

wesley impact

Winter 2013

God grant me

The changing face of **homelessness**

Bitter past, sweet heart

Read Kelly's story on page 4

Soul food

Making friends with 'rough sleepers'

Chinese Christians

Embracing the Word of God

contents

Features

Bitter past, sweet heart	04
Soul food	08
New Carlingford centre offers seamless support to seniors	14
Celebration and thanksgiving for 50 years of Lifeline	16
Chinese Christians Embracing the Word of God	17

Regulars

Hello	03
Wordwise	12
Wesley Mission News	18
Wesley Mission services	19

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12

“While seeking good we should also hate injustice”

‘... let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!’

Amos 5:24

hello.

In our frenetic and materialistic society it is too easy to forget or ignore the pain and suffering of others. Although we live in a world blemished by selfishness we long for restoration and a world free from poverty, disadvantage and homelessness.

Standing beside people who are disadvantaged or marginalised and giving them a voice amid the powerful and privileged is an act of Christian grace and love. Despite the risk and cost this is the advocacy to which God's people are called.

Each night Wesley Mission cares for 600 adults and children who have no permanent place to call home. Many are escaping domestic violence or abuse and are longing for acceptance and security.

What is encouraging is that the ministries of our staff and congregational members are restoring lives. These are exceedingly encouraging stories.

In this edition of *Wesley Impact!* you will also read of Wesley Mission's initiatives in aged care and our celebrations to honour the 50th anniversary of Lifeline which began here at Wesley Mission during the ministry of the Rev Dr Sir Alan Walker.

Serving and caring for others is a rewarding ministry. Giving a voice to others gives strength, clarity and hope. I am delighted that you can share in such a ministry. The issues we must speak about do change but the challenge of homelessness in our city and across the country is an urgent matter for us all. In this winter edition of *Wesley Impact!* I address the subject of advocacy and I believe it is an important theme for us all at this time, especially with a federal election around the corner.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Keith V Garner". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a long, thin horizontal line that extends to the right.

Rev Dr Keith V Garner
Superintendent/CEO
Wesley Mission



Bitter past, Sweet h



*God grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change,
the courage to change the things I can,
and wisdom to know the difference.*

heart



As a child Kelly remembers drawing a chair up to the kitchen shelf, grabbing a knife and levering the child safety cap off a cough mixture bottle: self-medication helped her sleep and forget the nightmares of life. This was her way of dealing with the trauma of being abused by a family friend. It also set the pattern of behaviour that gave shape to her adult life.

In the years that followed Kelly struggled with unresolved emotional pain and an underlying addiction. It was in the midst of this journey that God reached her.

Some people come to a faith in Jesus Christ through a dramatic conversion experience while others through the teaching of parents and their church community. Others struggle to pick up the pieces of a fractured life, and in the midst of the turmoil God brings new life and hope to a seemingly hopeless situation. That is what Kelly's journey of faith has been like.

"My bedroom became unsafe," Kelly remembers of her childhood ordeal. "But really I didn't feel safe anywhere."

She was unable to find the words to tell her parents, but her pain made itself evident in so many other ways. She began fighting with her mother, her school work suffered, and she was diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). As the abuse continued, she grew to hate the pristine waterside community she was growing up in. At 15 she left home, moving in with her boyfriend and his mum. During drunken rages, her boyfriend's mother would regularly force the pair onto the streets of inner Sydney. This was the way Kelly grew into adult life: living on the streets and using drugs to kill the emotional torment.

Cynicism, not faith, dictated her life but God's voice was never far away.

"I always felt a presence there in my life," she says. "I just didn't understand it was God."

Despite strong attempts to establish a stable life for herself, homelessness has been her overriding experience. Kelly, now 30, lives at Wesley Mission's Community Housing in Sydney's inner west. She has a three year-old son and a newborn baby and is wondering what the future holds.

While she has faced many harrowing experiences in the past, and will probably continue to face challenges in the future, she is grateful that these experiences led to her spiritual awakening. "It was the grace of God that saw me through really hairy situations," Kelly recognises.

At 16, she spent a few days in juvenile detention for theft. Upon release, Kelly was referred to a refuge. This was when she encountered support services.

"It was the first time I was able to talk to people about what I'd faced," she recalls. "It planted the seed about finding a voice and asking for help."

