

mercy foundation®

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at the
service
of human
dignity

Making a world of difference

"I can't tell you how much we appreciate being able to access the service offered by the Mercy Foundation. Home in a Box is a massive help for the people I work with. When an offer of housing comes through it is such a massive relief and extremely exciting. However, that can quickly turn to anxiety because the majority of my clients are deeply entrenched in homelessness. Individuals who have been rough sleeping for long periods of time find themselves with absolutely no household belongings.

Getting a house is a great thing but making it a home is something completely different and it gives them a sense of ownership. Most of my clients are on a Centrelink benefit and cannot afford to purchase all the essential items required to start up a new tenancy.

Home In a Box provides quality homewares that instantly provide a sense of home, making it a place where they want to spend time.

The look of delight when people open up their Home in a Box is priceless. They make a world of difference."



Karen Hunter, Homelessness Services Coordinator,
Newtown Neighbourhood Centre

Safe as Houses

The global pandemic reminds us of how critical it is to have a home. It underscores why housing is a human right. We all have a right to the protection and safety that a home brings.

Around 8,200 Australians experience unsheltered homelessness on any given night. This group, referred to as rough sleepers, often have complex needs and dangerous health conditions, which puts them at great risk if they contract coronavirus. Practicing social isolation and access to hygiene and sanitation facilities are impossible when you live on the streets, couch surf or live in a car.

Recognising an impending health crisis, governments and communities around Australia jumped into action and thousands of rough sleepers were moved into temporary accommodation to protect them from the virus. This remarkable effort illustrates what can be achieved when we all work together.

This crisis presents a unique opportunity to end homelessness, especially for rough sleepers. Housing ends homelessness, and with the required supports in place, we know that people who have experienced long term homelessness, including those with complex needs, can sustain a tenancy. The creation of more social and affordable housing and investment to make existing private rentals more affordable, along with support services needed to help people sustain their housing, would not only make an enormous impact on ending homelessness, it would kick-start the economy with the creation of thousands of jobs.

As many of us face isolation in our home, being able to connect online has become essential to maintain social interaction.

The Mercy Foundation continues its mission to end homelessness, currently supporting projects in Perth, Sydney, Melbourne, Hobart and Adelaide to help end homelessness for people experiencing chronic homelessness and women experiencing homelessness.

This year, our Social Justice Small Grants program prioritised projects that:

- provide access to the digital world for people who are currently excluded,
- protect vulnerable groups from online exploitation,
- address social inclusion via online technology.

We continue to work in the area of modern slavery, supporting ACRATH to deliver education about forced marriage across Australia, supporting Anti-Slavery Australia in their work and continuing to fund research to better protect, prevent and respond to modern slavery in Australia.

