird because you’ve got people telling you what to do and locking you in a cell but I loved it. It was like high school. It was a distraction,” said 25 year-old Natalie Saada in a moment of reflection.

Natalie is now clean from drugs and is working hard to improve her mental health, she is busy creating a safe and secure home for her son, and credits Wesley Mission’s innovative program, **Mums and Kids Matter**, with providing her the opportunity and skills to achieve much of this.

Natalie speaks with a confident energy and when she plays with eight-month-old Toni—her “little man”—she is happy and relaxed. She laughs at the feathery tuft of hair puffing out from only one

side of his head: “What do you have this hair here for? You want to look good for the girls?” He responds with wide-eyed smiles and innocent giggles.

This is a mother who is comfortable in her love for her baby son and all the responsibilities that motherhood entails. It sparks the question: what was happening in her life that made prison a welcome distraction?

Less than a year ago, Natalie was eight months pregnant, trying to kick her dependency on drugs, and

incarcerated for using stolen credit cards to buy food to survive. She accepts her past and when she looks for explanations, she doesn’t make excuses.

“I was always living in a co-dependent situation, whether in my relationship or depending on my family to support me, and they were always very strict and I used to rebel,” she said. “I’ve got no excuse for it. My brothers don’t do drugs and I don’t know why I did that to myself. I went down a really bad path and it was a hole I couldn’t get out of.”

Natalie was living in an environment of domestic violence and stuck in a cycle of addiction that she wanted to escape but didn’t know how.

“I’d been clean and then relapsed four or more times in my life. Because I always wanted to become clean but never found that way to become clean.”

Finding out she had a baby on the way though, changed everything for Natalie: she resolved to beat the addiction and to raise her son in a safe and loving home.

“I was in a really bad situation (before joining the program); I just had nothing to live for.”

“The judge was going to give me a six-month good behaviour bond, but because I couldn’t give him a bail address they put me in prison. I didn’t want to give him (Toni’s father’s) address because it wasn’t secure. I was always walking the streets (when I was there). I was lonely.

“So I went to gaol and I looked at it as, this was my way out from now on.”

When she left gaol, Natalie was determined not to return to her old life because she knew it would lead to losing Toni. During pregnancy, she

moved straight into a rehabilitation clinic where she gave birth to Toni and began looking for programs that accommodated mothers and babies together. Her search led her to Wesley Mission’s Mums and Kids Matter, an early intervention program helping mothers with severe and complex mental health needs to remain with their young children.

“I was in a really bad situation (before joining the program); I just had nothing to live for,” Natalie recalls. “I felt like I was screaming for help but no one was there to help me because I didn’t have the stepping stones to help myself.

“I had no living skills, but Mums and Kids Matter helped me transition into my own home. It was a practice run, because you’ve got this 24-hour support and it made me ready to move out on my own.”

Since it began in 2014, Mums and Kids Matter has cared for and supported 73 mothers and their children and the NSW Government has recently announced that they will continue funding the program for three more years.

During a recent visit to the program, NSW Minister for Mental Health Pru Goward said: “Mums and Kids Matter is a one-of-a kind program directly helping women with severe and complex mental illness and their families. There is no program like it operating in Australia.”

The program focuses on addressing not only health and parenting needs, but also the social, economic and accommodation issues facing mothers with severe mental illness and their families through individually tailored, holistic, family-focused care and support.

For Natalie, the parenting skills and other training courses gave her a confidence that is visible in the comfort and ease with which she interacts with Toni. When he wanders out of reach she is calm.

“I’ve baby proofed this whole place, so he can explore and do his thing and be safe,” she said.

“The program just teaches you to be a better mum. Learning about the behavioural problems children might eventually have and how to deal with them.”

With the stability the program has helped her find, Natalie has also reconnected with her family.

“It took me three years to get them back,” she explains. “I lost my family at one point. They really put their hands up and said, we don’t want anything to do with it.”

A large part of Natalie’s recovery has been re-discovering the joy in the small moments.

“When you get off (drugs) you become so low that nothing interests you anymore and that feeling right there, that boredom, that ugliness, makes you want to relapse,” she said.

With Christmas just around the corner, Natalie is looking forward to spending time with her family and making Toni’s first Christmas a happy one, focusing on all those little moments of happiness, like Toni’s first photo with Santa.

“I want him to be the best he can and I want to be there to help him do that. I’m not going to tell him what to do, I just want him to find his passions and help him with that,” she said, rocking him gently.