With this new support and confidence, Kelly returned to her hometown, took a job in a little coffee shop and stopped using heavy drugs. She divided her time between her boyfriend's and her parents' houses. For the first time since childhood she enjoyed a safe and stable life. However, the few years of peace and respite were not to last.



Kelly with her Wesley Mission case worker, Liesa Davis (left)

The man who abused her as a child returned to the town and made unwarranted sexual advances. The experience rekindled feelings of vulnerability and Kelly's anger rose to the surface. Everything had been going so well and now everything felt unsafe again. She quickly left town and returned to the streets of Sydney. Alone and homeless, heroin became her constant companion.

"At 25, the drugs caused me to get really sick with pneumonia and septicaemia," she said. "That was when I got really serious about getting off drugs. In rehab, I started to address all these difficult things about my life."

Kelly spent more time in rehabilitation programs than she did using drugs. Finally she found a way to manage her addiction and is now a regular at Narcotics Anonymous.

It was here that Kelly said faith became real, and made a commitment to continue her faith journey.

The Serenity Prayer which is recited at Narcotics Anonymous and Alcoholics Anonymous resonates for Kelly in her daily prayer and meditation:

*God grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change;
courage to change the things I can;
and wisdom to know the difference.*

When Narcotics Anonymous members hold hands a bond of peace embraces them all: this is an experience she cherishes.

"That unity is very important to me," she says.

Like most people, Kelly often struggles to understand why bad things happen to good people. Such a paradox can be perplexing for many people, including Christians. For Kelly it is profound and close to home.

"Dad's business recently went under," she said. "He's a good man who works hard and it's not fair that this happened."

Giving thanks, even in the midst of adversity, is a solid reminder of God's grace and love.

"If you are open to looking around, there are blessings everywhere," Kelly believes. She smiles warmly at the thought. "I have two beautiful children."

"At the moment, I feel like I'm being tested," she said. "At least I have 'quality problems', serious problems worth all my attention to find a solution."

Despite life's valleys and hills, the path Kelly follows is straightforward.

"It helps to keep it simple: God is love and cares about us."

Her practical and uncomplicated trust is a reminder of

The changing face of homelessness

The latest Wesley Report, *Homelessness and the next generation*, was launched earlier this year and its findings challenged many of the assumptions about homeless people.

Wesley Mission Superintendent, the Rev Dr Keith Garner, said the face of homelessness is no longer a single elderly man on a park bench.

"It is a sad fact, that nationally, almost one third of homeless people who receive support are homeless families—and that number is expected to grow in the coming years," he said.

The Wesley Report surveyed and interviewed homeless people being cared for by Wesley Mission. Some of the key findings showed that:

- many families are not safe in their homes and that the experience of homelessness can leave an enduring negative impact on their lives
- domestic violence and family breakdown too often sets families adrift in a strange and unfamiliar world of emergency shelters or life on the streets
- one in five (21.62 per cent) people who seek homelessness support from Wesley Mission identifies domestic violence as the main cause of their homelessness. A further 8.1 per cent claim relationship and family breakdown as the prime cause
- more than 17 per cent of Australia's homeless are now under the age of 12, 27 per cent are under the age of 18, and another 15 per cent are aged 19 to 24 years

another woman's trust: the woman we read of in Luke's Gospel who is in need of physical healing. Encountering Jesus, the woman reaches through a dense crowd of people to touch the hem of Jesus' garment, resolute that even the lightest of touches will restore her broken body (Luke 8:40–48).

Kelly's persistence in exploring her faith is inspiring. It's integral to her life—a life she shares with her son Charlie and her newborn daughter, Ava Adore.

For a long time, Charlie lived either at Kelly's mother's home or his father's residence. Since Kelly now has a safe place to stay in Wesley Mission's Community Housing program, Charlie has been able to stay with her more often.

"Charlie used to ask me where I went while he was staying with my mum," she remembers. "It's very hard for a kid to understand why he can't live with his own mum."

Kelly was over the moon the first time Charlie came to stay with her.

"I told him this was his home too," she said. "He has his own little bed and a little toy box."

Becoming a parent has been a life-changing experience for Kelly, making her more determined to fulfil her dream of one day having her own home with her children. She recalls the first time she held Ava Adore in her arms with Nick Cave's ballad *Into my arms* playing in the background.

"I was in total awe of such beauty," she said. "I never felt love on this scale until I had my children. I love being a mum. It's challenging but there is nothing like it. It brings me such joy."

