



# Annual Report

2019/2020

JUSTICE • RESPECT • SERVICE • CARE • UNITY

*Exceptional care*  
mercyservices.org.au





## Acknowledgements

**MERCY SERVICES ACKNOWLEDGES THAT WE WORK ON THE TRADITIONAL COUNTRY OF THE AWABAKAL, WORIMI AND WONNARUA PEOPLES. WE PAY OUR RESPECTS TO THEIR ELDERS PAST AND PRESENT.**

Mercy Services would like to thank the following people, organisations and Government Departments for their contributions to Mercy Services over the past year:

- The Institute of Sisters of Mercy Australia and Papua New Guinea
- Samaritans Foundation
- Australian Government Department of Health
- Network of Alcohol and Other Drug Agencies (NADA)
- Hunter New England Health (NSW Health)
- National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA)
- The NSW Department of Family and Community Services (Ageing, Disability and Home Care - ADHC)
- Mercy Action Support Fund
- Transport for NSW
- All people supported by Mercy Services, their families, carers, volunteers and all Mercy Services staff.

The wonderful photos in this publication have been captured by some of our talented staff and volunteers. We are particularly grateful to Sue Joy, Chris Latham, and Marg Mackie, who captured so many of the images contained within this report.

### THANK YOU

Thank you for taking the time to read Mercy Services 2019-2020 Annual Report. Our aim is to provide you with a comprehensive overview of the achievements of Mercy Services over the past 12 months and our vision for the 12 months ahead.

### WHERE TO GET A COPY

In an effort to reduce the impact on the environment, limited copies of this document have been printed and are available by contacting Mercy Services. Alternatively, a copy of this report can be found on our website and is available for download.

## PROFILE / 02

The Sisters of Mercy Heritage	03
Services We Offer	04
Philosophy Statement	04
Mission	04
Vision	04
Values	05

## PEOPLE / 06

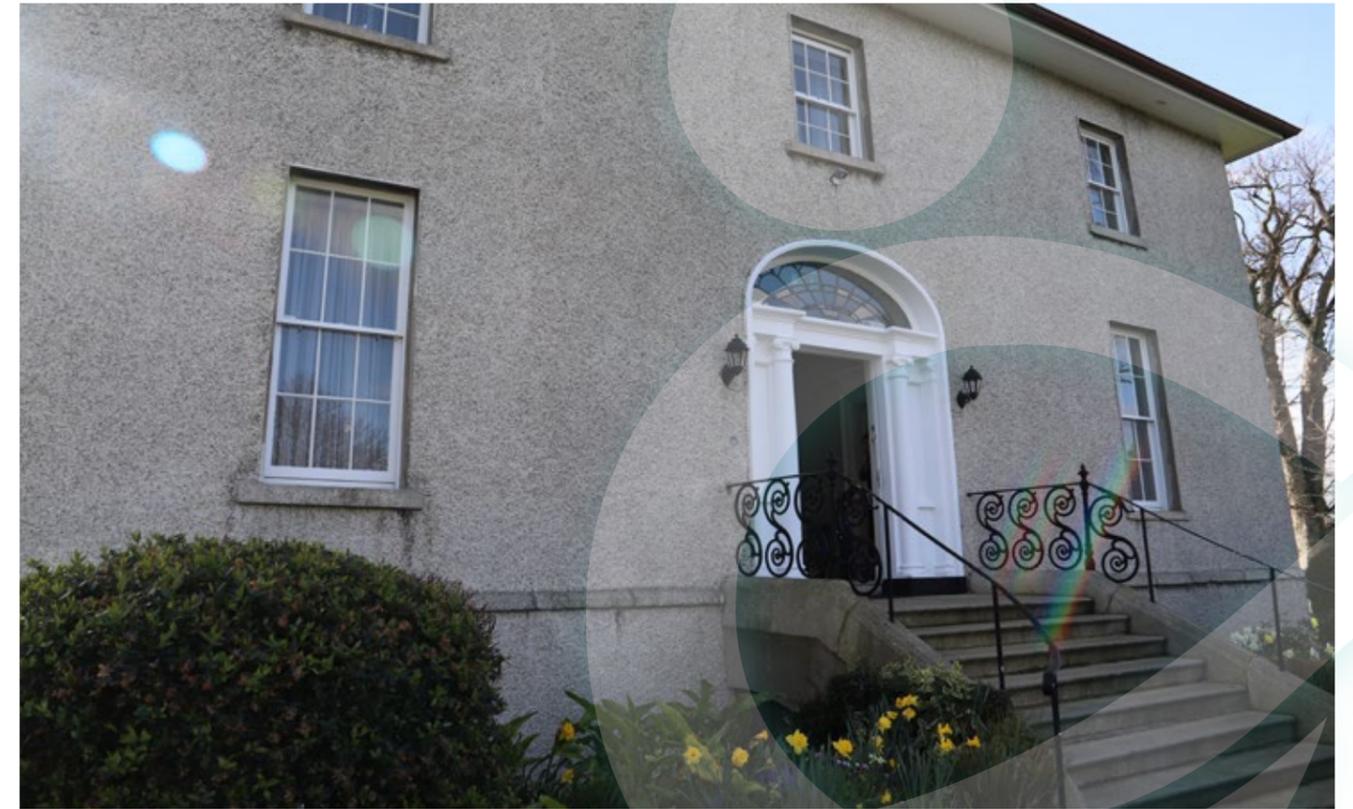
Chairperson's Report	07
Corporate Governance	08
Management Team	10
Chief Executive Officer's Report	12
Learning and Development	14
Organisational Structure	18
Quality and Safety	19
Grants and Funding	22
Environmental Responsibility	23

## SERVICES / 24

Activities and Outcomes	25
Home and Community Care	26
Mercy Services Residential Aged Care	30
Community Transport	34
Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) and Family programs	38
Mercy Volunteers	42

## FINANCIAL REPORT / 45

# Our Profile



## THE SISTERS OF MERCY HERITAGE

Mercy Services is a Ministry of the Institute of Sisters of Mercy Australia and Papua New Guinea founded by Catherine McAuley, in Ireland in 1831; who continues to inspire Sisters of Mercy all around the world.

The Sisters of Mercy first came to Australia in 1846 and to Papua New Guinea in 1956 and were dedicated to serving people who suffer from injustices related to poverty, sickness or lack of education; endeavouring to respond to a range of local and global needs. In December 2011, for the sake of their mission, fifteen Mercy congregations formed the Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea.

In 1875 The Sisters of Mercy arrived in the Hunter region when Mother Mary Stanislaus Kenny and 10 Sisters settled in Singleton, NSW. Subsequently, the Sisters established many houses and served in many schools; Monte Pio Orphanage, West Maitland (1910 - 1972); Home for Unmarried Mothers, East Maitland (1967 - 1975); Mater Misericordiae

Hospital, Waratah (1921 - 2006); Taree Aboriginal Apostolate; Toronto Retreat Centre; Mercy Nursing Home, Singleton; and Mercy Services.

The Sisters courageously continue to undertake other works such as development assistance in poorer countries; supporting and advocating for refugees and asylum seekers; working with those with addictions; and counselling, ensuring that those most in need receive the best services regardless of their background.

Mercy Services is proud to continue the Sisters of Mercy heritage. The Sisters still set the overall mission, values and direction of Mercy Services.

These are our sign posts showing us both what we are to do, and the ways we are to behave with each other and with clients. There are few Sisters of Mercy still working in Mercy Services but it is our hope that people will see in all of us the same spirit that enlivened Catherine McAuley and all of her Sisters of Mercy.

## OUR SERVICES

Mercy Services takes a holistic approach to its services, which include:

- community aged care services
- residential aged care services
- disability services
- community transport services
- alcohol and other drugs (AOD) services
- services to vulnerable families.

## PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

Mercy's philosophy embraces a deep and lasting trust in the compassionate love of God.

We believe in, and are witness to, the dignity of the human person and the value and quality of human life.

We respect that all persons are born equal and that all life is a God-given gift.

We acknowledge that each person's journey is unique, and that support needs can vary from person to person.

We believe in offering services that recognise and honour the whole person: body, mind, heart and spirit.

We believe in responsible stewardship.

Placing high value on our human resources, while promoting rigorous attention to the financial, structural and material.

We believe in collaborating with other organisations that share our values to better benefit the community we serve.

We hold the values of Respect, Care, Justice, Unity and Service to be central to our culture and believe in demonstrating them in creative responsiveness to the social needs of our times.



## MISSION

Our Mission is to provide holistic, proactive and inclusive service, in the spirit of our foundress, Catherine McAuley, to all those we support and work with, both in the community and in a residential setting.

In all our work, we strive to provide compassionate, respectful, high quality and environmentally sustainable practices.

## VISION

Mercy Services will be a leading provider of compassionate care and quality services. We will excel in the delivery, management and measurement of service and quality; and will be implementers of innovative and integrated care delivery models.

## OUR VALUES

Motivated by our stated philosophy and committed to our mission and vision our values become key to who we are and how we choose to offer service.

- |                |  |
|----------------|--|
| <b>JUSTICE</b> | Ensuring that relationships are maintained by establishing systems and structures that give each person maximum opportunity for access to resources. We advocate for a society in which all can realise their full potential and achieve the common good.                                |
| <b>RESPECT</b> | Everyone, regardless of title or position, income, education or status, ethnicity, religion or sexual preference has a dignity that is sacred. All people deserve to be met with a spirit of genuineness and sincerity, and an appreciation of their own self-worth.                     |
| <b>SERVICE</b> | Responding with compassion to the needs of others, whether clients or colleagues, we willingly offer our time, skills and attention.   |
| <b>CARE</b>    | Attending to the identified needs of those we serve, giving priority to those who are underserved by society, we seek to care not only for their immediate needs but also to advocate for structural change that keeps people in an unhealthy or unsafe environment.                     |
| <b>UNITY</b>   | Creating a community where harmony and connectedness are present, we work together to progress our Mission. We stand by each other in the face of challenge, and co-operate with decisions that are taken for the good of the Service, yet might be different from one's own preference. |

# Our People

## CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

As Chairperson of the Mercy Services Board I am very pleased to present this annual report for 2019-20.

As you will see from the Financial Report, Mercy Services continues to operate in a financially responsible and sustainable manner overseen by a very competent Finance Committee, being mindful of environmental, social and governance factors.

This year the Board farewelled three long serving Directors, Sue Oakey, Sister Kay Sheridan RSM and Sister Judith Murphy RSM.