“Because he’s my one and only everything, aren’t you? My everything. My ev-ree-thing!” ■

To find out more about how Wesley Mission can help with drug and alcohol dependence or mental health issues, visit wesleymission.org.au, call (02) 9263 5577 or email psychologicalservices@wesleymission.org.au

Life changing program

Helping families take charge

“It’s really tiring being homeless and broke”, said exhausted single mum Rachel as she reflected on a string of challenges that left her without hope for the future.

Rachel’s financial troubles began when she left her full time job in disability services to care for her young son Ryan, who developed several health problems that required constant attention, including damaged eardrums, asthma, high allergies, anxiety disorder, dyslexia and autism.

Even now, Rachel will often stay up through the night to care for Ryan, and they make frequent trips to medical appointments and, sometimes, the hospital.

“I’ve only had the occasional paid job because my life has had to revolve around Ryan’s needs,” she said.

Her relationship with her partner, Steve, had also been troubled, and when he unexpectedly abandoned her—never to be seen again—Rachel was left with a crippling amount of rent to pay, and was unable to find new tenants to share the cost.

Rachel soon felt overwhelmed by ongoing rental requirements, and struggled to pay her bills or even find enough money for essential groceries.

Unfortunately, Rachel’s story is a familiar one. As most Australians sit down for a Christmas Day meal countless families will go without, while others will be focussing on paying off their festive debt. Many families will

struggle in silence only to be overwhelmed with mounting bills in the new year.

Wesley Mission’s **In Charge of My Money** program was developed in 2011 to help vulnerable and disadvantaged people like Rachel, who were identified as ‘high risk’, find the help and support they need to turn things around.

The program was developed after a 2010 Wesley Report revealed that one in three NSW households were spending more than they were earning. Almost 40 per cent were suffering financial stress and many were struggling to prepare a budget or keep to it.

The program—which recently received glowing praise from **Macquarie University** in its independent review—has been delivered to more than 7,000 people, many of whom are financially disadvantaged women, like Rachel, bringing up children on their own and facing multiple challenges including situations of domestic abuse.

Wesley Financial Literacy Program Manager Maisie Warburton said many of these women feel completely powerless.

“They are often caring for children, facing domestic violence, and at risk of becoming homeless,” she said. “This program empowers them with the skills and knowledge they need to change their financial behaviour and gain a little more confidence for the future.”

Without that confidence, Rachel had felt like there was no way out.

“I felt like I was in a pit with no avenues

“Having someone I could rely on really meant a lot—it’s one thing to know people out there in the world, but it’s another to be able to rely on them.”

to be able to move anywhere and I needed someone to talk to, so I Googled **homelessness** and **depression** and Wesley Mission popped up,” she reflected. “I knew they were local to me so I called them.”

As she talked through her situation with her case worker Justine, at **Wesley Family Centre**, Quakers Hill, her options—and her future—became clearer.

“You’re dragging your burdens around with you all the time because every place you go, you have to repeat your story over and over again to get some help. Having someone I could rely on really meant a lot—it’s one thing to know people out there in the world, but it’s another to be able to rely on them,” Rachel said.

Justine accompanied Rachel to meetings with the real estate agent, gave her food vouchers, and even helped Rachel move out of the house she had been renting.

Rachel still had challenges to face. Even though she found somewhere to live, she and Ryan were homeless for five weeks, and lived in emergency accommodation.

At one of the lowest points in her life, Rachel had to seriously consider giving up custody of Ryan because of her financial situation. “It’s not nice to think that I could give up my child, but it just gets really hard and you’re pushed to the limits,” she said.

Despite this, Rachel persevered with applications for new rental properties, and has now been able to secure a house for her and Ryan. With the help of vouchers for utilities and food, Rachel has been able to pay back most of her debt, and has just started a one-year TAFE course, which she hopes will help her obtain a job in social services.

Rachel’s story is not uncommon for other disadvantaged women who have

joined the In Charge of My Money program: independent analysis by Macquarie University revealed that more than half of study participants said the program helped them achieve their financial goals ‘a lot’ or ‘very much’ and 89 per cent indicated that the program helped them in the long-term.

There was also evidence that people retained and understood what they learnt in the program for several months after completing it. A very large and significant improvement was found in both general financial knowledge and personal financial knowledge from before the program to immediately after the program. These gains were still apparent five to seven months later.