— Gavin Hanbridge



Ever considered becoming a foster carer?

Wesley Mission is currently on the lookout for some very special people: singles and couples who are keen to provide a safe and caring temporary or permanent home for school-aged children desperately in need of foster care.

If you think this might be you, Wesley Dalmar would love to have a chat. For more information, simply call 1300 325 627 today.

wesleymission.org.au/dalmaroohc



PAGE 58 JULY 13



17% of Australia's homeless are under 12

Help homeless families find safe places to stay.

Donate today wesleymission.org.au/donate

Do all the good you can because every life matters



Doug

Age 47.

Has lived on the streets since 2002. Misses his kids.

Jake

Age 27.

Comes to Martin Place for the sense of community

Terry

Slept by the harbour for years but started sleeping on trains when his bedding was stolen

Alwin

Age 41.
Has been serving food to homeless people in Martin Place for 12 months

Vincent

Age 30.
Lives in Department of Housing accommodation and enjoys the friendship of those gathered in Martin Place

Soul food

Alwin Chong is the owner of a successful Sydney noodle restaurant and is a dab hand at serving up food. As he fills bowl after bowl with steaming broth his hands move deftly, almost gracefully. But tonight he's not serving up at work. Instead, he's standing at the dark end of Sydney's Martin Place amid the gathered hungry, rough sleepers of the CBD. It's unfamiliar territory; something he would never have imagined doing a few years ago. As he hands out meals, connecting with people in the best way he knows how—over food—he ponders what has led him to this point.



Terry and Alwin

“My heart has slowly changed,” he decides. “I always referred to people on the street just as ‘homeless people’ but now I call them brother and sister.”

As well as running his restaurant, Alwin attends Wesley International Congregation (WIC) and leads a group of young adults from the congregation, discipling and encouraging them in their Christian faith.

Back in 2011, Alwin was looking for a way for these young adults to actively practice and develop their faith between the service on Sunday and their regular fellowship on Friday. After he began a Wednesday night prayer group, two members approached him and asked how they could serve the community. For Alwin, it was the opportunity to develop discipleship that he had been looking for.

“I had been waiting for people to take initiative and step up,” he said. “This is true discipleship. Faith without deeds is nothing.”

It was almost Christmas, a popular time for volunteering, and most places already had all the volunteers they needed.

The trio heard that many rough sleepers congregated in Martin Place and so headed there to share their faith. However, they found this a very difficult way to make connections with people on the street.

They noticed that there were a couple of Christian groups providing meals to the homeless and disadvantaged, including a group from St Paul’s Mission, based in south west Sydney. The trio struck up a friendship with them and began to work with this group on a regular basis.

When the two young WIC members serving with Alwin moved on to other projects, Alwin wondered if he should continue to

serve the homeless. He didn’t have to wait long to find out Alwin received an invitation to a wedding banquet, but not any kind of wedding banquet. St Paul’s Mission was inspired by the parable of the wedding banquet in Luke 14:16-24. In the parable, a king is angered when those invited to his wedding banquet ignore his invitations. In response, he asks his servants to ‘bring in the poor and maimed and blind and lame’ to the feast.

So this is what St Paul’s decided to do. They sent three buses to gather homeless people in Sydney’s CBD and an actual wedding reception was created for them. Those who everyday lacked food, human connection, and love would be treated to a sumptuous feast, a celebration, all in their honour.

Alwin was helping out at the event and was welcoming guests off the bus when a homeless elderly Aboriginal woman took him by the hands and warmly told him what the banquet meant to her.

“Thank you, thank you,” she said. “I know Christ because of this banquet.” Alwin was profoundly moved.

“I was speechless. I nearly cried,” he recalls. It sealed his commitment to continue giving to those sleeping on the streets.

Growth

After the banquet, Alwin also discerned an even stronger call to draw young people at the beginning of their careers into ministry with the homeless and marginalised. He thinks young working adults have the greatest potential to engage the community.

“They have the time, money and energy,” he believes.

He sent out the call to the young people at WIC, encouraging them to participate. Now there are six WIC members that help at Martin Place on a regular basis. Young people from another church, Hope Sydney Christian Church, have also responded, regularly coming to serve alongside Alwin’s group.