We thank them and acknowledge their complementary skills and professional contribution to the governance of Mercy Services. Being mindful of the need to maintain a diversity of skills on the Board I am very pleased to report the successful recruitment of three new Directors, Felicity Evers, Sister Anne Maguire RSM and Sister Anne Hannigan RSM.

In September 2019 the Singleton Aged Care Facility was audited and re-accredited by the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission meeting all 42 Standards - an exceptional commendation in this time of intense scrutiny of the quality of Aged Care Services nationally.

The staff at Singleton Aged Care was augmented by the arrival in March of four Assistants in Nursing (AINs) from the Solomon Islands under the Pacific Labour Scheme. Mercy Services is the first employer in Australia to contract nurses under this programme. We look forward to supporting them in gaining further qualifications and experience to benefit their local communities on their return to the Solomon Islands.

I wish to express the Board's appreciation and a huge thank you to our CEO Tony Bidstrup, all the staff and volunteers for their dedication, expertise and

flexibility. They ensure the delivery of safe, high quality support to our clients and residents throughout the unprecedented challenges of the ongoing COVID 19 pandemic, whilst adhering to our ministry values of Justice, Respect, Service, Care and Unity. I must also thank the Board and staff for so readily adapting to 'Zoom' meetings throughout this time of social distancing.

It has been a privilege to again work with the Mercy Services Board this year and my sincere thanks once again to my colleagues who have worked together with so much good will to achieve our shared goals of providing professional, sustainable and accountable standards of governance. Your support has been very much appreciated and I am confident that Mercy Services will continue to flourish and develop under your stewardship.

This is my last year as Chairperson of the Mercy Services Board. I am very pleased to advise that Peter Williams has been appointed Chairperson. I am confident that under Peter's leadership the Board will remain committed and focused on achieving the very best outcomes for our clients.

**- Val Woodman**  
Chairperson of Mercy Services Board

# Corporate Governance

## MERCY SERVICES BOARD

Mercy Services is governed by a skills-based board of seven (7) directors who oversee the strategic direction of the organisation to implement strategies and achieve goals in compliance with the Australian Securities Investment Commission (ASIC) and Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC).

The Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and PNG appoint all Directors.

During the financial year, eleven (11) meetings of directors were held. Attendances by each director during the year is shown below.

MERCY SERVICES BOARD OF DIRECTORS	YEAR APPOINTED	NUMBER OF MEETINGS ATTENDED OUT OF 11
Val Woodman	2015	11
Sr Judith Murphy	2000	7
Kay Sheridan	2007	6
Mark O'Connor	2012	10
Susan Oakey	2015	4
Peter Williams	2019	10
Darlene McLeod	2018	10
Felicity Evers	2020	4
Sr Anne Hannigan	2020	4
Sr Anne McGuire	2020	4

The Board farewelled three longstanding directors during the Financial Year. Sue Oakey resigned from the Board in November 2019. Sister Judith Murphy and Sr Kay Sheridan resigned from their positions as directors in March 2020.

During the Financial Year, the Board welcomed three new directors. Felicity Evers, Sr Anne Hannigan, and Sr Anne McGuire all commenced as directors in March 2020.

The Company Secretary and Public Officer is Tony Bidstrup.

Finance and Investment Committee Members: Mark O'Connor, Darlene McLeod, Tony Bidstrup, Allan Collins.

Community Housing Advisory Group: Robert Hodgson, Narelle De Losa, Trish Tanner, Elvira Johnson, Felicity Evers, and Jamie Young.



# Management Team

## MERCY SERVICES MANAGEMENT TEAM IS NOW COMPRISED OF SEVEN (7) HIGHLY TALENTED, EXPERIENCED AND WELL-QUALIFIED PEOPLE.

### TONY BIDSTRUP

Tony Bidstrup was appointed Chief Executive Officer in November 2016.

He has many years' experience in the banking and insurance industries.

Tony brings to Mercy Services exceptional leadership and management skills coupled with commercial acumen which is underpinned by a strong Christian faith.

Tony has also undertaken voluntary work overseas, working with the underprivileged in Africa.

### ELVIRA JOHNSON

Manager of Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) and Family Services, Elvira is a registered psychologist and has been employed by Mercy Services for over 25 years. She holds a Bachelor of Arts Hons (Psychology); Master of Health Science; Certificate IV Workplace Training, Assessment and Evaluation; Diploma of Business (Front Line Management); and Advanced Diploma of Community Sector Management.

Elvira is responsible for the Brighter Futures Early Intervention parenting program; McAuley Community Housing program; The Holyoake Program; McAuley Outreach Service.

### LEESA BIGHAM

Leesa began with Mercy Services at the residential facility in August 2006 and is now the Facility Services Manager. She has qualifications in administration, business management, information technology and ageing support.

### ALLAN COLLINS

Finance Manager Allan joined Mercy Services as our inaugural Finance Manager in November 2014 with over 15 years working in the not-for-profit disability sector. Allan directs and manages the Mercy Finance Team and is responsible for the financial reporting as well as ensuring that the Mercy Finance Team has the resources, skills and training for the introduction of new systems and ventures that Mercy may undertake.

Allan is a fellow of the Institute of Public Accountants (FIPA) and completed an Advanced Diploma of Business Management with the University of Ballarat.

Allan has also worked in the transport, newspaper, radio, packaging, metal roofing and fencing industries.

### LEA GREGG

Now the Head of Home and Community Care, Lea has been working as an RN in the health care industry for 39yrs. For the last 16yrs of that, she has worked in Aged Care. She holds a Diploma in Leadership and Management, Diploma in Quality Auditing, Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, Mental Health First Aid Instructor and is a Registered Nurse. Lea has been working at Mercy Services since 2017 and oversees Home Care Packages, Commonwealth Home Support Program, West Wallsend Day Centre, Tighes Hill Day Centre, Maintenance Team, Newcastle Elderly Citizens Club, and COS (Coordination of Support for NDIS).

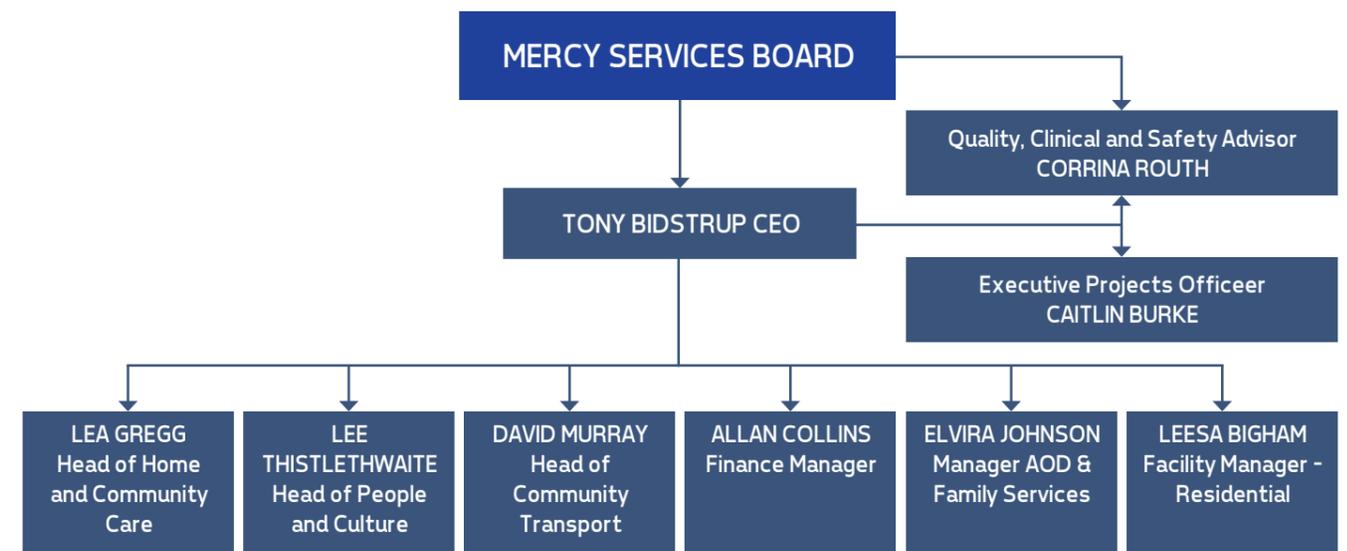
### DAVID MURRAY

Head of Community Transport since November 2017, David came to Mercy Services with experience as a senior manager in community transport, social housing and the building industries. He has worked for both government and not-for-profit coordinating their maintenance and capital works programs, bringing with him solid management and leadership skills.

David also served as a Police Officer for nine years some of which was spent travelling and teaching Aboriginal Police Aides and Aboriginal National Park Rangers throughout Western Australia. He strongly believes in helping those who are disadvantaged and those in need of assistance.

### LEE THISTLETHWAITE

Head of People and Culture, Lee joined the Mercy Services team in September 2017. Lee comes to Mercy with over 15 years experience in the field of human resources obtained across various industries including retail, hospitality, manufacturing and most recently in community services. Lee is passionate about ensuring people management processes are effective, transparent and respectful and she believes that sound relationships and genuine conversations are the cornerstone to achieving a respectful workplace. Lee holds a Bachelor of Arts (Psychology) and a Bachelor of Business (Honours) - Industrial Relations and Human Resources Management.





*"The simplest and most practical lesson I know is to resolve to be good today, but better tomorrow. Let us take one day only in hand, at a time, merely making a resolve for tomorrow, thus we may hope to get on taking short, careful steps, not great strides." <sup>1</sup>*

Catherine McAuley

## CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

This year we have heard a great deal on fear, and uncertainty, but there is also place for gratitude and learning. With these unprecedented times of the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been challenges, but also opportunities for growth, as well as events that shine a light on the talents, and hidden talents, of individuals and teams, and the innovation born of necessity. This year we have been reminded to - like Catherine McAuley wisely recommended - take short, careful steps.

I am grateful for the incredible people and teams we have here at Mercy Services, and proud of what they have achieved through these trying times. You'll see from the reports that follow from each team, that the below is just a brief summary of the incredible flexibility of our people and teams, and their dedication to providing quality care despite the challenges.

When faced with water restrictions, teams banded together to create a care package for the drought-affected town of Murrurundi. When the Aged Care Quality and Safety Standards changed, our staff were ready to make the necessary adjustments to ensure compliance, and when the Commission arrived at our Singleton facility to check our compliance, the results were testament to the dedication and attention to detail of our residential aged care team.

As the bushfires ravaged Australia over the summer, our teams continued to deliver services safely, and our plans and processes were honed across each area to address the risks of catastrophic days, with staff making welfare calls to maintain contact with clients.