In addition, the study showed sustained improvement over several months in saving behaviour, planning behaviour, monitoring of expenses, and other money behaviours like comparing prices or getting the best deal, and not buying things if unable to afford them.

As Rachel and Ryan, who is now 15 years old, continue to settle into their new home and new life, they have started talking about options for his future career. Rachel’s hope is that she can help him become more independent.

“It’s been a real learning curve for me in terms of knowing what Ryan is capable of. He’s opened up more, he’s grown through this, and I’m really proud of him,” she said.

*Names and photo have been changed to protect privacy. ■

To find out more about Wesley Mission can help with dealing with financial stress visit wesleymission.org.au, call (02) 9275 2861 or email financialliteracy@wesleymission.org.au



The forgotten father in the Holy Family

with the Rev Keith V Garner, AM

Matthew 1:18-25

This Advent I have found myself turning my attention to the place of Joseph in the infancy story in Matthew's Gospel. I have some trusted books in my library at home and one publication concerns the great personalities of the Bible. That was to be my first port of call, until I discovered to my dismay that Joseph does not appear there.

When we look at the birth of Jesus, Mary, his mother, understandably and deservedly receives most of the attention, apart from the Child himself. In our Christmas edition of *Wesley Impact!*, we have focused upon children and families, but I want to draw your attention to the significant role of Joseph in the Christmas account. What about this man in the story? Joseph may receive little attention and honour, but we must not miss the blessing of his inspiring role in the early days of Jesus' life.

Prior to Jesus' birth, we are told that Mary and Joseph were pledged to be married. They were already understood to be engaged. This was a binding arrangement and they were legally accepted as husband (v.19) and wife (v.20) "...so that unfaithfulness was considered adultery, and could be dissolved only by death or divorce."¹

I offer to you four thoughts about Joseph's life which I believe have much to say to us:

Joseph knew how to temper justice with mercy

Joseph is described as a righteous man. However, we must not draw the conclusion that this means he can simply "forgive and forget". On hearing the news that Mary is expecting a child, his righteousness leads to a point where he does not want to humiliate her and his plan is to divorce her quietly. "God's work often upsets social expectations and conventions."²

Although it is difficult for us, we need to think about this from Joseph's perspective. He was in a place of shock and dismay. It was a serious problem for both Mary and Joseph. Although he had every right to be angry, he displayed a rare and marvellous quality: he was able to look beyond what was his right and acted with grace.

Joseph demonstrated aspects of obedience

Through the avenue of a dream, Joseph was given insight into how he might act. The words of the angel, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid ..." (v.20) indicate that Joseph is described in ways that link to the earlier genealogy which focuses upon him (v.v.1-16) and suggests that Joseph might have made up his mind, were it not for this experience. "Joseph tried to solve his dilemma in what seemed to him the best way possible. Only then did God intervene with a dream."³

Joseph might have to face shame, misfortune and disgrace but nevertheless he acted quickly and unhesitatingly to do what the angel had commanded (v.24).

Joseph was a man of self-discipline and commitment

Joseph gave up his rights as a husband as he returned home in order that he might not only fulfil God's purposes, but also care for this very special Child. The unique nature of God in Jesus Christ, incarnate in the

Child, would be an enormous responsibility for both Mary and Joseph.

Matthew's Gospel notes the pedigree of Jesus but does not deny the special relationship with Joseph. "Matthew is, as we have seen, interested not in strict biological descent but in legal standing. Legally Jesus was the son of Joseph, and inherited his pedigree. Biologically, Matthew maintains, he was not. He was born of the virgin Mary through the direct intervention of the Holy Spirit."⁴

Joseph stands at the beginning of Matthew's Gospel as a model of what Matthew hopes all disciples will be – indeed all who are reading the gospel in the earliest days. "Joseph is already facing the 'you-have-heard-that-it-was-said-but-I-say-to-you' tension that will be displayed in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:21-48)."⁵

Throughout Matthew's Gospel there is a prevailing theme which points to the understanding of God's commandments and the new thing that God is doing in Jesus Christ. By the very actions of Joseph in his decision to obey the startling and unexpected command of God, he is already demonstrating what it means to live at the heart of the law and not its letter. This could be considered to be living in the new and higher righteousness of the kingdom of God (Matthew 5:20).

As a father, Joseph helped to shape Jesus' life

The biblical account does not end with the birth of Jesus, for Matthew's Gospel makes it plain that Joseph went on to play his part in protecting the Christ Child (Matthew 2:14-23).