Alwin envisages that young adults will experience spiritual and personal growth through the ministry. As they begin climbing the corporate ladder, he hopes the experience of seeing poverty and disadvantage will provide a lasting influence.

“If they never see poverty firsthand, how will they understand it?” he reasons.

For Alwin, sharing food has always been a way to bring people together and he has found that providing food to people in need forms a strong basis for friendship and gives him opportunities to share his faith. And the care and support goes both ways: he has learnt much about himself and his relationship with God.

Hardship

“It’s not just about us going out to teach them,” he said. “It’s about them teaching us. God can come from us and from them.”

It’s not always easy; there are no quick fixes for many of these people, and you are not always greeted with a smile. Finding rapport with someone who has experienced hardship and an absence of love is difficult: damaged and hurt people do not always respond well to the kindness of others.

In those moments Alwin thinks of Christ’s words from Luke 6:32-35, “If you love those who love you, what credit is that

to you?" Giving to people who may not show reciprocity is a reality of servanthood.

"I don't mind giving to those who don't give back," Alwin said. "It's what we've been called to do. It's about showing people that we care for them.

"If I see people who are homeless on the streets now, I give them respect. I know that they have been hurt before."

Friends

St Paul's Mission President, Richard Hanna, has been on a similar journey to that of Alwin in reaching out to Sydney's homeless.

Fourteen years ago he and his wife returned from a mission trip in India where they had participated in outreach to homeless people.

"My wife and I came back absolutely inspired and wanted to reach out to people in Sydney," he explains. "We just started walking up and down George Street asking people who were homeless how we could help."

Now St Paul's Mission provides food for over 100 people across the Sydney CBD each week in Woolloomooloo, Wynyard, and Circular Quay as well as Martin Place.

A regular at Martin Place on Wednesday nights for the past four years is Ian. He has been homeless 'on and off' for eight years since his 'ex-missus' asked him to move out of her house. Ian started sleeping at Central Station and then in squats, hostels and with friends.

Ian's teeth are in a very bad state so he finds it difficult to eat much of the food that is distributed. However, for him the benefit of the service is the sense of community.

"There are people around here who can help you," he says from experience.

Ian's comments reflect one thing that is very clear among those gathered: it is not just about food, it is about the companionship that brings this dark end of Martin Place to life on even the coldest, rainiest night.

Alwin has made many friends in Martin Place including Victor, a 30 year old who lives with his girlfriend in Department of Housing accommodation in Blacktown.

Victor has been coming to the food service in Martin Place for two years. What he likes the most is the people he meets.

"All these people are my friends," he grins. "I like to get to know new people."

And so the bonds of friendship in Martin Place grow. Alwin is constantly inspired by the number of people reached and the potential to reach more.

"I've been doing it for one year and I continually see a whole lot of different people," he says. He's glad he's in the thick of it, with a team of young people joining him. Alwin is a fast mover and likes to take action once he discerns God's path for him.

"I believe God likes 'yes or no'," he quipped. "He doesn't like lukewarm."

— Gavin Hanbridge

wesley impact tv

Every Sunday at 5.30 am on Channel 9 and 7.30 am on the Australian Christian Channel

The Rev Dr Keith Garner interviews a range of fascinating guests including:

Rachel Anderson: a gift of grace in the face of cancer	18 August
Susie Wallace: foster care and a journey of faith	25 August
Pastor Chris Foley: he lost his son and found forgiveness	15 September



Amos 5:

A call to advocacy—with the Rev Dr Keith V Garner

Wesley Mission has chosen Christian advocacy as a theme for 2013. Advocacy is often defined in terms of a political process in which any individual or group participates to influence public policy and make a difference in the direction of a community.

It is 200 years since Edward Eagar received a conditional pardon and became a leading advocate in the emancipation cause. Wesley Mission has always sought to be at the leading edge of advocacy, but social situations change and, therefore, the issues do too.

The Book of Amos from the first half of the eighth century before Jesus Christ provides valuable insight. Amos was not a poor peasant, but a sheep breeder and an owner of sycamore orchards. He was a prophet who spoke with clarity and with an intense awareness of God's presence; a person of stature, who coined some of the most powerful and enduring words of the whole Bible:

'... let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!'

(Amos 5:24)

Justice is a vital theme for Christians. However, some people feel we should spend most of our time bringing comfort to others, seeking to win souls without any reference to the social systems of the day. This may make religion attractive to some, but we must reach beyond nostalgia and discover the gospel interacting with the brokenness of our society.

