



wesley impact!

news

Spring 2023

Your generosity

shows people light in their darkest hour.



Six years ago, Sarah's* life looked very different to today. She called us in despair and on the brink of suicide. Now though, she's on the other end of the phone, working as a volunteer Crisis Supporter and using her experience of darkness for the benefit of others – an inspiring testament to the difference you make with your support.

Thanks to your generosity and compassion, we can be there for people in their darkest of hours. Your kindness means we can continue the Lifeline Sydney & Sutherland telephone crisis service, ultimately saving lives as we guide callers towards hope.

Here's what Sarah says about your generosity:

"As both a Lifeline caller and Crisis Supporter, I know how valuable this service is and how vital it is that we can answer every call possible. Your donation will help us to do this and ensure that people get the support I received which kept me safe in a very dark time."

There are a lot of people feeling alone in Australia right now. The depth of financial distress as the cost-of-living rises and housing affordability falls is particularly troubling. We're hearing from many people who simply can't see a way out of spiralling debt or imagine a happy future for their families.

Sadly, each day, nine people die by suicide in Australia. Beyond the tragic loss of the person, the impact of these deaths is felt by an average of 135 people, including family members, colleagues, friends and first responders at the time of death.¹

Thanks to your generous support we are now recruiting and training additional volunteer Crisis Supporters so that no desperate calls for help will go unanswered. In partnering with us, you're showing people light in their darkest hour, and for that we are deeply grateful.

If you or someone you know needs help, please call Lifeline on 13 11 14.

*Name changed to protect privacy.

1. Cerel et al, 2019

Lucy takes charge for financial freedom

When Lucy* first met Wesley Financial Counsellor, Samantha, she felt overwhelmed and trapped by uncontrollable circumstances. The mother of two had recently escaped a violent home and had to also leave her job to stay safe. Centrelink payments weren't enough for the family to live on, and she had five loans to pay off.

She came to us feeling helpless.

A local family support service had put Lucy in touch with Wesley Financial Counselling. First up, Financial Counsellor Samantha organised a Wesley Mission Escaping Violence payment for Lucy to take some of the immediate pressure off her. Then the two set about making a plan. They talked through Lucy's financial habits and Samantha could see that Lucy was determined enough to advocate for herself and take back some control – a great sign.

With this in mind, Samantha worked to empower Lucy to take the lead in negotiating better payment plans on

her loans, with great success. Lucy spoke with her creditors and together they agreed on a manageable way for Lucy to clear her debt.

Fast forward just a few months and Lucy's financial situation had improved dramatically. She'd learned to budget effectively and had already managed to clear some of the loans. The remaining had become much more affordable thanks to the new arrangements.

"I really couldn't have done it if Samantha hadn't been there behind the scenes," says Lucy. "Having that support from Wesley Financial Counselling is what helped me make better financial choices and has given me a sense of grounding and security."

Today, Lucy is going well managing her finances on her own, but she's comfortable to know Samantha is there to help in a crisis, or as her situation changes. So inspired by Samantha's help, Lucy has herself begun studying a community services course as a step towards a stable future for her beautiful family in a



fulfilling career helping others. We wish Lucy and her family all the very best in this new stage of their lives.

If you or someone you know needs help to overcome financial difficulties, please call the Wesley Financial Counselling service on 1300 827 638.

*Name and photo changed to protect privacy.

'Welcome Ride' for young people new to Australia

Australia's beautiful winter sun shone for the 23 young people on July's 'Welcome Ride', a bi-annual event that's been running in Newcastle and Lake Macquarie since 2016. The Welcome Ride is designed to support young people from refugee or migrant backgrounds who are newly arrived in the Newcastle area. It's a fun, pressure-free way to connect with the community and make new friends.

This Welcome Ride began with a trip to Ninja Parc indoor obstacle course, followed by lunch and volleyball on the beach and a stroll to Fort Scratchely. There was a lot of laughter and chatter among the young people, who have come from Afghanistan, Tibet, Phillipines, Syria and Democratic Republic of the Congo, to begin their new lives in Australia.

The event is led by Multicultural Neighbourhood Centre and supported by a number of local agencies, including Wesley Young Healthy Minds, our service that focuses on health and wellbeing in young people.

"We've been involved in, and supporting, the Welcome Ride since 2017," says Kaia Ireson, Team Leader Child, Youth and Family Services. "It's such a fantastic way for young people who have only very recently arrived in



Newcastle to meet new friends and start to build the supports they need as they begin their new lives as part of our wonderful community."

The Welcome Ride is one of many projects the Wesley Young Healthy Minds Service is involved in as part of their work supporting young people who have arrived in Australia as refugees or as humanitarian entrants, and their families. The team works to build wellbeing through skills development and connection, tailoring their approach to each individual young person to give them the best chance to feel good and flourish in their lives. **The Welcome Ride is a perfect opportunity to show these young people the power of connection as they explore some of the activities now local to them.**

Meet Sue*, one of our Lifeline team members

Sue has been with the Lifeline Sydney & Sutherland team for almost nine years. She is a mum and first joined as a volunteer Crisis Supporter after feeling a strong calling to help those in crisis, having seen family and friends struggle with their own mental health.

“At the time I was working in a day spa and often found myself in the role of accidental counsellor to the clients I pampered,” says Sue. “This role enabled me to connect with a wide variety of people and prepared me to become a Crisis Supporter.”

Sue undertook ten weeks of training followed by student placements where she took calls with the support of a qualified mentor beside her.

“At first I did find some of the calls confronting,” says Sue. “But the compassion I felt for our help-seekers really worked to overpower the intensity of what I was hearing.”