There is no doubt that the influence of a father is critical, when he is on hand to exercise that responsibility. I am always deeply moved to consider the part that Joseph played in the upbringing of Jesus and that he became known as "the carpenter's son". I can only assume that Joseph taught Jesus to be a carpenter like himself, as any loving

father would. I have never found a bad word said about Joseph, although frequently he has been ignored.

I have travelled to the Holy Land a number of times and visited Nazareth which, at the time of Mary and Joseph, was a small community of only a few hundred people. Today it teems with close to a hundred thousand inhabitants. A church is built over the site which some consider to be Joseph's carpentry shop. Little is known of pre-Christian Nazareth but the focal point of the Church of the Annunciation, situated in the city's oldest bustling market quarter, will ensure its importance for all time.

At Wesley Mission, we understand the importance of the family and our concentration at Christmas time upon the Holy Family includes the place of Joseph, the earthly father of Jesus. We long for more fathers to play their part in helping to shape the lives of their sons and daughters today.

My final comment about this great man is that he is given the privilege of naming Jesus and did exactly as he was instructed (Matthew 1:21). "He is also given the honour to name Jesus as the new Joshua capable of rescuing his people from their sins. The Joshua of old had been given the task of conquering the Promised Land, but this Joshua is sent to save his people from their sins, making it possible for them to live as the people of the promise."⁶

Rev Keith V Garner, AM

1. Boring, Eugene M, *The Gospel of Matthew*, Abingdon, p.134.
2. Bartlett and Taylor, *Feasting on the Word*, Year A, Vol.1, WJK, p.92.
3. Carson, DA, *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Vol. 8, Zondervan, p.75.
4. Green, Michael, *The Message of Matthew*, IVP, p.61.
5. Boring, Eugene M, *The Gospel of Matthew*, Abingdon, p.136.
6. Hauerwas, Stanley, *Matthew*, SCM, p.36. ■

Annual Report reveals growing demand and vision for the future

Wesley Mission has served and supported a large and growing number of Australians during the past year, its 2016 Annual Report reveals.

Hefty increases in people receiving family, youth, and counselling services stood out in a year in which Wesley Mission met the fresh challenges of the much vaunted National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and Consumer Directed Care (CDC).

Wesley Mission was again at the frontline of serving those in most need.

Wesley Lifeline Sydney & Sutherland answered more than 36,670 calls from people in crisis and provided counsel and support to 905 people and their families struggling with the impact of gambling—a 30 per cent increase on the previous year.

The number of young people supported through **Wesley Youth** services increased by a massive 33 per cent to 1,358. In Newcastle more than 5,260 people accessed the Wesley Oasis Centre.

Wesley Family Centres and **Wesley StreetSmart** youth service served 68 per cent more young people than in 2014–15.

Wesley Homeless Services provided 107,628 nights of accommodation—up more than 30 per cent on the year previous.

In launching the report, Wesley Mission CEO, the Rev Keith Garner, said he was optimistic that Wesley Mission could not only adjust to the



Leading the way... Rev Keith Garner delivers the Annual Report address at the Wesley Centre.

new world of NDIS and CDC, but succeed, flourish and grow.

“Adapting to new business models and new ways of doing things is not always easy but we have shown remarkable flexibility in doing so,” he said. “We are determined to be a constructive partner with our clients as we travel towards greater individual choice in both disability and aged care.”

A total of 829 **Wesley Home Care Packages** were provided to 4,338 people, representing a 23 per cent increase.

Mr Garner pronounced that at the heart of Wesley Mission was its Christian life.

“Wesley Mission is a uniquely shaped church with diverse congregations and around 1,500 people gathering weekly to worship,” he said. “We are the green shoots of hope in the heart of our city, and our many congregations continue to flourish in a changing ministry environment.”

The work of volunteers is priceless, providing more than 13,000 hours of their time during the past year to the care and support of others.

“But volunteers bring much more: from our centres in Newcastle to our Wesley Lifeline counsellors in Sydney and Sutherland, to our **Wesley Aunties & Uncles**

mentors, volunteers bring a passionate commitment in giving tangible hope to others in need,” he said.

Wesley Hospital at Ashfield and Kogarah continued to provide world class professional mental health services and support. Almost 6,000 day patients received 24 hour care—up 16 per cent on the previous year.