When the COVID-19 pandemic gave cause for another use for the word 'unprecedented', we reviewed our services and processes, and established a hierarchy of risks and needs, to understand how we can

continue to deliver key services in the midst of a pandemic. Some services were deemed to be too risky to continue, so things like group social outings and Day Centres were paused until the health advice changed. Our Transport Team redirected some of their staff to procure essential PPE. Some Day Centre staff worked on procuring and delivering groceries for those who needed them, while others took on the task of welfare calling all clients and staff to ensure services are delivered by 'well people' and that those client who are unwell were provided services by staff wearing appropriate PPE. Our Residential facility had to put a hold on visitation, but the team worked hard to facilitate window visits, and creative ways to engage residents and their loved ones. When visitation was able to recommence, on a reduced scale, we moved to a booking system to allow families to visit in person, using our Chapel.

The COVID-19 threat has shown populations around the world how easily it can take control, and take lives. We value the lives of our clients, residents, volunteers and staff, and our decision making has championed this core focus above all else. We have learnt countless lessons in preparedness this year, and these challenging events have illuminated the talents and dedication of our staff at all levels. Many experts estimate it will be a challenge our communities will face for another few years.

Even with the reality of living with COVID-19, Mercy Services and the entire aged care and disability sectors will need to continue to reform to ensure that we have an organisation and a sector that is fit to deliver the care we as a community need well into the future. The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety will hand down their final report in February of 2021 and the Disability Royal Commission in April of 2022.

Clearly there have been cost pressures on all providers this year but even in these uncertain times Mercy Services recorded a profit of \$426,147. Total equity grew to \$6,267,083. A strong position as we face the future of COVID-19 and the outcomes of the Royal Commissions.

To give our clients the quality care they deserve in these challenging times, we will continue to learn from each other, from other providers, and from our peak bodies and government departments. The years to come will no doubt continue to challenge and teach us, and we will continue to do our best to meet those challenges.



## LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

The past year has presented many rewards and challenges in the delivery of training and education to the staff of Mercy Services.

Based on the success of previous programs where Mercy Services partnered with local RTO's we once again partnered with Essential Skills Training and Recruitment to undertake a recruitment and training program for Community Care Assistants completing Certificate III in Individual Support. Recruitment was undertaken in the Spring of 2019 to employ for a period of 22 hours per week over 26 weeks, up to twelve trainees who would undertake combined face to face education with local RTO Essential Skills together with direct service provision with clients. Eight participants commenced at the beginning of January 2020 with six being offered ongoing employment at the end of the program. As with the successful completion of the 2019 program, the success of this year's program was dependent on the participation of existing Community Care Assistants along with a Support Coordinator who ensured trainees were well supported in their field work. The Support Coordinator also ensured a strong relationship with the RTO which assisted with keeping relevance for Mercy Services. The current Covid-19 pandemic posed many logistical problems that saw the need to be innovative when delivering both the training and placement opportunities. Given the successful outcome of the program it will be repeated in the next financial year.

The online training platform through Altura Training which was implemented last year for our Residential Aged Care Staff, was expanded from early 2020

to include staff working in community based aged care. Altura utilises the Bridge platform which is accessible to staff via PC, Laptop, Tablet or mobile. The decision to move training for Aged Care staff to an on line platform has been very timely in light of the restrictions placed on us by the Covid-19 Pandemic providing opportunities for staff to access relevant and up to date training particularly in the area of Infection control. During the past financial year there have been 619 module completions equating to around 412hrs of online learning. Providing staff with an electronic opportunity to complete mandatory training supports a consistent and accessible approach to Learning and Development for all staff working with the Aged. Staff are also encouraged to undertake non mandatory modules of interest to them.

The Covid 19 Pandemic has meant that we have needed to deliver training in different ways.

As well as the online opportunities, we also commenced providing Orientation to Mercy Services Values as one to one phone conversations backed up by individual presentations of WHS and relevant Safe Work Practices. In addition, where possible, we have continued to provide in service face to face training as required.

The following table outlines professional development and training undertaken by staff and volunteers. While some of the Altura online courses are mandatory for staff, others are available for staff to complete if it interests them, in their own time. This ability to self-select additional courses is the reason some of the courses tabled have relatively low numbers in comparison to others.

## LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT 2019/20 FINANCIAL YEAR

### FACE TO FACE DELIVERY - ATTENDANCES

Apply First Aid	16
Orientation to Mercy Services and WHS	12
Client Safeguarding	91
Fire Awareness/Warden Refresher	23
Catheter Valve	3
COVID19 in Aged Care	
Community Care Assistants in training Introduction	8
Community Care Assistants in Training - Understanding Boundaries	4
Changing a Catheter Valve	4

### ALTURA ON-LINE LEARNING - COMPLETIONS

Aged Care Quality Standards	37	Falls prevention: Implementing a fall prevention program	1
A guide to Food Handling	1	Food Safety	5
Antimicrobial Stewardship	13	How to document in the home care setting	40
Assessing Risk in everyday care	1	Health and Safety: Musculoskeletal Health	1
Assisting clients with medication	33	Hydration & Nutrition: special diets	3
Audits: Making them work for you	1	Infection Control: An overview	1
Bowel Management	6	Infection Control: Laundry and Cleaning	2
BPSD: Responding to Behavioural Symptoms of Dementia	8	Infection Control: The basic principles	20
Bullying and Harassment in the Workplace	1	Leadership: Engaging your team	1
Clinical skills for care staff: Catheter Bags,Blood Pressure,Tubular Bandages	1	LGBTI: Inclusions and Awareness	31
Clinical Skills: Managing Stoma Care	11	Medication Management: A framework	11
Confidentiality and Information Handling	8	Mercy Services Elder Abuse, Missing Persons and Compulsory Reporting	68
Confidentiality and Information Handling Extension	13	Pain: Recognising and Responding	1
Consumer Directed Care	1	Palliative Care: Approach in Residential Aged Care	13
Covid -19 in Aged Care	32	Parkinsons: A person centred approach	1
Dementia: An Introduction	3	Privacy and Confidentiality	17
Dementia: Engaging the person in meaningful activities	2	Professional roles and responsibilities	18
Dementia: Night time care	6	Promoting quality and diversity	16
Dementia: Understanding Behaviours	22	Recognising and communicating changing client needs	1
Diabetes: Everyday Care	14	Recognising and responding to Abuse	10
Diabetes: Managing complications and Medications	1	Teamwork communication	1
Dignity and personalised care	5	Tissue viability: Pressure Injuries	1
Documenting in the Care Environment	11	Transporting Clients safely	6
Duty of Care and Negligence	1	Use of restraints	3
Dysphagia: Awareness and support of swallowing difficulties	1	WHS: Safe Manual Handling	29
Effective written documentation	3	WHS: Safe Manual Handling Extension	4
End of life care: Symptoms Management	1	WHS: Understanding your role and responsibility	10
Epilepsy: Understanding the condition	1	Working Bullying and Harassment	19
		Wound Care: Skin Tears	15



## MERCY HELPERS ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020

During the course of hiring Community Care Assistants to Mercy Services over the past year, it was becoming increasingly evident that a certain demographic was attracted to working in the Aged Care sector. This certainly was the case when we recruited for the 2020 CCAs in Training program, whereby only 1 person was male and under the age of 40. Interestingly, the average age of all recruits from last financial year was 46.55 and 80% of those were women.

Our goal was to attract young people to the Aged Care workforce, in a role that would build meaningful connections with older people in the community and bridge the generation gap. The role was established as a 'Mercy Helper', working in the Home and Community Care team offering social support, basic technology assistance, gardening and domestic assistance to our home care clients.

We took a targeted approach to our recruitment process, utilising modern, colloquial language in our job advertisements and promoting the role at local Universities, Tafes and Colleges.

Through Facebook and these local institutions alone, we had 38 individuals express interest in the position. Of these, 22 attended information sessions and 16 went through the recruitment process.

We commenced our recruitment at the end of February, with 2nd stage interviews planned for March, which unfortunately coincided with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, recruitment continued virtually and after the support of some amazing clients and staff, we were able to put 10 candidates through 'buddy shifts' and then offered a place in the program.

This process gave us our first glimpse at the opportunities these individuals could bring to our clients. During one buddied interview, upon striking up a conversation with the client, the candidate identified that the client could speak Chinese and immediately responded in Chinese to open up the conversation. This Helper has continued to see this client on a weekly basis, building on their initial connection.

From 6th April 2020 onwards, we welcomed 7 Mercy Helpers to our team. As this was in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, their duties looked very different to what we had set out to achieve, but their willingness, enthusiasm and commitment to working with us has been outstanding. Our Mercy Helpers have been supporting our Singleton Aged Care Facility with window visits and indoor visitations. To begin building their connections with our clients, the Mercy Helpers have been supporting the Home and Community Care team with daily welfare calls as well as assisting on reception.

In addition to above, the Mercy Helpers have been able to provide services to our clients not previously received, such as gardening, internet and basic technology support. On one occasion, a Mercy Helper assisted in setting up technology so the residents at Singleton could attend a funeral virtually from the facility, due to COVID restrictions.