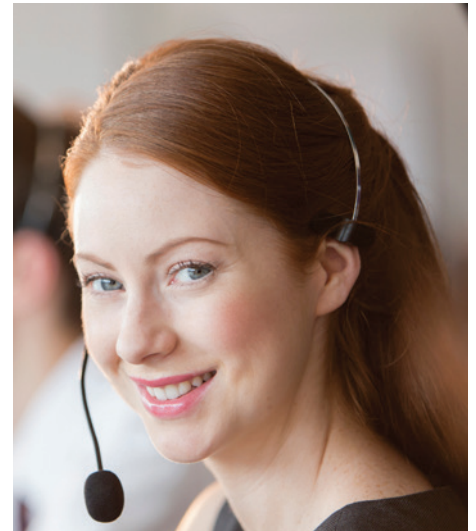
Five years in and Sue was brought

on as a paid Crisis Supporter, just as COVID-19 hit. She was emotional support to countless people throughout the pandemic period of lockdowns, isolation and anxiety. More recently, she’s transitioned into the practice lead role, coaching and taking care of a strong team of volunteer Crisis Supporters.

“Training volunteers is a core component of my role, but another critical part is overseeing wellness initiatives to enhance their own wellbeing,” says Sue. “This is just so important given the content they’re exposed to in their roles.”

The team at Lifeline Sydney & Sutherland is made up of people with a wide range of backgrounds, ages, nationalities and experiences, something Sue says makes for great diversity in the team.

“I think it’s helped by the fact that these days we have such flexible training and volunteering schedules,” says Sue. “Most people



can easily make volunteering with us fit with the rest of their life, whether they’re a stay-at-home parent, a retiree or working in a corporate office in the city.”

Right now, the team is recruiting for new volunteer Crisis Supporters to help manage the increase of calls from people in distress due to the current economic environment.

*Name and photo changed to protect privacy.

If you have empathy, resilience, open-mindedness, commitment and good communication, then we’d love to hear from you. Please register your interest at wesleymission.org.au/lifeline-sydney-sutherland/new-volunteer

Remembering lives lost to suicide

In a spirit of comfort, support and hope, we gathered together on 8 September at the Sydney Opera House for the Wesley LifeForce Suicide Memorial Service to remember loved ones lost to suicide.

We were joined by a supportive community of people who shared their experiences of being bereaved by suicide.

The service was an opportunity for reflection with music, to hear



Michelle Levy, Aftercare Peer Worker
Wesley LifeForce Aftercare

messages of hope and lived experiences and to add a personal message to the memorial wall as well as the laying of sunflowers in Sydney Harbour.

“When we gather together, we stand side-by-side, connected through a shared experience – it’s a powerful reminder that we are not alone.”
- Rev Stu Cameron.

George's* lifelong legacy of generosity

It was 31 May 1942. George was 15 years old, and like every Sunday evening, he was attending church. But this was no ordinary Sunday. It was the night of the Japanese attack on Sydney Harbour. That night George took part in worship at Wesley Mission's Lyceum Theatre in Sydney's CBD. George's connection to Wesley Mission has been long-standing. And it's through this enduring connection, his inspiring lifelong legacy began.

Born in the mid-1920s, George grew up visiting Wesley Dalmar, which was then a foster care home for children, where his parents served as volunteers. Raised in a Christian household, George has always been a man of faith. He regularly attended Sunday School, including 16 years at Wardell Road Methodist in Earlwood as a student and teacher, which he pointed out, "had such a tremendous impact" on his life.

So, for George, it was his faith that motivated him to give back. Inspired by scripture from the Bible, in 1993, George decided to leave a gift in his Will. And when deciding which charity, George chose to leave his whole estate to Wesley Mission because of its people.

"When I sent my cheque in, a staff member would ring me at home at night to let me know he'd received the cheque. It was a personal acknowledgement. It wasn't just sending a receipt through the post, but personal recognition. And I was very impressed," George explained.

While George passed away in 2021, his legacy of kindness and generosity will continue to live on through his gift.

The lives of those disadvantaged and marginalised can be transformed by everyday Australians like George leaving a gift to Wesley Mission in their Will. For over 200 years, these



legacies have helped us strengthen the vulnerable, comfort the lonely and give hope for a brighter future.

To discuss how you can make a powerful impact for generations to come by leaving a gift to Wesley Mission in your Will, please call Steve Burfield on (02) 9263 5561.

*Name and photo changed to protect privacy.

Upcoming Wesley Mission Wills Days

Have an independent solicitor prepare your simple Will for a fraction of the cost. The next Wills Days are:

- 26 October 2023 at Level 4, 220 Pitt Street, Sydney CBD
- 21 March 2024 at Frank Vickery Village, 101 Port Hacking Rd, Sylvania

For further information, please visit www.wesleymission.org.au/gift-in-will to book your place today.

Yes, I'll give practical support to people in crisis.

Please accept my gift of:

\$25 \$50 \$100 My choice \$ _____

My contact details*:

Title: _____ Name: _____

Surname: _____

Street address: _____

Suburb: _____

State: _____ Postcode: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Date of birth: _____

I would like to make a recurring monthly gift of \$ _____

Please debit the credit card below**.
(You can change or cancel at any time.)

Please contact me to set up direct debit.

My payment details:

Cheque made out to Wesley Mission OR

Please debit my credit card: Visa MasterCard Amex

Card no.: _____ Expiry: ____/____/____

Name on card: _____

Signature: _____

 **Online: wesleymission.org.au/impactnews_spring2023**

Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible.

Scan here to donate now