“We are also leading the way through our many specialist services, including the treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder, eating disorders and addictions,” he said.

Mr Garner said the Wesley Mission Board approved the 2016–2021 Strategic Plan, setting out a road map for future growth and for this past year.

“We have worked steadily to build the foundations we need to be ready to deliver on our goal; investing in our people, assets, systems and processes,” he said.

“We now also have a much more joined up senior leadership team with transparent management to better plan for, and support, future growth in this new competitive and fast-changing environment.”

Read the **2016 Wesley Mission Annual Report** at wesleymission.org.au. ■

Taree community welcomes Wesley Aunties & Uncles with open arms

After a year of development, **Wesley Aunties & Uncles** has officially expanded into Taree; with four children now linked to mentors in the region, and a further three children identified and in the process of being matched.

The early intervention program matches volunteer ‘aunts and uncles’ with children up to 12 years old, providing mentoring, care and guidance in a stable family environment. Wesley Mission has been operating the program in the Sydney metropolitan area for 42 years and 27 years on the Central Coast. Wesley Dalmar Aunties & Uncles Manager, Michelle Parrish is excited that it will now be available to more children in need.

“Wesley Aunties & Uncles provides so much more than just mentoring. It provides children with genuine loving relationships within which the real healing takes place,” Michelle said.

“We launched the program into the Taree and mid-north coast region on 1 July 2015. And after a year of high activity, recruitment, advertising, presentations to local community

groups and training, we are delighted to announce that we are now matching children from **Wesley Foster Care** to Wesley Aunties & Uncles in this region. Creating this extended family for children in foster care is a vital part of the wraparound support we offer to all children in foster care.”

There is significant demand for the program in this region, with Wesley Foster Care already referring 29 children who are currently in out of home care.

“This is the largest geographical area Wesley Aunties & Uncles works in, so I thought it would take a lot longer to launch a whole new program here, but it has really been embraced by the community,” Michelle said.

After just one small newspaper advertisement calling for people interested in becoming aunts and uncles, the team were inundated with applications: “I’m genuinely impressed by the local community’s incredible enthusiasm for the program and the warmth of their reception,” she said. ■

Volunteers thanked

To celebrate the work of our almost 4000 volunteers, the Rev Keith Garner presented the second annual Volunteer of the Year awards at a special appreciation luncheon and service on 13 November.

The overall award for Volunteer of the Year went to Kaye and Brian Taylor for their work with Wesley Mission’s out of home care on the Central Coast.

From 34 finalists, the category winners were:

Youth: Elisha Curry, for service to Wesley McKenzie Newcastle

Adult: Barbara Allwright, for service to Wesley Aunties & Uncles

Seniors: Kaye and Brian Taylor, for service to out of home care on the Central Coast

Volunteer team: Wesley Aunties & Uncles

Corporate individual: Emily Weight, an employee from the talent agency, WME IMG, who has supported Wesley Mission through its corporate volunteering program.

Corporate team: AbbVie, a biopharmaceutical company that has supported Wesley Mission through its corporate volunteering program. ■

Please join us as we celebrate Christmas

Christmas Day Sunday 25 December 2016

9.30 am

Wesley International Congregation, City Wesley Theatre, 220 Pitt Street, Sydney

10.00 am

Wesley International Congregation, Ryde Ryde Public School, Ryde (parking entrance at Argyle Avenue)

10.30 am

Wesley 10.30 am Congregation with the Rev Dr Keith Garner Wesley Church, 220 Pitt Street, Sydney

Visit

wesleymission.org.au

for details of all events this Christmas.

Young people challenged and encouraged to serve at Wesley Urban Mission

During the September school holidays, 46 high school-aged students joined together for the second annual **Wesley Urban Mission**—a five day event that helps young people deepen their faith and live like Christ as they experience mission in the heart of Sydney.

Under the care and guidance of almost 30 leaders, students were given a unique chance to work together—and alongside community workers—to serve marginalised children, young people, adults and the elderly, and see God at work in a variety of urban mission environments.

At the end of each day, the students came together in reflection and worship to discuss where they had encountered Jesus and how the mission was impacting their lives. Some of the young people, like Daisy Hu, recorded their thoughts.

After an eye-opening first day in Parramatta Park meeting people supported by Wesley Disability Services, Daisy wrote: “Whenever I saw the clients smile, their giggles, I felt warmth deep down in my heart. I didn’t know that my small and insignificant actions could make others so happy. The first day was already challenging and confronting but at the same time it was an encouraging and powerful start.”