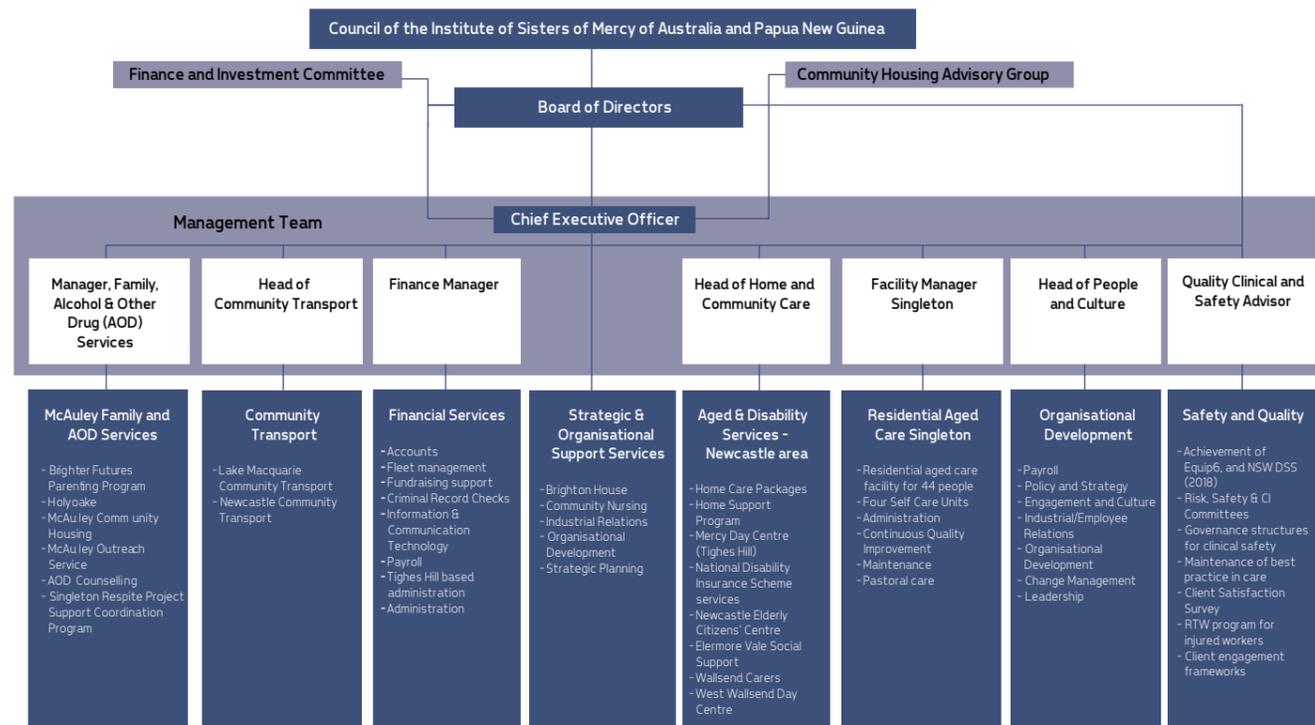
Our Mercy Helpers bring with them a diversity of interests and backgrounds. We have mix of male and female workers - a young pianist and music student, a

trial exam editor, 2 psychology students (one with an interest in Dementia), social science majors, childcare experience, indigenous studies, biotechnology and an interest in languages!

Recently we have seen an increase in social support for our Mercy Helpers, across day centre activities and one-on-one connections with clients. We hope to see this new generation of workers continue to use their unique skillsets and abilities to enhance our client's lives and perhaps in turn, see greater acceptance and deeper connections built between different generations within our community.



## ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE



## QUALITY AND SAFETY

From all perspectives, this has been a particularly challenging year given the impact from COVID-19. Mercy Services' Risk & Continuous Improvement Committee (RCI) has been meeting weekly since the onset of COVID-19 to oversee and manage the impact on services, in particular the clinical and safety aspects across the organisation. Despite the various challenges this has provided, several strides have been taken in improving quality and safety across services.

In October 2019, the Aged Care Quality & Safety Commission (ACQSC) conducted a site audit and assessment of performance for Mercy Services residential aged care facility in Singleton. The ACQSC is the national regulator overseeing compliance against the Aged Care Quality Standards. The facility in Singleton achieved compliance with all 42 sections of assessment. This was a significant achievement for the team following areas of improvement identified in 2018 and a huge congratulations must go to the team in Singleton for their efforts in delivering this for residents.

The ACQSC conducted interviews with 12 residents on their experience in the facility with the following responses:

- 100% of responses indicating they always get the care they need;
- 100% of responses indicating they feel safe in the facility always or most of the time;
- 100% of responses indicating they feel the facility is well run always or most of the time;
- 100% of responses indicated that staff are always kind and caring; and
- 92% of responses indicated that staff treat them with respect always or most of the time.

### Clinical Quality

It is essential - that as the needs and acuity of our clients and residents change - to ensure a focus on best practice clinical efforts. Our clinicians each have a keen interest in best practice, so forming a committee to liaise with external clinicians was an ideal way to ensure that the best outcomes are available to our clients and residents.

In August 2019 the first meeting of the newly established Clinical Advisory Council was held. The council is comprised of clinicians and RNs from across Mercy Services to provide expert advice on clinical issues to enhance the delivery of consistent, evidence-based, high quality services. The council informs, guides and advises the RCI on a broad range of matters relating to the effective clinical management of Mercy Services clients and residents. A key aspect the council has focused on is medication practices across Mercy Services, following review of clinical incidents each month. In the first half of 2020, medication competency of staff was reviewed and updates made to SWP training for staff when assisting residents/clients with medications. A review of Mercy Services policy on medications in the community was also undertaken to ensure consistency and quality of practice across services.



### Client Perspective

Mercy Services initiated a Client Advisory Council in August 2019 to give clients the opportunity to participate and consult on activities for issues that affect their lives. This aims to help Mercy Services understand the views of clients and partner with them to deliver better health and wellbeing outcomes. The Council highlighted a key point to Mercy Services in how difficult it can be for clients to understand home care packages. This information has been extremely helpful in providing feedback to case managers to help existing and future clients understand the home care package available to them. While the council is currently suspended given COVID-19, we intend to re-establish meetings once it is safe to do so.

Several key corporate policies were reviewed over 2019-20 by the RCI, with important updates made to the Complaints & Whistle Blowing Policies. These were made to streamline the process for staff, residents or clients who wish to make a complaint or notification via these means. A simplified and easy to understand fact sheet around making complaints is now included within all welcome packs for residents and clients. In addition, both these policies are available on the Mercy Services website.

An important avenue for Mercy Services to identify areas for continuous improvement is via reviewing incidents and complaints. A review of these registers was undertaken over the year to streamline reporting and help identify any trends. The process for reporting incidents and complaints has also been centralised for easier reporting, escalation and response. A summary of complaints and incidents are reviewed by the RCI monthly, to highlight any areas of concern or improvement needed.

### Social outings - Community Transport

In early 2019 Mercy Services amended its pickups for social outings to improve allocation of vehicles around Lake Macquarie. However, this led to some clients not being on the same bus as their friends from prior social outings. Mercy Services was advised via a ministerial of this later in the year, and a survey was undertaken with clients on where they like to go on socials and whether the current pickup format is appropriate for them. 95% of clients provided feedback on potential new social destinations and 50% wanted to see a change in pickups.

During July 2019, our Community Transport team sent out the new social calendar in packs to clients (as well as in vehicles), which took this feedback into consideration and helped reunite clients with their friends again on social outings. From subsequent feedback received, this has been well received.

### Residential Aged Care - Resident Satisfaction Survey

The residential aged care facility at Singleton undertook a satisfaction survey with residents, with one key theme raised that they were not sure about how to provide feedback. To improve this a large letterbox was setup on the wall in the sitting room with a rainbow sticker and a poster on how to provide feedback.

*"We can never say "it is enough" <sup>1</sup>*

Catherine McAuley

<sup>1</sup>Letter to de Sales White February 28, 1841.

### AOD - Client Feedback

Clients expressed a high level of satisfaction with the service provided, the majority of feedback received asked if services could be increased, however we are unable to increase services within current funding parameters.

Clients identified in home visits for parents with young children as one of the most valuable aspects of the service. Whilst this was placed on hold during the COVID-19 lockdown period, delivery of individual face-to-face services has resumed in clients' own homes.

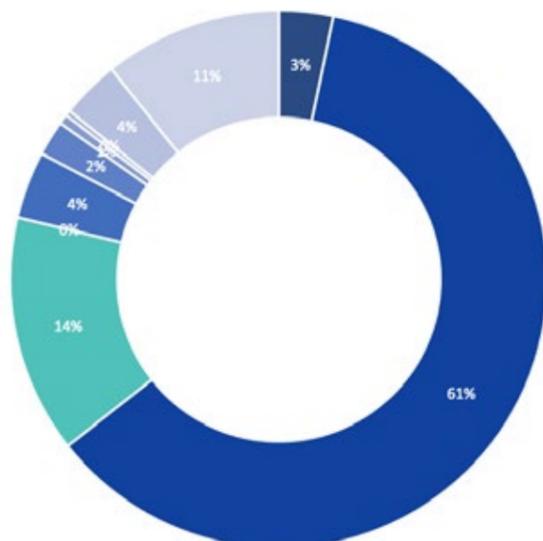
There are always valid reasons and motivations to seek to improve our service delivery and outcomes. This year has provided us opportunities and imperatives to adjust what we do in every area of our business, as well as allowing us to collect valuable feedback.

## GRANTS AND FUNDING

Mercy Services is contracted to deliver a range of services on behalf of the Federal and NSW Governments. Funds are allocated to specific programs, and expenditure of these funds is monitored in accordance with contractual obligations and outcomes as stated on the program contract or service details, as outlined by the funding body.

This year the variances include additional funding from Home Care Packages, and the Institute of Sisters of Mercy Australia & Papua New Guinea, as well as the addition of the Telethon Kids Institute (TKI) Commonwealth funding.

SOURCE	PROGRAM	FUNDS RECEIVED	
		2019	2020
Institute of Sisters of Mercy Australia & Papua New Guinea	Health and Aged Care Coordinators	\$510,655	\$560,239
Commonwealth Department of Health	- Government subsidies for Aged Care Facility Singleton - Home support (CHSP Program) - Transport - Home Care Packages (HCP)	\$9,248,385	\$10,523,668
Transport for NSW	Community Transport Lake Macquarie and Newcastle	\$2,360,632	\$2,463,035
FACS Services ceased 17-18 Year		-	-
NSW Health (HNEH)	- McAuley Outreach Service - Day Centre - Health Transport - Auspice of Newcastle CDATs	\$710,929	\$698,003
NDIS	Payment for services to persons under 65 with a disability	\$489,518	\$364,493
The Samaritans Foundation (partnership)	Brighter Futures Parenting Program	\$100,000	\$100,000
Donations, Bequests and Fundraising		\$50,005	\$56,559
Other	- Rent Received - Interest - Sundry Income	\$436,975	\$604,709
Client/Resident fees		\$1,850,973	\$1,843,665
	<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>\$14,344,927</b>	<b>\$17,214,371</b>



MERCY SERVICES FUNDING SOURCES

- Institute of Sisters of Mercy Aus and PNG
- Commonwealth Department of Health
- Transport NSW
- FACS Services ceased 17-18 Year
- NSW Health
- NDIS
- Samaritans
- Donations
- Other
- Client/Resident Fees

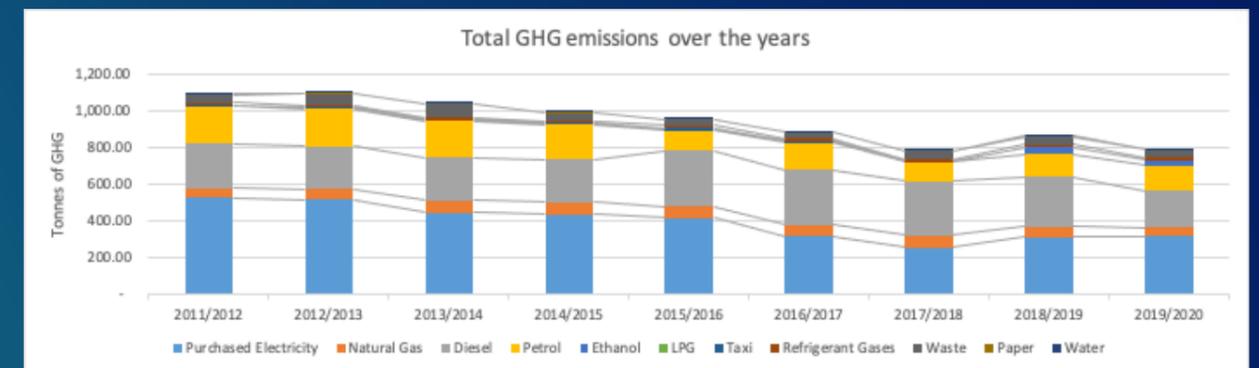


One of our new hybrid community transport vehicles, assisting us to reduce our environmental impact.