The prophets were not afraid to alert their contemporaries about both the present and the future. Every week in our city, thousands of young people are involved in Christian worship, without ever engaging with their communities or the issues

that impact them. We need to awaken a new generation to the 'whole' gospel.

Amos reminded his audience that the times were not good; in fact they were anything but (5:13) ... and he told them:

'Seek good, not evil,
that you may live.

Then the Lord God Almighty will be with you,
just as you say he is.

Hate evil, love good;
maintain justice in the courts.

Perhaps the Lord God Almighty will have mercy
on the remnant of Joseph.' (Amos 5:14-15)

What does it mean for us to be committed to advocacy?

Seek good—the only way to live

Seeking good is the foundation of all meaningful witness and will result in our lives being lifted above self-centredness and captivated by God. Amos was removed from the care of a localised flock to become a prophetic voice. One writer says: 'This implies a sudden seizure by a power not of himself.' Alec Motyer reminded his readers that '... the social climate of the day threatened anyone who voiced an opinion contrary to its unrighteous and self-seeking ethos.'¹

To recognise we have a call to advocacy means there will be times when, like Amos, we have to be brutally frank with our hearers and courageous and dynamic in declaring God's Word. These are exactly the qualities that we see in the ministry of Jesus Christ.



18-27

It was George Caird who contended that 'The only glory which Jesus ever sought for himself or offered to his disciples was to be caught up in God's redemptive purposes.'

Hate evil—but especially injustice

While seeking good we should also hate injustice. Amos identified a remnant, a small faithful group who remained, as they held fast to what they believed to be right. 'Amos addressed an urgent word to a specific situation at a point in time. And yet for all this, his book can be a rich resource for Christian theological and ethical reflection today.'² For Amos, the two specific evils in his own day were the oppression of the poor by the rich and the corruption of the courts.

During my time at Wesley Mission, I have been involved in speaking for the poor of our city but recognise that so many of the poor live outside metropolitan areas. I was very conscious of this when travelling through the Northern Territory, talking with Indigenous leaders and hearing of the challenges and projects being undertaken.

Amos exposed the needs of the poor by addressing the opulence of the elite. He confronted the 'upper crust' women of society ... the Hollywood Housewives of their day. He saw them as pampered, over-fed and self-indulgent. You can imagine the indignation of his audience.

Maintain justice—to enjoy real sustainability

The deepest form of sustainability is focused upon peoples, nations and our world as well as ensuring the best of life from one generation to the next. We must link sustainability and justice. In a developed world, social welfare, education and health concerns are under great pressure. A cry is

rising from among us that we must seek God's healing for the whole of our world. The vision of Amos ends with a concern for the future. This will begin to put real value on life and help us to live with a demonstrable understanding of hope.

Our advocacy is for the long haul. Our immediate response to calamities is often to grab those who are drowning, but we also need to build lifeboats. The adrenaline which flows through the spiritual life of a community of faith is that which brings transformation. Such strategic activity not only seeks to change values, but also, ultimately, systems. Harry Mowley said our justice and righteousness must not be a thing of fits and starts. 'They must be a consistent feature of the nation's life if its corporate and organised worship is to be pleasing to God.'³

We must be hungry for transformation, work together and eagerly pray for three things in particular:-

- for the revival of God's people
- that we are able to share our faith effectively in an increasingly secular culture
- that we are able to advocate for change for those who seemingly have all the odds stacked against them

This is a hard call, but it is one we cannot avoid. We must translate the gospel of Jesus Christ into the essentials of life in modern Australia. To fail to do this will leave us short of the gospel.

1. Hooker, Morna, *Not Ashamed of the Gospel*, Paternoster, p.90.
2. Hall, Douglas J, *The Cross in Our Context*, Fortress Press, p.195.
3. Moltmann, Jurgen, *The Crucified God*, SCM Press.

New Carlingford centre offers seamless support to seniors



The Rev Dr Keith Garner, Carol Garner, Federal Member for Bennelong, John Alexander, NSW Attorney General and Member for Epping, Greg Smith, Elizabeth Orr, Wesley Mission General Manager, Corporate, and NSW Premier, Barry O'Farrell

The new Wesley Rayward residential facility at Carlingford continues to attract new residents following its opening earlier this year.