During the next four days, Daisy and her new-found camp friends grew closer as they cared for and played with children in out of home care and their families, were challenged to rethink their ideas about ‘disability’, engaged in conversation with older people, and experienced the reality of meeting people who are homeless during a visit to Wesley Edward Eagar Lodge.



Deeply moved by some of her experiences, Daisy reflected on her last day of camp: “I learned so much, from the smallest things like how to start conversations with strangers, to impactful things like how to treat others with respect and dignity despite their differences. I made many new friends that encouraged and inspired me. They had shown me the potential of young people is more than what we think it is ... we can make changes even if it’s the smallest ones. I think I’ve matured a lot and understood how to treat others with dignity and

respect, just how we would like to be treated.”

The Rev Dr Rick Dacey, Senior Minister Wesley Congregational Life said unity in the body of Christ drew young people together in discipleship and outreach.

“Everything we do together—working and playing, worshipping and learning—is intended as a springboard for the ongoing growth of youth in and through their own local church,” he said. “We want to see a passion for whole-of-life, everyday mission ignited among a new generation of disciples.” ■

Young people leaving care benefit from Wesley Fair

One of Australia’s longest running church fundraising events, Wesley Fair, has raised more than \$22,700 for a new Wesley Mission program which is helping young people transition from foster care to independent living.

The recently launched, **Wesley Take Charge of Your Life** program, was the beneficiary of the funds raised at the 103 year-old event held on 3 November. The fair was officially opened by Rev Myung Hwa Park, Moderator NSW Synod of the Uniting Church Australia.

When the doors of the Wesley Centre burst open at 9.30 am, a flood of patrons rushed in to eagerly buy bargains from the extensive range of homemade treats, crafts,

CDs, videos, new and second hand clothes and homewares.

Outside in Pitt Street, fresh flower bouquets, a barbecue of sizzling bacon and eggs, and the spectacle of a high-jumping stilt walker welcomed everyone—from office workers, tourists and shoppers, to the many Wesley Mission supporters who travelled to the city for the fair.

Stephen Burfield, Wesley Mission fundraising manager, paid tribute to the excellent support from event volunteers and corporate partners.

“Our volunteers from Westpac, CBA (Commonwealth Bank of Australia), St George and Suncorp went above and beyond the call of duty—from setting up the stalls the day before the event, to making popcorn

and spinning fairy floss, to helping pack up long after Wesley Fair was finished,” he said.

The fashion hall, a Wesley Fair mainstay, raised more funds than any other stall, attracting fashionistas from far and wide with the promise of a bargain and styling advice from the ‘Westpac ladies’, who volunteer their time each year and are becoming known for their expert fashion tips.

Another major fundraiser was the auction, Wesley Mission CEO, the Rev Keith Garner, reprising his role of auction master and raising a significant \$1,660.

Through the tireless effort of volunteers and staff who bring this event to life each year and under the leadership of the current Chair of the Wesley Fair committee, Carol Garner, the Wesley Fair is continuing a more than century-old tradition and still holding its special place in the life of Wesley Mission. ■

Great Christmas gift ideas



Wesley Gift Shop

Give a gift that matters
Visit wesleymission.org.au to purchase gifts that help people in need. You can send an e-card or receive a print-at-home card to give in person.



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Wesley Impact! TV DVDs

Perspectives on faith and sport

Series 2 looks at the motivations of this unique collection of athletes who share the Christian faith.

Perspectives on faith and entertainment

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To purchase your DVDs, email impacttv@wesleymission.org.au or call us on (02) 9263 5326.

Program continuing to help mums and kids live well



NSW Minister for Mental Health Pru Goward meets with Natalie and son Toni at the Mums and Kids Matter centre.

An innovative Wesley Mission program, helping mothers with severe and complex mental health needs to remain with their young children, will continue its groundbreaking work following the NSW Government's announcement to re-fund it for a further three years.

Minister for Mental Health, Pru Goward, recently met with staff and residents of Wesley Mission's **Mums and Kids Matter** program and announced the NSW Government had committed a further \$9 million to the program.

Since it began in 2014, the program has cared for and supported 73 mothers and their children at the centre in Sydney's south-west.