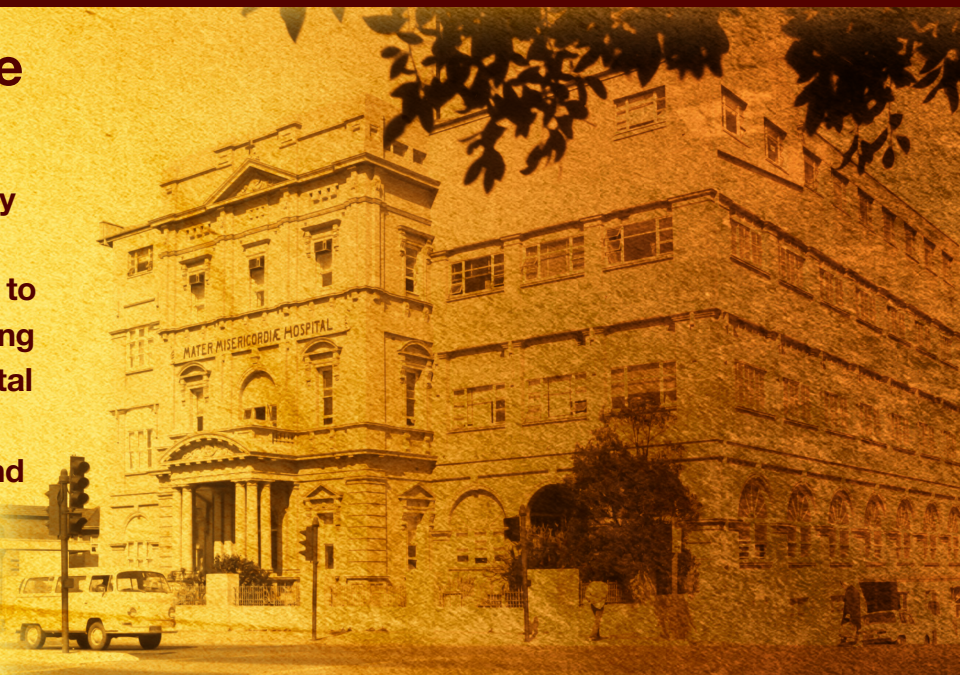




Celebrating 30 years

30 years at the service of human dignity

It's 30 years since the Sisters of Mercy North Sydney established the Mercy Foundation, to continue their mission to combat poverty and exclusion following the closure of the Mater Public Hospital in North Sydney. Since 1990, through seed funding, advocacy, education and research, the Mercy Foundation has helped restore dignity to the lives of thousands of Australians.



Highlights over the last 30 years include:

- The establishment of the first Common Ground building in Sydney, a mixed tenancy model providing permanent housing and on-site support services for formerly chronically homeless people, living alongside people on low incomes.
- Ground-breaking research and continued advocacy on older women and homelessness
- Funding to Asian Women at Work and the Fair Wear campaign to deliver fair work practices and protections for migrant outworkers in the clothing and textiles industry.
- Significant funding to help establish the Asylum Seeker Centre in Sydney.
- Helping communities run Registry Weeks to identify the name and needs of people experiencing homelessness, the first steps to ending homelessness.
- Engaging youth across Australia with social justice issues through the Mercy Youth Awards.



In the spirit of Catherine McAuley, the Mercy Foundation remains as committed today as it was in 1990 to bring about systemic change to combat poverty and restore dignity to people's lives.

Grants to End Homelessness

Through the Mercy Foundation's Grants to End Homeless program, we continue to fund innovative projects that end people's homelessness. Our latest projects funded will:

- help end homelessness for people with complex needs in Canberra
- deliver more permanent housing solutions to rough sleepers in Adelaide
- share the learnings from an innovative project in Perth, making remarkable progress in housing its most vulnerable rough sleeping population.

Working to end homelessness:

Last year we funded projects with Head Start Homes, YWCA Canberra, Salvation Army Housing - Common Ground Tasmania and BaptCare.

Fulfilling the dream of home ownership: Head Start Homes

Helping community housing tenants achieve their dream of home ownership and at the same time increasing the supply of community housing is the objective of Head Start Homes. Many low-income earners are locked out of home ownership because of the requirements for a substantial deposit and mortgage insurance, two significant barriers to home ownership. Head Start Homes overcomes these barriers by acting as a guarantor for community housing tenants who can afford a mortgage, but are unable to save for the necessary deposit.

The good news is that one young mum (with three children) is soon to be a homeowner, having received approval for a home loan. Head Start Homes is working with another five families to do the same, all keen to fulfill their dreams of home ownership. www.headstarhomes.org.au



Two tenants from Rentwell enjoying their new home

COVID-19 has reminded us how critical it is to have a home, especially for our older or more vulnerable citizens. The evidence-based response to homelessness is a safe, affordable, permanent home, with access to support if needed.

Delivering affordable homes for women at risk: YWCA Canberra

Rentwell is Canberra's first charitable property management service. In its first year, Rentwell has secured 25 properties for lease, and assisted 49 people into affordable homes. This includes women and children fleeing domestic violence, older women, refugee families and other people experiencing homelessness. A fabulous result from a new model of property management in Canberra.

A hearty brew: Common Ground Café

'Coffee Grounds' is the name of a social enterprise that provides barista training through TasTafe, employment, social inclusion and support for people who have experienced homelessness, including tenants at Common Ground and Goulburn Street Supportive Accommodation. After two months of temporary closure due to COVID-19, the café has just reopened.