## Environmental Responsibility

The 2019/2020 year saw a notable decrease in our greenhouse gas emissions across the business. This improvement can largely be attributed to the arrangements made during the COVID-19 pandemic, we had less vehicles on the road, social outings and day centres were put on hold, and many medical appointments moved to a telehealth model of care. Paper usage also decreased significantly as our teams further embraced digital systems to work remotely.

While our operations continued, we simply had to adjust the way we deliver services, which positively impacted our environmental footprint for the 2019/2020 year.

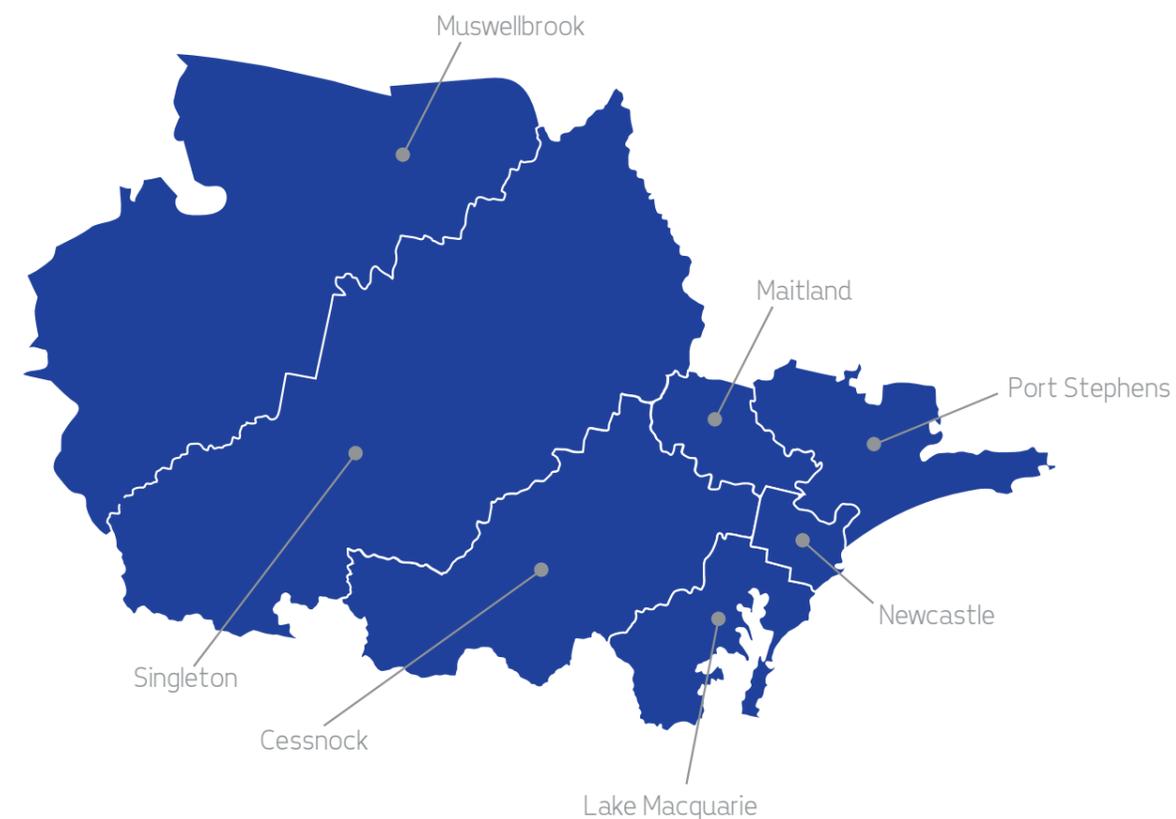


# Our Services

## ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

During the 2019-2020 year, on any average week, our 216 Mercy Services staff assisted clients across a number of programs across the community. For four months of this year, COVID-19 adversely affected outputs in our Day Centres (which had to close temporarily), and our Community Transport, as our clients opted to stay home due to the pandemic.

OUTPUTS 2019-2020	ACTIVITY PROVIDED BY MERCY SERVICES
42,193	Aged care in client's home/community (hours)
1113	Alcohol and Other Drug services (individual counselling services)
18,883/3547	Centre based activities hours/meals provided
2146	Community Nursing Service (hours)
43,216	Community Transport (trips)
524	McAuley Parenting Program (hours)
12889	National Disability Insurance Scheme (hours)
<b>124,511</b>	<b>TOTAL Community Outputs</b>



3477

Clients



216

Staff



88

Volunteers



## Home and Community Care

There has been an abundance of change, progress, and challenges in home and community this year.

The structure of the team in the office was reviewed, roles were adjusted, some of our familiar faces opted for redundancy, while others moved into newly created roles as Care Managers, and Customer Service Officers. We now have the opportunity to further refine our processes to improve the responses we have to enquiries. The opportunities to improve are endless but the feedback we are receiving shows we are meeting and often exceeding our clients expectations.

We have worked tirelessly to adjust our processes to better serve our clients. The Customer Service Officers primarily handle roster changes, and our Care Managers ensure that the services on offer directly meet the needs of every individual. This structure will allow us to continue to hone the consumer-focused care we provide, in full alignment with the new Aged Care Quality Standards.

Our 78 Community Care Assistants, worked tirelessly this year to meet the needs of our individual clients - even on weekends and public holidays as needed. There were over 41,000 hours of domestic and in home care provided this year by our CCA team. Our Home Maintenance team spent over 1800 hours mowing lawns and maintaining gardens. Our Day Centre staff served up over 3,500 delicious meals, and that doesn't get close to measuring the efforts they go to, to delight and entertain those in attendance each day.

During the summer bushfire season, we took extra steps to check on the welfare of clients in higher risk areas. Even on the catastrophic fire day declared for the region, we had clients who needed essential care services, and we made arrangements to ensure those were completed safely. When the COVID-19 pandemic impacted Australia from March 2020, our services continued. We made adjustments to the PPE being utilized and carried by staff, but we ensured that our clients' needs were met.

Unfortunately we were left with no choice but to temporarily close Day Centres in line with the State Government advice, and we paused the volunteer roles so that we could focus our resources on where they were most needed. During that time, we were also informed that NECC could no longer operate from their home of many years.

One of the significant challenges has been groceries - panic buying had made shopping difficult and often futile for our clients. Through the valiant efforts of our Volunteer Coordinator, and collaboration between the Day Centre and Community Transport teams, we established a shopping service. Woolworths were able to assure us that our orders would be delivered with priority, and we wouldn't be hampered by volume limits - which is essential when we are shopping for dozens of clients. To ensure client choice, we were able to set up similar assurances with Coles soon after. The demand was initially huge and required the efforts of a number of staff to order, pack, and deliver the groceries, and now that restrictions have eased, the work continues to deliver groceries for clients

who aren't comfortable returning to doing their own groceries while the threat of COVID-19 transmission in the community looms.

We will continue to refine our Pandemic Plan for Home and Community Care to ensure that essential care services will be made available even in the event of an outbreak in our region. Our focus is squarely on the safety of our community - for clients, carers, and the families and friends who surround them.

As we adapt and adjust to working through a pandemic, I want to take the time to thank the team for their efforts. There have been times where the uncertainty may have felt overwhelming, but I am immensely proud of all our teams and the way they have worked towards that 'exceptional care' despite the challenges this year has heralded. We will take these lessons learned, and build on them in the years to come.



## NEWCASTLE ELDERLY CITIZENS CENTRE - AN UPDATE FROM CAROLYN LEISHMAN, NECC COORDINATOR

### THE HISTORY OF NECC

To understand the immense value of Newcastle Elderly Citizens Centre, we need to start at the beginning. It is important to know about the service's humble beginnings, and how many wonderful teams have influenced it over the years, allowing food and a sense of community to be provided to thousands of Novocastrians in need.

In the 1950's, groups of volunteers had routinely been feeding people in need, from a demountable in Civic Park. When the Newcastle City Council Car Park was built in the 1950's they were approached to continue this wonderful service under the parking station in Laing Street. The food was provided and lovingly prepared by various organisations - often the local parishes Mother's Unions - on rotation. If there was any food left over they would make themselves a vegetable sandwich with homemade pickles so as not to waste anything.

There was no shortage of demand for the services of at the centre, but the doors were almost closed as time went on due to ageing volunteers and lack of new ones. The Council eventually called a Committee together and decided to hand it over to the Salvation Army, for a period of time, but with Council assistance, a grant allowed a designated Management Committee to be formed. The grant allowed the recruitment of a Co-ordinator 5 days a week and a cook 4 days (the remaining day to be covered by volunteers) in 1988.

In those days the Newcastle CBD was a thriving place with Coles, David Jones, Johns, and of course the Newcastle Hospital, all lending to the foot traffic .

In 2012, Newcastle Elderly Citizens Centre became part of Mercy Services. This change alleviated some of the administrative pressures, freeing up the staff and volunteers to focus on the operations of the Centre.

NECC has always been a place to come and enjoy friendship, companionship and a fresh cooked meal for our patrons, and they know that they will always be treated with respect and made to feel most welcome.

*"Our charity is to be cordial. Now cordial signifies something that renews, invigorates and warms. Such should be the effect of our love for each other."*<sup>1</sup>

Catherine McAuley

For some of the patrons of NECC, the centre, its staff, and volunteers are a true lifeline. They feel free to ask us to help read and fill out forms for them and discuss their concerns and some cases they may just need a hug.

The joys and value of NECC is testament to the staff and wonderful volunteers. Quite simply, they are unique, humble, and endlessly caring.