The \$30 million development is a state-of-the-art facility that provides a seamless transition in care as the needs of residents change over time.

It was officially opened in March by the CEO of Wesley Mission, the Rev Dr Keith Garner, who was joined at the plaque unveiling ceremony by the Premier of New South Wales, Barry O'Farrell, and Hilary Jones, the daughter of the late Rev Dr Frank Rayward. Dr Rayward was the Superintendent of Wesley Mission from 1938 to 1957 and the new centre bears his name.

The centre has 74 boutique rooms, including a 14 room dementia-specific unit and an additional 16 independent living units which are an extension to the existing 204 units at Alan Walker Village.



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Alan Walker Village 1 Dalmar Place, Carlingford alanwalkervillage@wesleymission.org.au

Wesley Mission is a part of the Uniting Church in Australia. PA2412_JAN2013



All rooms offer beautifully appointed, spacious and private, single accommodation. Each room has its own en-suite, emergency call button, hi-lo adjustable bed and plasma television. The facility is fully air conditioned with an interactive communications system via residents' television screens.

The 14-bed dementia unit is designed to provide additional support and dignity to those residents with this need for specialised care. The unit is safe and secure to ensure residents do not come to harm or become lost.

The dementia courtyard includes items which people will find familiar, comfortable and reassuring: unencumbered circular pathways, an immobilised car on blocks, clothes hoist and laundry, raised garden bed and potting shed, and a bus stop and post box.

The indoor area includes a fireplace and hearth and retro style working kitchen, with adjustable bench heights and instead of a computer there's a smart-looking typewriter. It is one of the most significant aged care developments in Sydney's north-west.

"There are numerous residential care facilities within a 20 kilometre radius of Carlingford but Wesley Rayward is unique because it is designed to meet the ageing-in-place needs of our community," Dr Garner said. "The 2010 Intergenerational Report predicts that the proportion of Australians over 65 will grow to more than 20 per cent of the population by 2050.

"The demographic impact of increased lifespan will raise this proportion of the population. Longevity also brings patterns of disease, increasing demand for complex issues associated with dementia, diabetes and other diseases as well as geriatric and palliative care.

"The population needing aged care service will become increasingly diverse and characterised by not only the demands of dealing with a greater incidence of dementia but cultural diversity and a greater number of frail aged couples.

"Wesley Rayward Carlingford is a pro-active response to this evolving and varied social context."

Dr Garner said Wesley Mission had also identified a growing demand for higher quality services. Older people, he said, had expressed a strong desire to preserve their sense of self, to maintain their independence, retain control and exercise choice.

"At Wesley Mission we believe that every life matters and that people should have the opportunity to 'age in place' with the dignity, respect and flexibility that such a journey requires," he said.

— Graeme Cole



Wesley Mission Residential Care & Independent Living Executive Manager, Jodie O'Sullivan, pins a corsage on Wesley Rayward's first resident, Joyce Wiseman



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Celebration and thanksgiving for 50 years of Lifeline



Wesley Mission celebrated the 50th anniversary of Lifeline in March this year, giving thanks for the lives helped and saved through the vital 24-hour telephone crisis counselling service.

Speaking at an anniversary function at Government House, Sydney, Wesley Mission Superintendent the Rev Dr Keith Garner said it was time to offer the work of Lifeline to God again, to bravely face future challenges and to recognise that listening and caring “still constitute the heart of Lifeline.”

“Lifeline grew out of a clear sense of Christian vision,” he said. “It was initiated by a remarkable man (the Rev Dr Sir Alan Walker) and was consistent with the mission principle of reaching out to those on the perimeter of the community.”

The anniversary event, held earlier this year, was hosted by Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir, Governor of New South Wales, and Sir Nicholas Shehadie, and attended by NSW Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Healthy Lifestyles, Minister for Western NSW and State Member for Barwon, Kevin Humphries.

The Minister for Health, Minister for Medical Research and State Member for North Shore, Jillian Skinner, the Chairman of Lifeline Australia, John Brogden, and CEO of Lifeline Australia, Jane Hayden, were also there to mark the occasion.

The 100 guests at the event included Lifeline board members, Wesley Mission board members, volunteers, and supporters, including some who were counsellors when Lifeline began.

The broader Wesley Mission family, including Lifeline volunteers, staff, congregations and supporters, also celebrated the 50th anniversary at a thanksgiving service at Wesley Mission.