The social enterprise café will continue to provide training and employment to help formerly homeless people improve their skills, earn money, gain valuable work experience and reconnect on their own terms.

Houses of Hope: BaptCare Ltd

This program provides housing and support to families seeking asylum. The project supported three additional families to join the program, consisting of three mothers and a total of 12 children. All had experienced trauma in their home countries, on their refugee journeys and in their domestic situation on arrival. The families are now in safe and secure housing and they continue to work closely with caseworkers and volunteers to help them improve their health and wellbeing, build community connections and networks and move forward in their lives.



Social Justice Small Grants

Social Justice Small Grants Funded 2020

The focus of the Social Justice Small Grants program in 2020 was 'Justice in the digital world'. Projects that assist people who are currently excluded from online communications due to age, income, geography, cultural background or disability, were prioritised.

The Farm in Galong, NSW:

The Farm in Galong Restoration Project

This project will provide disadvantaged women with access to computers and IT support to develop literacy, numeracy and technology skills and access to online courses including educational and mental health courses.

CatholicCare Sandhurst, VIC: Iawa App

The App will provide a local culturally relevant service directory to help families engage in antenatal, maternal child health, kindergartens, playgroups and relevant universal family supports.

Prison Network, VIC:

Post Release Online Support

The development of a post-release online support group for women, in regional and remote areas, tailored to support their needs around mental health, homelessness, poverty, addiction and domestic violence.

Cultural Diversity Network Inc, NSW: Safety for newly arrived migrants and refugees

The project will train and upskill refugee and newly arrived migrant women to use digital devices, educating them about e-safety, counteracting social isolation, and successfully integrating these skills into their day to day activities and the Australian work environments.

Carers of Africa, QLD:

Keeping up to Speed with Technology for Women

This project will provide computer sessions for women from disadvantaged backgrounds, equipping them with basic computer knowledge and skills, ensuring better access to information and an improved way of life.

Syrian Mosaic Community in Brisbane, QLD: Computer Principles, Learning is a Social Justice Issue

This project provides funding to purchase devices and to create educational classes required for learning the basic principles of computers, in addition to teaching Arabic and English.

Parramatta Women's Shelter, NSW:

Cyber safety and security project

The project provides access to computers and software for clients of Parramatta Women's Shelter to promote safer and more positive experiences online.

Churches Housing, NSW: Connecting domestic violence survivors to affordable rental housing

The project entails the development of an App to help connect domestic violence survivors to affordable rental housing, Australia wide.

The Reconnect Project, NSW: Staying connected

This project will enable women, who do not have access to mobile digital technology, to access a reconditioned device and tools to connect digitally with essential services and their own social network.

Women's Information, Support and Housing in the North "WISHIN", VIC: Switched On: digital inclusion for women who have experienced homelessness and family violence.

This project will support up to 270 women per year who have experienced homelessness and family violence. They will have access to computers for completing job applications and short training courses, to access Centrelink and Medicare, as well as other essential services.

Life Changing Experiences Foundation, NSW: We-Care Online Community

The purpose of this project is to protect vulnerable groups from online exploitation and manipulation. The "We Care" online community will offer support to vulnerable girls by providing a safe online space where they can find connection, mentoring, information, guidance and resources.

The program will be delivered online and face-to-face, alongside the organisation's mentoring programs.

Funding of this project was made possible by a donation from the Cath Leary Social Justice Foundation.

Parramatta Mission, NSW: Internet Access for Women and Children

Parramatta Mission's Thelma Brown Cottage provides accommodation for women and children escaping family violence. Seed funding was requested for set up costs for families to be connected to the digital world. COVID-19 has highlighted the need for women and children to access online technology for education, accessing online services and support and making appointments. It is expected that each year, 600 women and children will benefit from this project.

Funding of this project was made possible by the Sisters of Mercy North Sydney.

Grant report: Gunawirra - Let me tell you!