### THE SAME GREAT CARE, ANYWHERE

My eyes and ears opened to the world of older people since joining NECC as Coordinator in 2014. It is a very unique community and a beautiful place to be part of. The bonds and friendships from clients and volunteers and the care that they all show each other is something very special.

In my early days I introduced some entertainers and performers on a Thursday and we became a very happening place to visit. We have had guests such as Super Hubert, Italian Cowboy, Wayne Rodgers, Red River Roosters, Waratah Men's Choir, Busy Bees and 85 year old belly dancers. Some Thursdays we had up to 90 people attend!

Our annual events include Saint Patrick's Day, Christmas in July, Octoberfest and Christmas parties. These days were so much fun and to see my clients wearing costumes and dancing and having fun was really lovely. We've had Hawaiian themes, Christmas elves, Santa's and leprechauns just to mention a few.

We have raffles on a Thursday and bingo on Mondays and our community donate the prizes - from chocolates to hand crafts such as nanna rugs and coat hangers. The generosity and support has been endlessly appreciated.

Sadly we occasionally have clients pass away and become unwell, and to witness the concern and care that the community display to each other was beautiful. The phone calls, cards and visits and the concern for each other was special. Last year we did a life celebration for a client that passed and had no family but we decided that we were his family and would give a sendoff that he deserved.

We participated in Fundraisers for charities such as Bowel Cancer Australia and Mark Hughes Foundation, we even had a visit from Miss Teen World, Mark Hughes and Our Lord Mayor Nuatali Nemes.

In the last few years we have had some disability groups join in the fun and they too have joined our community. We have some very good singers and dancers! We also have a craft group that mosaic.

Our menu has changed slightly and we still serve a great scone and traditional homely meals that are always fresh and tasty. Our cooks Debbie and Sandra do an amazing job, also our volunteers who have been attending the center, work tirelessly to provide a friendly service. We have some volunteers that have attended there for over twenty years.

Sadly this year when COVID- 19 hit we were forced to close NECC indefinitely for the safety of our patrons due to structural concerns. Despite our initial sadness over losing access to such a familiar, comfortable home, NECC is just a building. It is the clients, staff, and volunteers who form the irreplaceable community that NECC is renowned for.

We now provide the same great care - albeit on a smaller scale due to COVID-19 restrictions - from Mayfield Seniors Centre in Hanbury Street, Mayfield. This allows us to provide the same valuable services, within a much more modern building. It's a lovely place to call our new home. No matter where the NECC community meet, we know the connections, the relationships, and the joys will always be the same.

At present we are operating 3 days a week with 10 clients and 3 staff from Mayfield Seniors Centre, with very strict hygiene and COVID safe measures in place. Some clients we haven't seen for months and it is so nice to reconnect and see their faces again. While the disruption of COVID-19 has challenged us, it has also shown us the sheer strength in our community, and the positive impact we can still have on our patrons in smaller numbers.

We are all looking forward to having one big party when it is safe to do so.



*"We must try to be like those rivers which enter into the sea without losing any of the sweetness of the water."<sup>1</sup>*

Catherine McAuley

## Mercy Services Residential Aged Care

While at the time of writing this piece, our focus is predominately about the safety of our residents during this coronavirus pandemic but it is impossible to overlook the brilliant things we had seen and done to enrich the lives of our residents in 2019, and early 2020.

I do want to firstly address the amazing staff and volunteers who make these activities possible, and who work hard to ensure that our residents needs are met, and their opinions heard. A residential aged care facility isn't only a great facility when it has new bricks and mortar - it can be great purely because of the care, attentiveness, and compassion shown by its staff. Testament to this, we received a surprise visit in September 2019, from the Aged Care Quality and

Safety Commission, who spent a number of days at our facility, reviewing files, and interviewing staff and residents. We waited for the report with bated breath and were ecstatic to see we met all of the aged care standards. We have not taken this as an invitation to slow down, and we continue to look for ways to bring joy to the lives of those who reside with us.

We spent a number of months having regular visits from the local St Nicholas Preschool, which included sing-alongs, cooking together, and arts and crafts. We even had a joint outing to the Singleton Show in September, enjoying games, activities, and delicious food together as a group. Beautiful bonds have formed across the generations, and many of our young friends have since started school. When it is

safe and the easing of restrictions allows us, we look forward to reintroducing this initiative and having many more young friends join our residents in the future.

When the drought continued to play havoc in our region in November, our community kicked into gear. The staff at NECC joined forces with our Residential Drought Appeal, and gathered so many resources for the people of Murrurundi which were hand delivered by our Activities Officer, Jenny.

Our social calendar remained full in January and February with special events such as a wild Australia Day event with visiting llamas, and a brilliant Valentine's Day morning team held for our residents,

and a special guest St Valentine (on any other day you'd know Graeme as our Clinical Manager).

In early March we welcomed four workers from the Solomon Islands. Monica, Hellen, Melvina and Alice have settled in beautifully despite the very different climate. Their presence is thanks to the Pacific Labour Scheme and the Australia Pacific Training Coalition, which provides an opportunity for people from pacific nations to gain a qualification and valuable experience in Australia which eventually they will take back to their communities. Mercy Services is the first employer in Australia to welcome nurses from the Solomon Islands using this program.



## COVID-19 AT MERCY SERVICES SINGLETON

As everyone would know, COVID-19 has impacted residential aged care significantly since March 2020, whether there was a confirmed COVID-19 case or not. We are fortunate to count ourselves amongst the facilities who have not yet had a confirmed case, however the very real risk of an outbreak has caused a number of changes to occur to protect those who live here.

When the government instructed that we prevent access to volunteers and visitors, we obliged, to protect our residents. When the government instructed care providers to refine our outbreak management procedures, we did so, to ensure we learnt all the hard-fought lessons of other providers, to provide our residents the best possible

protections. Every time the advice changed, our Risk and Continuous Improvement committee met to address the rules and recommendations, and changes were quickly communicated to families.

Even when the doors were closed to visitors, we ensured the residents days were joyous whenever possible. We put out a social media call for letters and artwork for our residents. The post went viral, and was shared over 1000 times, reaching nearly 100,000 people. As a result we were blessed with thousands of mail items for our residents to read- once they were thoroughly disinfected. We had letters, poems and artwork galore from around the world. We had dancing days, and special performances from staff including our Solomon Islander staff. We held Facebook

livestreams with themes, and even spotlights on residents who enjoyed the limelight. For families, we held window visits for up to two hours per day, and when the restrictions eased, we moved to offering socially distanced visits in the chapel- with PPE provided.

We maintained our emphasis on residents choice by holding regular meetings, and surveying their thoughts when restrictions eased. With their feedback, we implemented a number of alternatives to in-room visits, as many were uncomfortable with the risks of transmission. The residents feedback also informed the themes each day - the activities are for the residents, and chosen by the residents.

*"We should be shining lamps giving light to all around us." <sup>1</sup>*

Catherine McAuley

We are proud of how the staff have managed their roles in the midst of the pandemic. We anticipate that the challenges of COVID-19 will continue to impact services for many months to come, and it is a pleasing outcome, that the care of our residents has not suffered, and that they are still offered choice wherever we can.



Across the 12 months, we delivered a total of 43,216 transport services to 2370 different clients. Our vehicles travelled a total of 679,486 km to supply this service; that's roughly 17 trips around the world along the equatorial line.

While we were conducting these trips we were also faced with 2982 cancellations or no shows at the client's front door. Although this hampers our service a little, it's a credit to the team to keep the service moving and getting our clients to where they need to go.



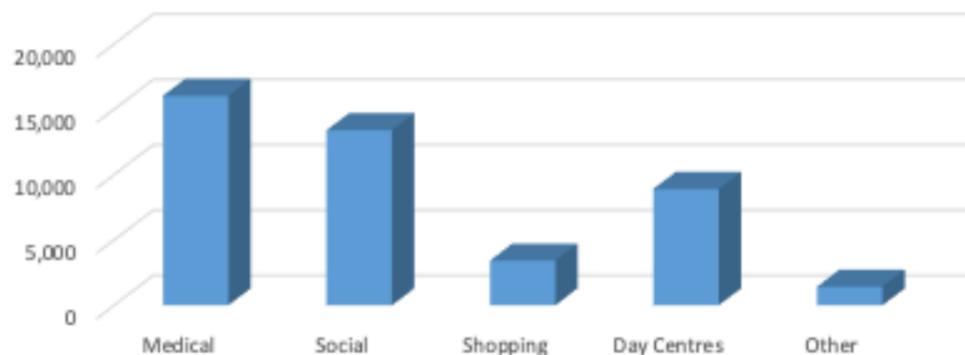
It was great to see how the team handled the news of the COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictions that we introduced to ensure our clients remained safe. Although much of our transport service was reduced, we continued to think of ways that we could assist our clients to get groceries. This saw us using drivers to do some quick grocery shopping for some clients and dropping it to them.

The next thing was to plan how we could get clients out of their house in a safe environment. The team decided to conduct some short (2 hour) exercise outings where we would collect 3 people at a time in one of our buses, take them for a trip around the country side, stop for a walk in the park, driver would grab them a coffee or something to eat and this would be consumed on the bus. It was such a great success that we will continue with this type of service for the foreseeable future. Clients were so pleased and thankful to Mercy Services for helping them with their wellbeing that many continue to book the next one as soon as they get home.

## Community Transport

This year commenced similar to other years with our transport team concentrating on business as usual to ensure we get our clients to where they wish to go. Our fleet changes have seen the introduction of more cars to meet the changing needs of our clients which introduced two new electric cars into the fleet. These cars have both electric and petrol motors with the combination giving us the first 50km travel free. It is quite exciting to be able to introduce electric vehicles to improve Mercy's footprint on the environment.