The service featured many special guests including the CEO of Lifeline Australia, Jane Hayden, who presented certificates of service to a number of Lifeline volunteers and the chair of Lifeline Australia, John Brogden, who spoke of the challenges facing Lifeline in the future.

Dr Garner said the thanksgiving service was “a wonderful opportunity to thank God for the vision and commitment of the

founders of Lifeline and the ongoing work of volunteers who, each year, reach out to hundreds of thousands of Australians with non-judgmental care and support.”

Lifeline, like so many of the ventures at Wesley Mission, required strong leadership, the genius of innovation and the ability to cast a vision that people themselves could embrace.

“From a desperate call, the tragedy of suicide and a helplessness that was felt by many ... the amazing work of Lifeline was born,” he said.

“Alan Walker had great compassion for the isolated and he believed that through the establishment of Lifeline the mantle of Christianity would cover ‘a lonely crowd of the modern city.’”

In acknowledgement of Wesley Mission’s seminal work in founding Lifeline, Outstanding Community Service Awards were presented to Dr Garner and to founding Lifeline counsellor, Ivan Reichelt, by the Parliamentary Secretary to the NSW Premier, Marie Ficarra MLC, at Parliament House earlier this year.

The award citation for the Superintendent reads: ‘In recognition of outstanding work to the community, particularly through work as an advocate for social justice, in Lifeline and Wesley Mission.’

Outstanding

The NSW Government issues a number of awards for exemplary service to members of the community.

“What lies behind this award are the thousands of people that make up Wesley Mission and the many who volunteer their time and effort to help some of the poorest and most marginalised in our community,” Dr Garner said, upon receiving the award.

Since its beginnings in 1963 Lifeline has been established in 19 countries around the world.

In Australia, Lifeline centres across the country answered 541,450 calls in 2012.

A short book on the history of Lifeline has been produced to commemorate the 50th anniversary. To purchase copies of the book visit wesleymission.org.au or call 1800 021 821.

— Graeme Cole

Chinese Christians Embracing the Word of God



The people of China are keen to hear the Word of God and embrace a ministry of Word and Deed.

That's the opinion of Wesley Mission Superintendent the Rev Dr Keith Garner who travelled to China in April.

After a successful Easter Mission in Sydney, Dr Garner visited the Methodist Church in Hong Kong and then preached at a number of major churches in mainland China. He also spoke at Nanjing Theological Seminary where students and staff were keen to hear about Wesley Mission's ministry of Word and Deed.

"We have been building excellent relationships with the Christian community of Nanjing Province," Dr Garner said.

"The church in China has a great interest in how we are able to exercise practical concern for people in viable and meaningful programs, and our evangelical faith.

"Students at the theological seminary were full of enthusiasm and quick to respond with questions. It was an altogether stimulating experience."

Dr Garner and Carol Garner were encouraged by the progress of the Church of the Apostles in Suzhou.

"It was amazing to see this very traditional church that during the time of the Cultural Revolution was closed and has now re-opened with wonderful Christian growth at the heart of its community," he said.

Dr Garner also preached at Dushu Lake Christian Church: a church which has had an enormous impact on its city.

"It was wonderful to go to a church as large as any cathedral in Australia and packed to the doors with people eager to hear the Word of God and ready to apply their faith to daily life," he said.

"I don't think I've seen a more beautiful church built in my lifetime. Just one year ago, there was nothing on this site and now it is a huge community of faith.

"I never cease to be amazed at what God is doing in China.

"We should all be encouraged by the very close relationships that Wesley Mission has forged between those who belong to this region and our own Chinese congregation. It is a relationship second to none."

Dr Garner said he was grateful to Wei Lin for the arrangements he made for the visit and Edward Lin for his dedicated and important translation work.

Be inspired and enriched

A new book with DVD, by Keith V Garner

Keith V Garner is one of Australia's best known preachers. In his new book, *A word for the world*, Keith covers success, sorrow, society and spirituality, important issues of our day.

A word for the world can be purchased through MediaCom Education for \$19.95 plus p&h

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wesley mission news

01. Families Connect pampers overworked mums

Mums in north western Sydney had a chance to take a well-earned break and be pampered when Wesley Mission's Rouse Hill Families Connect hosted the Mums Matter Celebration Day on 1 May.

