

From the Chair

Thirty five years after being established by the Sisters of Mercy North Sydney, the Trustees of the Sisters have transitioned their ministry, Mercy Foundation, to Mercy Partners.

This transition will ensure the heritage, traditions and charism of the Sisters of Mercy North Sydney remain at the forefront of the Foundation's identity.

The Mercy Foundation was launched on 24th September 1990 and is an organisation committed to social justice and structural change to create greater social equity and inclusion in the Australian community.

Mercy Partners has become the sole member and canonical sponsor of the Mercy Foundation. The Sisters of Mercy North Sydney are an existing Ordinary Member of Mercy Partners Limited, and their representative is Sr Loreto Conroy RSM.

On 20th February, the day of transition, all the formalities were completed and a formal transition ritual was held on 21 March 2025. This celebration included many old friends and colleagues who have been involved in the work of the Foundation since its inception.

It was an opportunity to reflect on the past, to acknowledge the vision and support of the Sisters and to look forward with confidence and hope to the future. The focus of the work of the Foundation remains true to its origins and the spirit of Catherine McAuley.

The only change that the Mercy Foundation will incur, is a change from the Sisters of Mercy as Trustees to Mercy Partners as Trustee. Under the governance of the Board and CEO the Mercy Foundation will continue its commitment to social justice and structural change.

It is with gratitude and faith in Mercy Partners we take this step to secure a strong future for Mercy Foundation embedded in Mercy Values and at the Service of Human Dignity.

Annabel Senior, Mercy Foundation Chair



Mercy Foundation Board of Directors

Breaking the Cycle: Prison Network's Housing Success Story

Prison Network's "Pathway from Prison to Permanent Housing" project has demonstrated how targeted support can transform lives and break the cycle of homelessness and recidivism for women leaving prison in Victoria.

The project was awarded \$60,000 from the Mercy Foundation's Grants to End Homelessness program, to develop a best-practice model addressing the unique challenges women face when transitioning from prison to independent living.

The creation of a dedicated Housing Coordinator role was pivotal to the success of the project. This new role blends housing expertise with trauma-informed practice and helps prepare participants for the private rental market. The approach recognises that many women leaving prison experience high anxiety and require gradual introduction to responsibilities like managing tenancy agreements.

The project provided positive outcomes for seven women and three children across five homes.

This pilot project proves that with proper support, trauma-informed approaches, and recognition of the complex needs of formerly incarcerated women, it's possible to break cycles of disadvantage and create pathways to genuine housing stability and personal recovery.



at the service of human dignity



Grants to End Homelessness

Congratulations to the nine organisations whose promising projects were awarded a Grant to End Homelessness. These initiatives will prevent or resolve homelessness, especially for marginalised women, in communities across Australia.

1. Welfare Rights Centre - From Crisis to Stability

Directly assist 50 - 70 migrant and refugee women fleeing domestic and family violence and at risk of homelessness, to navigate Centrelink and access support. The project will also train frontline workers. (NSW)

2. 2MFM Muslim Community Radio - Path to Stability

A radio series delivering culturally sensitive, trusted, multilingual, and accessible information to prevent homelessness among women from CALD backgrounds. 2MFM reaches more than 45,000 female listeners. (NSW)

3. St Kilda Community Housing - Ending the Churn

An innovative solution to end chronic homelessness among vulnerable single women. It includes 'indemnity funds' to assist women facing unexpected financial hardship that threatens their tenancy. (VIC)

4. House of Welcome NSW - Women's Pathways to Independence

Supports women and children experiencing domestic and family violence and homelessness through safe and stable housing, wrap-around specialist support, and assistance to enter the workforce. (NSW)

5. Cana Communities Inc - Cabrini House

Providing safe housing for 25 women with children who are seeking asylum and fleeing domestic violence. A safe place to live is coupled with tailored, wrap-around support to end their homelessness and create brighter futures. (NSW)

6. Habitat for Humanity - Empty Spaces to Homes Pilot Project.

Transforming vacant buildings into eight homes for affordable housing, with a particular focus on providing housing for women with children and young people. (NSW)

7. Women and Children First - Fast track to Independence

Debt-free grants for 10 families escaping domestic and family violence, enabling them to move from crisis accommodation into long term, secure housing. (NSW)

8. Immigrant Women's Speak out Association - Brighter Tomorrow

Provides trauma counselling, employment assistance and support services to help migrant and refugee women achieve independent living after leaving domestic and family violence.