"A key aspect of Mums and Kids Matter is the focus it has on addressing not only the health and parenting needs of participants, but also the social, economic and accommodation issues facing mothers with severe mental illness and their families. In fact, our early

data shows just how fantastic this program is. When they entered Mums and Kids Matter, 12 per cent of the mothers were homeless and a further 28 per cent were at risk of homelessness. On exit from the program all mothers were housed," Ms Goward said during a visit to the program. "There is no program like it operating in Australia," she said.

Mums and Kids Matter delivers individually tailored, holistic, family-focused care and support to address the mental and physical health, parenting support, accommodation, vocation/education, disability and other co-morbidity needs of the mothers and their young children.

The CEO of Wesley Mission, the Rev Keith Garner, said Wesley Mission was delighted that funding for the program had been continued.

"Mums and Kids Matter has been a wonderful example of collaboration between government and non-government specialist providers

so that mothers with mental health issues have the opportunity to recover while being with their children," Mr Garner said.

"The program is unique in that it provides an integrated approach to treatment and care that includes medical/biological, psychological, social and values based approaches. It also draws from the many support services of Wesley Mission such as accommodation support when leaving the program, financial counselling, life skills and mental health support and counsel.

"The program is preventing hospitalisation, reducing the risk of homelessness, while also providing assistance to improve the social and economic outcomes of mothers and their children."

Mums and Kids Matter is being promoted across the state and is aiming to support more mums and their children from rural and regional NSW. ■

Highest honour in Christian journalism

Wesley Mission's Public Affairs Manager and Editor of *Wesley Impact!* magazine, Graeme Cole, was recently awarded the Australasian Religious Press Association's (ARPA) 2016 Gutenberg Award at the Association's annual awards dinner in Sydney.

Each year, the Gutenberg is awarded to a Christian media organisation or person as the Association's highest honour.

Graeme has won 16 ARPA awards over the past 28 years in a range of categories for writing, editing, headlines and media relations at Wesley Mission and other Christian agencies.

In his citation for the award, ARPA President Peter Bentley said the award

testified to Graeme's "versatility and incredible ability to manage a variety of roles".

"In essence, Graeme exemplifies the best of Christian reporting, grounded in a commitment to justice and truth and founded in personal integrity. At all times, and in difficult times, his personal faith points to the undergirding power and grace provided by God for all those who are called to serve," Mr Bentley said. "Graeme's ministry is not a venture or service for himself, it is a mission to point to the good works that are being done in the name of Jesus Christ."

Wesley Mission CEO, the Rev Keith Garner, said Graeme's journalistic



Graeme Cole and the Gutenberg Award... best of Christian reporting. Photo courtesy John Veage, St George and Sutherland Shire Leader

skills were well recognised within Wesley Mission. "It is, however, pleasing that his peers specifically identify these skills. We are grateful to God for Graeme and all that he does and is," he said. ■



Richard Brading (right) with his award is congratulated by Stan Grant.

Countless Australians struggling with debt and gambling issues are thankful for the expert legal support and counsel provided by Wesley Mission's Richard Brading.

Mr Brading who founded the world's only free legal service for problem gamblers and their families—Wesley Community Legal Service—more than 20 years ago, was recently awarded the Justice Medal from the

Justice medal for pioneer of world-first program

Law and Justice Foundation for his outstanding work in the area, and for driving reform in response to the impact of problem gambling on disadvantaged people.

He was presented with the award by The Hon Sir Anthony Mason AC, KBE, former Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia, and patron of the Foundation at a gala awards event in Sydney. Director of the Law and Justice Foundation of NSW Geoff Mulherin said Mr Brading had "provided advice and representation to hundreds of people, in many cases turning their lives around."

"Richard has also taken gambling operators to task in an effort to reduce the social harm caused by problem gambling," Mr Mulherin said.

Mr Brading is also regarded as an expert in the field of credit and debt recovery. He has also provided

significant input into Wesley Mission submissions to Commonwealth Government enquiries on the reform of the finance and banking sectors and the recent Upper House enquiry into gambling in NSW.

The CEO of Wesley Mission, the Rev Keith Garner said Wesley Mission was delighted by Mr Brading's award and that it was recognition of his work among some of society's most disadvantaged people.

Mr Brading said Wesley Community Legal Service was begun with a vision of creating a unique community legal centre integrated with Wesley Mission's financial and gambling counsellors. "I'm grateful that Wesley Mission gave me the opportunity to make a positive contribution to people affected by financial disadvantage and problem gambling," he said. ■



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