Speech impediments or delays in young children can affect their school readiness and self esteem. A Social Justice Small Grant was awarded to Gunawirra to run a speech development program with preschool Aboriginal children to assist them with their speech development. The program, called 'Let me tell you', provided support to 15 preschool children and their families.

A speech pathologist attended weekly mothers' groups to work with the children. She assessed each child and provided individualised, evidence-based programs for children with developmental and language disorders. The therapist worked with the social worker to mentor the mothers and Gunawirra staff, to create a language-rich environment to encourage speech development.

The speech pathologists also attended mothers' groups with newborn babies, showing mothers new techniques for interaction with their babies.

According to Graham Toomey, CEO of Gunawirra, "Through our early intervention on speech impediments and proficiency, we have assisted in 'closing the gap' for a new generation of Aboriginal children. By preparing and entering school with greater confidence and capacity to articulate their inner feelings, the children are less likely to internalise pain or discrimination. They are more likely to engage with their peers as equals and not fall behind in school work."

With the advent of Covid-19, the project was modified to deliver online support to families, using tele-therapy sessions.

Funding of this project was made possible by a donation from the Cath Leary Social Justice Foundation.

The theme for Social Justice Small Grants 2020 was set before the global pandemic, which has illustrated how essential it is for all members of the community to have access to online communication, to stay connected and address social isolation.

Congratulations to all organisations that were successful in this round of grants.





Grants Report

Social Justice Small Grant Report: Brothers Together

Mingaletta is an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islands Corporation, run by volunteers on the Central Coast in NSW. The project 'Brothers Together' was funded to address the needs of young Aboriginal men, aged 18 to 25 years, in the community.

The program focused on healing, suicide prevention, employment, health and wellbeing. The Developing Leaders program was designed to support the men in a culturally appropriate way, assisting them in developing leadership skills.

A number of workshops were held over 15 weeks. Weekly meetings with Elders and a men's group helped plan the workshops. The workshops covered many issues, including health care, mental health care, dealing with trauma, employment skills, interview skills, communication skills and more. The workshops involved Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal service providers within the local area. Up to 30 young men participated in the program. The workshops also

addressed any issues that were concerning the local community.

The program taught the young men about their Aboriginal heritage. They visited Aboriginal cultural sites and they were encouraged to share their culture, history and Aboriginal heritage and as leaders, pass this important information on within their own community and with future generations.

During the program, the young men established their own yarning circle, which will continue into the future. The program was a success and Mingaletta is keen to offer more programs for other groups in the community.

MERCY YOUTH AWARDS 2020

The Mercy Youth Awards are open! Students from secondary schools across Australia are invited to enter. The theme for this year's competition is "Freedom: Ending Modern Slavery".

Secondary school students are invited to submit a photo exploring the idea of freedom. Students are also asked to write a statement in 100 words or less that explains how their photo explores the idea of freedom. Finally, students are asked to complete an online quiz about modern slavery, after reading about this issue on our website.

The competition closes on **Friday 3 July 2020**, with the winners notified mid August. Please visit our website for details: www.mercyfoundation.com.au



Enter to WIN

1st Prize

\$700 will be awarded to the winning Entrant and \$700 will be awarded to the winning school*

2nd Prize

\$350 will be awarded to the winning Entrant and \$350 will be awarded to the winning school*

3rd Prize

\$200 will be awarded to the winning Entrant and \$200 will be awarded to the winning school*
\$50 vouchers will be awarded to the next top 10 entries and the school that submits the most entries wins \$250.*

***Note that judges may award more than one winner in each category. In this case, the winners will share the prize money.**

Combating Modern Slavery

Eliminating Forced Marriage with Education

Forced marriage is not only a crime, it is a serious breach of human rights. A forced marriage occurs when a person gets married without freely and fully consenting. This may happen because they have been coerced, threatened or deceived, or are incapable of understanding the nature and effect of a marriage ceremony. Forced marriage has severe and lasting impacts, and is severely detrimental to the health and wellbeing of the persons involved.