There was a kids-free zone with child care provided, a pamper zone with make-up and facials, a drumming circle, and cooking demonstrations. Mini-expo stalls provided information on health and diet.

Wesley Mission's CEO the Rev Dr Keith Garner said many mothers find it difficult to balance the role of 'bread winner' and parent.

"Certainly since the Global Financial Crisis, we continue to receive feedback from mums that their own health and wellbeing are at the bottom of their priority list—after the demands of family and work," he said.

Rouse Hill Families Connect Community Development Worker, Emma Ludlow, said the Mums Matter Celebration Day provided a place for mums to relax.

"The mums were able to kick off their running shoes and feel pampered, nourished, and validated for the role they play in our society raising future leaders and citizens," she said. "Every mum learned at least four reasons why it is important for them to take care of themselves."

02. Appeal pulls heart strings of Novacastrians

Hunter residents responded warmly and enthusiastically to a public call for goods for the region's homeless during an outside broadcast by local radio station KOFM held at Wesley Mission Newcastle.

The station's morning hosts David and Tanya settled into the breakfast broadcast as listeners brought in more than 6,500 pieces of clothing, food and toiletries for the region's homeless.

In the weeks prior to the event they interviewed a number of homeless people who were being assisted by Wesley Mission. The public were moved and what was initially a trickle of goods became a flowing river of goodwill and charity for those in need.

Gaile Hartcher commented on Facebook: "The homeless story has been a real eye opener for me, I did have the wrong idea about the homeless and how they got there. I'm sure some good will come from 2KO making the rest of us aware of how easy it can happen to anyone!"

Another resident, Cathy Williams, noted, "Love your work! Too many heartbreaking stories. Great for those homeless people to see they have not been forgotten, that people care."

Wesley Mission CEO the Rev Dr Keith Garner said the response from the people of the Hunter underlined the region's strong community spirit.

Helping the homeless is a major part of the work of Wesley Mission Newcastle. More than 4,000 people have had a shower, breakfast or received emergency food and relief or other support at Wesley Mission's McKenzie Centre during the past year. Wesley Mission also assisted hundreds of people directly with accommodation or referrals. Some 80 studio apartments are located at Adamstown, Windale, Hamilton South and three houses at Maryland, including two four bedroom houses and one three bedroom home.

01. Wesley Mission Community Development Worker Emma Ludlow (left) enjoys the Mums Matter event with Carolyn and daughter



02. Wesley Mission Newcastle staff at the KOFM broadcast which brought in donations of 6,500 items of clothing, food and toiletries



More than a bed

Wesley Mission provides a range of services for homeless men, women, children and families, helping to get them off the street, then working with them to help them adjust to their new life.

Every day, Wesley Mission cares for more than 600 people who are either homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. This care includes offering them safe and secure, short to medium-term accommodation, as well as vital support services to help eliminate the issues contributing to their situation.

Because every case is different, we offer a range of different accommodation options, these include:

Accommodation for individuals

Wesley Mission offers a range of short and medium term accommodation options for individuals. This includes crisis accommodation at Wesley Edward Eagar Lodge in the



city, community housing in the suburbs and a dedicated accommodation and welfare service in Newcastle.

Accommodation for families

To meet the growing crisis of homeless families, Wesley Mission offers a Short Term Units program in Carlingford, one of the few in Australia that can accommodate couples with children, sole fathers and large families. The Wesley Noreen Towers Community was created to meet the high rate of homeless families and children in south west Sydney.

Homeless support for young people

Wesley Mission's Independent Living Program provides medium-term accommodation for young people, 16 to 22 years, including young families, who are unable to reside at home and are motivated to live independently.

Homeless support for the elderly

The Wesley Community Housing service at Greenacre provides permanent accommodation to the elderly who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Wesley Mission also offers the Assistance with Care and Housing for the Aged (ACHA) Program, designed to assist the homeless or people in insecure housing to find more appropriate housing with care options.



Families represent almost 1/3



Homeless families represented almost one third (32 per cent) of those receiving support in 2011–2012. In most cases, homeless families were single adults with children

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With spring and summer school holidays on their way, make sure your kids are taken care of with one of our holiday camps. Whether it's climbing a rock face, soaring on the flying fox, or paddling in a canoe, they'll love every second they spend at Wesley Vision Valley.

Camps cater for kids aged 7 to 16 years and are located just north-west of Sydney in Arcadia. To find out more, call our team today.

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