Client Transport Purpose



NOREEN: "I had a wonderful time on the exercise outings and the driver Tony was very good"

IRIS: "I had a nice time on the exercise outing and would like to book again soon"

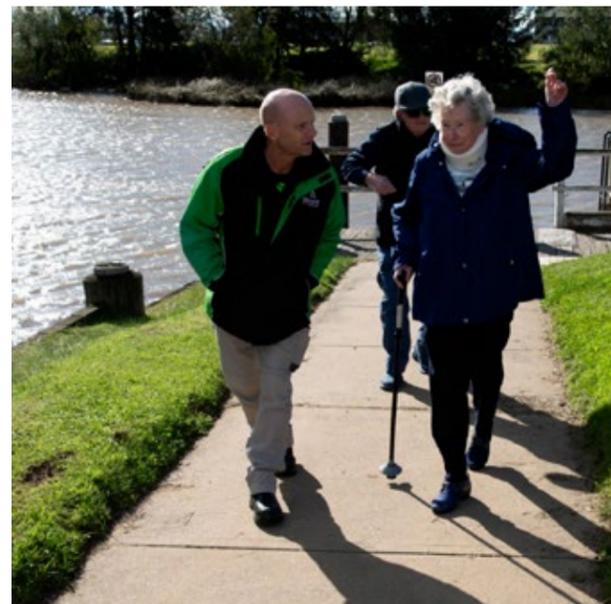
ANNETTE: "I had a wonderful time and Andrew was great. I want to book again for next Friday"

LORRAINE: "Just a note to say thank you for the opportunity to get out of the house and enjoy a very pleasant drive. Andrew picked us up around twelve o'clock and drove up the freeway to Morpeth where we chose lunch items at the bakery, then on to a spot by the river. We had a short walk in the sun and Chris took some photos. On the way home, we went through areas which I have not seen for a lot of years and were lucky enough to see two jet planes land at Williamtown Airport and two more take off. In all a very enjoyable outing."

IRENE: "I had died and gone to heaven as we went to Morpeth and had cake and pie. I was so excited."

YVONNE: "I was so pleased with the locations and driver Mark. We had a pie at the local bakery and it was the best pie I've ever had"

EXERCISE OUTINGS  
DURING COVID-19



# Alcohol and other drug (AOD) & Family programs



## MCAULEY OUTREACH SERVICE

McAuley Outreach has continued to provide AOD counselling and support to families in the Lower Hunter areas throughout the year. When the COVID pandemic arrived staff moved to working from home. There were some initial challenges in ensuring we had appropriate equipment in good working order, but things quickly settled down into a routine. We continued to provide individual counselling via both phone and video-link and have maintained the level of service previously held. We also continued to take on new referrals as usual. The lack of face-to-face contact disadvantaged some clients; however, other clients were happy that they could continue to receive counselling and support without the social risk factors.

We had to postpone our Holyoake group sessions when the lockdown started. We have taken the opportunity to organise on-line group facilitator training with Holyoake

WA, to increase our facilitator pool. This will take place in September. We are planning to recommence an updated and improved group program later in the year.

During the year we provided counselling and support to 148 parents with 560 children - approximately half currently living at home. 1113 individual counselling services were provided; and there were 231 Holyoake women's group session attendances. The number of services and the number of clients provided with a service again exceeds our funding targets.

Eighty four per cent (84%) of clients were female; and 24% identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. The drug identified as most problematic by the largest number of clients (45%) was amphetamines (mostly meth-amphetamines). Cannabis was identified as most problematic by 26%; and alcohol by 23%.

AOD counsellors have also assisted approximately 45 clients to work off State debt through the Work Development Order (WDO) scheme this year.

## FEEDBACK FROM OUR AOD CLIENTS:

We actively attempted to re-contact all clients after 3 to 6 months to obtain feedback about the service they received. The outcomes indicate significant positive change among participants e.g. a reduction in AOD use; as well as in clients' perception of the severity of their AOD dependence. Psychological health as well as general health and wellbeing also improved significantly. A large majority also expressed an increase in their parenting skills and confidence. Clients also expressed a high level of satisfaction with the services provided; and 98% indicated that they would re-refer to the service in the future if they required further support. The vast majority felt that they had achieved some, or all, of their goals.

There are common themes in the feedback we receive from our clients. Many have expressed relief at feeling supported and not judged; being given good information and resources; and support to access other services. Pre-COVID many clients expressed the value of receiving support in their own homes, rather than being required to attend offices or other venues.

One of the McAuley counsellors recently received the text below from a client she is working with. The client had lost the care of all of her children; drugs had been a part of her life since she was young. She also had a fear of wanting to parent well but not knowing how to parent. The client has now been abstinent for 8 months, her youngest child, aged 2, is gradually being returned to her care; she is attending a number of empowerment groups, and is working consistently with the McAuley Outreach Service counsellor on AOD and parenting issues.

The client's text message to AOD counsellor:

*"Hi... Thank you very much for your kind support and helping me to understand everything. I know you care and I can't thank you enough. I'll remember all we spoke about and will stay in control of myself and emotions tomorrow. Thank you very, very kindly. I wish I could give you a big, big hug and a bunch of nice flowers. Thank you very much. This is my strength and ... you're seriously the best. You have so much knowledge and you are so amazing. Your support is one of a kind and I'm so proud you're my counsellor"*

Feedback from a male client re AOD counselling experience, June 2020:

*"(The counsellor) helped me to find courses (and) do things on-line. (The counsellor) and I talked about triggers; she can get through to me when no-one else can. She's a bloody legend."*

*I was on a down-hill roller coaster. I took charge of my life. Life is better than it was. (I am) on top of housework; fridge is full; finances are in order - bills paid etc. I give fair consequences and have clear expectations regarding the children. I don't yell as much anymore; and am not putting (so) much blame on one child. (I am) seeing the big picture when they fight. I spent the last 13 years drinking. I went to detox for a week and I stopped drinking for me and my kids. (I am) taking Campral and anti-depressants and I have not relapsed to other drug use. (I have) changed my mindset."*

## MCAULEY (BRIGHTER FUTURES) PARENTING PROGRAM

We continue to partner with The Samaritans Foundation to provide the Brighter Futures early intervention program. Throughout the year our Family Workers (IFTE) have provided parenting interventions and support to 20 at-risk families (27 parents) with a total of 47 children (40 of these aged eight years or younger). The Family Workers completed 274 home visits (totaling 524 hours). Thirteen per cent (13%) of visits were conducted either before 8.30am or after 5pm. The length of service for families completing service during the year, ranged from 1 week to 44 weeks. Most families had one or more parent with mental health issues; and several had alcohol or other drug concerns. Two parents (11%) identified as Aboriginal.

This picture was drawn for the Family Worker by a child in one of her client families.



## FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER (FASD) PROJECT.

The 2-year Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) research project - which we have undertaken in partnership with The Telethon Kids Institute WA and the Newcastle Local Drug Action Team - finished in June. The project has resulted in some great outcomes:

1. some very well attended FASD education workshops for community members and workers in the Hunter;
2. a well-received Model of Care for young people with FASD (and other neurological disorders) in the youth justice system;
3. a successful social media campaign aimed at educating young women about FASD;
4. pending Journal publications.

## COMMUNITY HOUSING

We have four 3 or 4 bedroom houses situated in the suburbs of: Mayfield, Maryland, Elmore Vale and Whitebridge. These are available to families for up to two years. This year we have assisted seven families (5 mothers and 2 fathers) with a total of 10 children. The parents ranged in age from 27 to 49 years; with an average age of 36. Two residents have had children returned to their care during the year. Four families left during the years after having completed their two-year residency. We currently have three families whose average stay to date is 8 months.

### BRIGHTON HOUSE

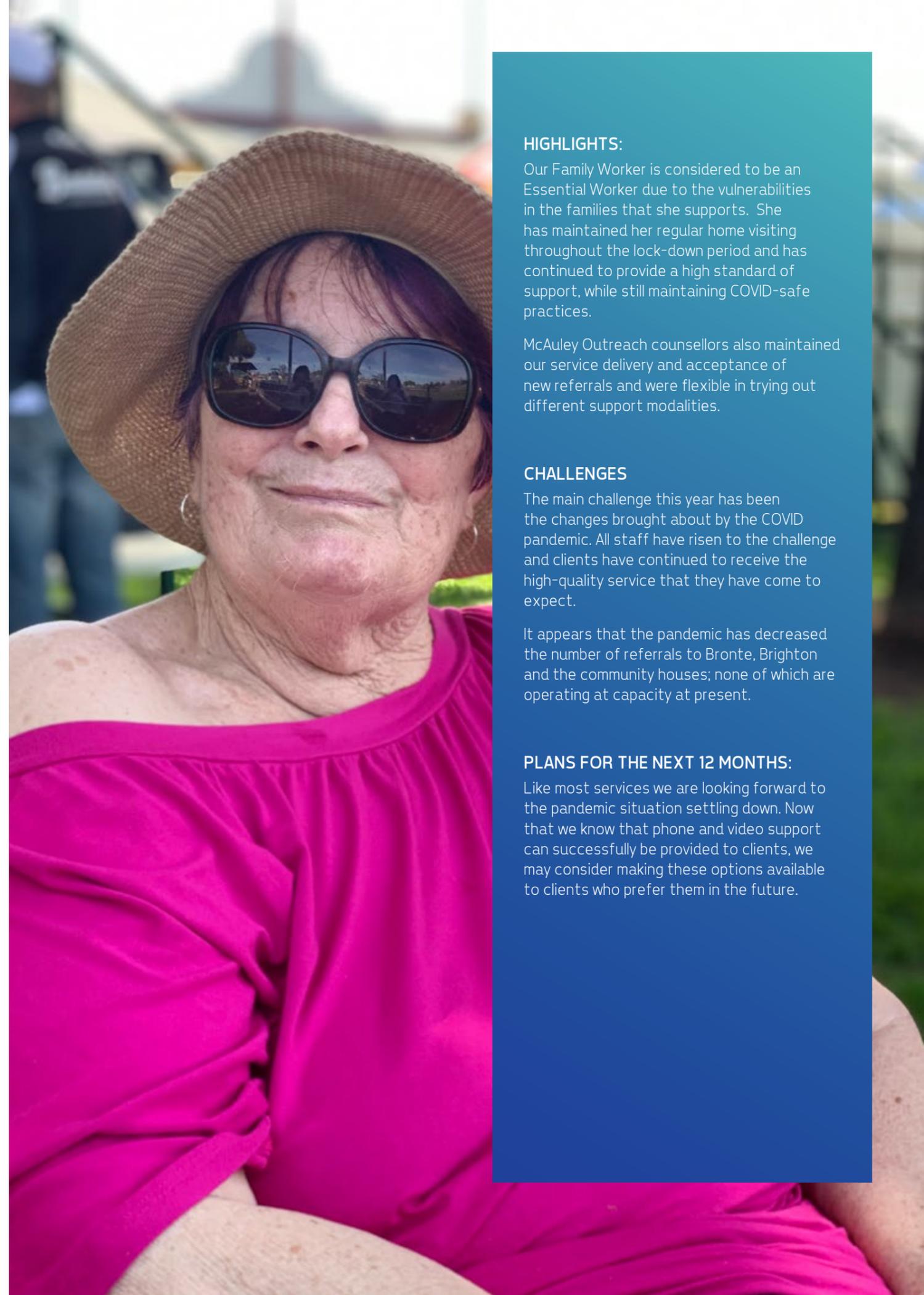
Thirteen men stayed at Brighton during the year. Their ages ranged from 22 to 48 years. The length of residency of the ten men who left during the year ranged from one week to 12 months; the average length of stay was 15 weeks. Most left by their own choice; however three left to seek further treatment after having lapsed.