The Mercy Foundation funded ACRATH to deliver forced marriage education to schools in WA, Queensland and Victoria. ACRATH worked to raise awareness of forced marriage in schools, educating male and female students about the issue. ACRATH informed students about how they could get help if they are concerned that they or their friends may be facing forced marriage.



ACRATH broadened the scope of the project, taking the opportunity to present to community based organisations and health care networks to raise awareness about the issue.

They discussed how to prevent forced marriage and what the referral pathways are if teachers, health care workers or other community members are concerned about a possible forced marriage in their schools or community.

More than 40 presentations about forced marriage were delivered. The presenters reported that at each presentation, they were told about an incidence of forced marriage in that community and at the same time, other participants were not aware that forced marriage was a crime. Following these presentations, the Australian Federal Police received a number of notifications of forced marriage from the same communities.

‘We’re all in this together’

Actually, we’re not. Australians have done a magnificent job in flattening the curve and reducing the spread, however, beyond our shores the story is very different. This humanitarian catastrophe is exposing thousands of people living in poverty, especially women and children, to exploitation and slavery.

Traffickers and unscrupulous employers are exploiting the opportunities to profit from this crisis.

- In Malaysia, there are reports of employees working long hours for little or no pay to produce rubber gloves for export markets, without taking safety precautions themselves.
- In Bangladesh, garment workers are unpaid as western buyers attempt to cut their costs.
- There are reports of slavery and labour abuse of Cambodians trapped in Thailand, working in agriculture, fisheries and production sectors.
- In Yemen, child labour and forced marriage is on the rise as families try to stave off hunger.

Now more than ever, we must ensure that the products we buy are not tainted with slavery, and that we reward and encourage businesses that are working to abolish slavery in their supply chains.

Australia’s Modern Slavery Act requires organisations with a turnover over \$100 Million to report on how they are addressing modern slavery in their supply chains. Due to COVID-19, the first reporting statements have been delayed.

Meanwhile, you can try to ensure that your purchases are slavery free. Everyday products that may be tainted by slavery in their supply chains include tea, coffee, sugar, chocolate, clothing, sports equipment, seafood, electronics and more.



Are you buying slavery-free products?

Look for the Fairtrade symbol on packaging or refer to the following websites for more information:

www.fairtrade.org.au

www.ethical.org.au

www.etiko.com.au

www.BaptistWorldAid.org.au
(refer to the Ethical Fashion Guide)







www.ethicalclothingaustralia.org.au

Home in a Box Update

In the past year we have delivered 42 Boxes to help people who have experienced long term homelessness set up their new home. Setting up a home is a financial burden that can be beyond the means of people living on a low income. Home in a Box helps people set up a warm and welcoming home where they can start their lives again.



The latest recipients include:

- | | |
|--|---|
|  | A woman in her 20's who was homeless for 4 years |
|  | A woman in her 40's who was homeless for 13 years |
|  | A young mum and her baby who were couch surfing for 12 months |
|  | A mum and her two young children who were homeless due to family violence |
|  | A man who was homeless for 5 years, with significant health issues |
|  | Another man who was sleeping in his car for 6 months |

Thank you to our generous suppliers:



Thank you to the generous supporters and donors to the Home in a Box program. Because of your support, many more people have enjoyed the benefits of a warm and welcoming home after a long period of homelessness.

The Mercy Foundation is committed to social justice and structural change that brings about greater social equity and inclusion in our country. At the heart of all activity is the service of human dignity.

Every dollar donated to the Mercy Foundation from the public will be spent on additional projects and activities to address disadvantage in Australia.

Yes, I would like to help bring about an end to homelessness.

Donation Amount (donations over \$2 are tax deductible)

Name:

Address:

(Please tick) Cheque ☐ Money Order ☐ Master Card ☐ Visa ☐

Card Number: Expiry Date: /

Cardholder's Name:

Signature:

Post this form to Mercy Foundation, 40 Rocklands Rd Crows Nest NSW 2065. You can also donate by phone 02 9911 7390 or online via secure website www.mercyfoundation.com.au and click the Donations tab.

A tax deductible receipt will be mailed to you.

Thank you for your support, it is greatly appreciated.