There are currently three residents who have been at Brighton for an average of four months.

### BRONTE HOUSE

Bronte House has provided accommodation and support for five women over the past year. Their ages ranged from 22 years to 38 years; with all but one in their thirties. Many of the women have young children and are working towards increasing contact with them. The length of stay of the three women who left ranged from one to fifteen months - with an average of a 10 month stay. Two women recently completed the program and moved into their own rental properties. Another resident left of her own accord to move back with family on the Central Coast.

Two women currently reside at Bronte House. Their length of stay to date is 6 months and 3.5 months so far.



### HIGHLIGHTS:

Our Family Worker is considered to be an Essential Worker due to the vulnerabilities in the families that she supports. She has maintained her regular home visiting throughout the lock-down period and has continued to provide a high standard of support, while still maintaining COVID-safe practices.

McAuley Outreach counsellors also maintained our service delivery and acceptance of new referrals and were flexible in trying out different support modalities.

### CHALLENGES

The main challenge this year has been the changes brought about by the COVID pandemic. All staff have risen to the challenge and clients have continued to receive the high-quality service that they have come to expect.

It appears that the pandemic has decreased the number of referrals to Bronte, Brighton and the community houses; none of which are operating at capacity at present.

### PLANS FOR THE NEXT 12 MONTHS:

Like most services we are looking forward to the pandemic situation settling down. Now that we know that phone and video support can successfully be provided to clients, we may consider making these options available to clients who prefer them in the future.



# Volunteers & Unpaid Carers

It is always a pleasure working with our wonderful volunteers, and this year has been as rewarding as it has been challenging. While COVID-19 saw our volunteer services pause, we still had much to work through this year, and much to plan for the future.

## Volunteer Update

### MERCY WEEK

Our Newcastle and Lake Macquarie volunteers were invited by Sacred Spaces Singleton to join them to celebrate Mercy week 2019. On the 23rd September, 11 of our volunteers gathered at West Wallsend for morning tea before boarding the bus and headed to Singleton - with one of the volunteers behind the wheel. For some onboard whom had gone to school in Singleton, the visit was a nostalgic trip down memory lane.

After a guided tour of the Covent and its incredible architecture and gardens, we were treated to a delicious home cooked lunch prepared by the Sacred Spaces volunteers. After lunch we joined the children from St Catherines to watch "The Story of Catherine McAuley". To be able to see this play performed in the historic Chapel on Mercy Day was a wonderful experience, combined with the laughter and chatter of many smaller voices enjoying the story of Catherine. After the play we wandered over to our Singleton Mercy Residential Facility for a visit and were treated to one of their delicious ice cream sundaes from McMercy Icecreamery before the drive home.

### NEW RECRUITS

We are always looking for new volunteers to join our team and 2020 started off with a significant increase in enquiries from community members across Newcastle and Lake Macquarie. Our radio advertising was a great success and by March we had over 22 enquiries resulting in 12 volunteers completing their Orientation and ready to commence in various roles across Mercy. Unfortunately with the COVID crisis all volunteer services were ceased one week later but these new volunteers are ready to start when the time is right.

### SHOPPING SERVICE

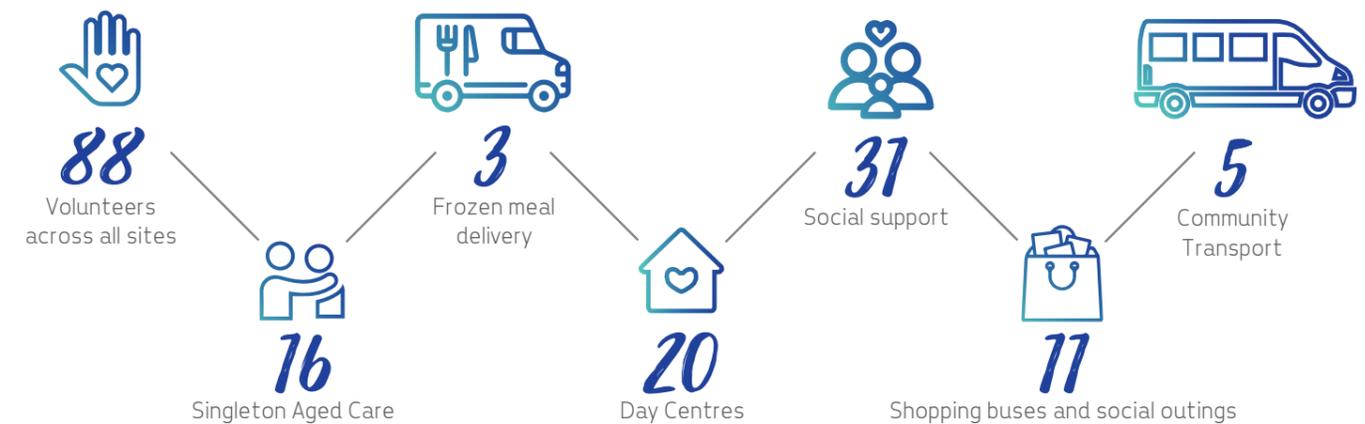
With the cessation of volunteer services at the end of March 2020 due to COVID 19 we needed to develop a plan to enable our vulnerable clients to access their groceries and essential items. We also needed to ensure the safety of our staff and the clients they support by reducing the amount of exposure to shopping centres and supermarkets during peak times. Fortunately we received wonderful support and encouragement from Woolworths head office

who ensured we were given Priority Assistance for vulnerable people and guided us in setting up a system. Our Care Managers then worked closely with all our clients and their families regarding the changes in the shopping process ensuring they were offered choice in their decision making. In the initial period we were challenged by product shortage, the sheer volume of people trying to access shopping online and the lack of choice in delivery windows, it could only get better. Our first delivery finally arrived on the 22nd April with 8 individual orders, the Mercy Shopping Service was in full swing. There were challenges along the way however our small team always kept the Mercy values close in mind, service, care, respect, justice and unity and reflected those in our service delivery.

At the end of June 2020 we are still delivering groceries to 19 clients across Newcastle and Lake Macquarie, our initial number was over 90. Most of

the clients that we deliver groceries to have not left their home for over 3 months except for medical appointments, and many have little or no family support. They tell us they look forward to having a chat over the phone when they give us their weekly list, they enjoy seeing the lady that delivers the groceries and they like sharing a recipe they cooked last week. We have had several people return to do their own shopping but contact us a couple of weeks later saying they feel safer with us. The unexpected outcome of the shopping service is the diversity and skills that have been created by a team of "displaced workers" from across Mercy Services, coming together determined to make this project not only a success but a pleasure for clients to be part of. Our Mercy Shopping Service will continue to operate as long as needed. Thank you to all our clients and their families that have supported this service over the last few months.

## AREAS OF VOLUNTEERING



SITE	VOLUNTEER HOURS PER MONTH	VOLUNTEER HOURS PER ANNUM BASED ON 32 WEEKS
West wallsend and bus outings	193	1,544
NECC	430	3,440
Wallsend carers	59	649
Tighes hill	176	1,408
Mens group	88	704
Singleton	184	1,472
Community transport	224	1,792
Social support	146.50	1,168
Frozen meals	48	384
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,548.5</b>	<b>12,561</b>



# Financial Report

MERCY SERVICES  
Financial Statements  
For the year ended 30 June 2020

**Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income**  
For the Year Ended 30 June 2020

	Note	2020 \$	2019 \$
Revenue	6	17,214,371	15,758,092
Employee benefits expense		(11,464,817)	(11,216,578)
Depreciation and amortisation expense		(711,577)	(571,169)
Other expenses		(4,426,906)	(3,735,031)
Finance expenses		(43,037)	(2,127)
Lease expenses	12	(141,888)	-
<b>Surplus before income tax</b>		<b>426,146</b>	233,187
Income tax expense		-	-
<b>Surplus for the year</b>		<b>426,146</b>	233,187
<b>Other comprehensive income, net of income tax</b>			
Net fair value movements for available-for-sale financial assets		(226,390)	-
<b>Other comprehensive income for the year, net of tax</b>		<b>(226,390)</b>	-
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>		<b>199,756</b>	233,187

The Company has initially applied AASB 15 and AASB 1058 using the cumulative effect method and has not restated comparatives. The comparatives have been prepared using AASB 111, AASB 118, AASB 1004 and related interpretations.

The Company has initially applied AASB 16 using the cumulative effect method and has not restated comparatives. The comparatives have been prepared using AASB 117 and related interpretations.

**Statement of Financial Position**  
As At 30 June 2020

	Note	2020 \$	2019 \$
<b>ASSETS</b>			
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents	7	5,896,420	12,281,476
Trade and other receivables	8	185,748	297,005
Other financial assets	9	5,884,753	5,254
Other assets	10	165,815	221,549
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<b>12,132,736</b>	12,805,284
<b>NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Property, plant and equipment	11	3,366,199	3,345,476
Right-of-use assets	12	832,282	-
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<b>4,198,481</b>	3,345,476
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		<b>16,331,217</b>	16,150,760
<b>LIABILITIES</b>			
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
Trade and other payables	13	5,513,035	6,862,983
Lease liabilities	14	121,986	-
Employee benefits	15	1,448,153	1,322,346
Other financial liabilities	16	2,066,915	1,671,409
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		<b>9,150,089</b>	9,856,738
<b>NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
Lease liabilities	14	781,305	-
Employee benefits	15	132,741	179,577
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		<b>914,046</b>	179,577
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>		<b>10,064,135</b>	10,036,315
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<b>6,267,082</b>	6,114,445
<b>EQUITY</b>			
Motor vehicle replacement reserve		1,228,883	1,308,227
Financial assets reserve		(226,390)	-
Retained earnings		5,264,589	4,806,218
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>		<b>6,267,082</b>	6,114,445

The Company has initially applied AASB 15 and AASB 1058 using the cumulative effect method and has not restated comparatives. The comparatives have been prepared using AASB 111, AASB 118, AASB 1004 and related interpretations.

The Company has initially applied AASB 16 using the cumulative effect method and has not restated comparatives. The comparatives have been prepared using AASB 117 and related interpretations.



## Contact us

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### MCAULEY FAMILY AND AOD SERVICES

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### COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

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