Partnership Grants: ACRO - EmpowerHER Fund

This project will fund activities to help women restart their lives, for example fees for licenses, training and vocational courses, educational expenses, driving lessons and swimming lessons for ten CALD families living in crisis accommodation. (QLD)



The Mercy Youth Awards are now OPEN!

Students in Years 7–12 across Australia are invited to take part in this national art competition celebrating Peace.

Students are encouraged to explore what peace means to them, whether it's harmony within their communities, global unity and understanding, or inner tranquility. Through their artistic talents, students can convey messages of understanding, compassion and hope for a more peaceful world.

There are great prizes on offer for the most inspiring entries! The entry deadline is Friday, 8 August 2025

Visit www.mercyfoundation.com.au
for full details and submission guidelines

**Let your creativity shine and share
your vision for a better world!**

Social Justice Small Grants

Eighteen hardworking grassroots organisations were awarded a Social Justice Small Grant to address local disadvantage and create stronger, fairer and more inclusive communities.

1. Rainbow Roos - Inclusive and Adaptable Soccer For All

Rainbow Roos brings together children of all ages and abilities, with additional needs representing minority groups, to learn new skills and enjoy the teamwork of soccer. (NSW)

2. Aspire Cairns Community Ltd - Aspire EmpowerHER

A First Nations program for women and girls to enhance employability, foster cultural identity and pride, build confidence, self-esteem and leadership skills. (QLD)

3. Wilya Ajjul Janta Aboriginal Corporation - Wilya Janta Storytelling

A storytelling initiative creating culturally relevant language-based video resources to educate remote Aboriginal communities about the link between housing, health, and climate resilience. (NT)

4. Big Little Buddies Inc. - Younger & Older Making Music & Memories

This intergenerational music program brings together generations in engaging music activities, tackling social isolation and building meaningful connections. (VIC)

5. Plate It Forward Limited - Second Chance Kitchen

A hospitality training program in partnership with leading Australian chefs to equip young people in detention with pathways to education and employment. (NSW)

6. Coolamon Community Incorporated - Birthing Strong: Coolamon Care for Aboriginal Mums and Bubs

A collaboration with Aboriginal Health Services midwives identifying mothers in need of support to receive 'The Coolamon', which includes baby and maternal care items, and culturally significant books and toys, to strengthen the bond between mother and baby, support overburdened health services, and help break cycles of disadvantage. (NSW)

7. Coffs Coast Wildlife Sanctuary - Nature's Turnaround

Young offenders are provided with hands-on experience in wildlife conservation for personal growth, skills development, and empowerment to build meaningful careers, reduce the risk of reoffending, and create a brighter future. (NSW)

8. Indigenous Futures Federation - Caring Through Culture: Empowering Indigenous Women Through Food and Connection

Culturally grounded cooking and nutrition workshops for Indigenous women preserving cultural heritage through food and community connection. (QLD)

9. Prison Fellowship Australia - Volunteer Bus Driver and Visitor Centre Volunteer

This project will recruit and train volunteers to operate a low-cost bus service from Alice Springs to the Alice Springs Correctional Centre, as well as volunteers to staff the prison's Visitor Centre. (NT)

10. The Mallacoota Wilderness Collective Inc. - Women's Skills Network

Skills network for isolated rural women re-entering the workforce in far East Gippsland providing training, mentoring, and confidence building opportunities to develop microbusinesses. (VIC)

11. VWCCS Inc (Victims and Witnesses of Crime Court Support) - Volunteer Cultural Awareness and Responsiveness Training

This project aims to improve support for First Nations victims and witnesses of crime when they appear in Court by enhancing the cultural awareness and responsiveness of VWCCS volunteers. (NSW)

12. Australian Youth Climate Coalition - People of Colour Climate Network

The People of Colour Climate Network (POCCN) is a new, multi-racial initiative to diversify leadership within the Australian climate movement, led for and by young people of colour within AYCC. (Nationwide)

13. The Water Well Project Ltd - Empowering CALD Women and Families Through Health Education

Education sessions delivered by healthcare professionals for migrant, refugee, and asylum-seeking women and children to better navigate the Australian healthcare system. (NSW, TAS, VIC)

14. Refugee Advice and Casework Service - Supporting Stateless Children

Assisting children born in Australia to stateless asylum seeker parents to apply for Australian citizenship to overcome barriers including accessing education and healthcare. (NSW & VIC)

15. The Sydney Retreat - Women's Online Drug and Alcohol Rehab Project

A virtual version of a residential rehabilitation program to help make recovery more accessible, especially for women. (NSW)

16. The Bega Women's Resource Centre (WRC) - Empowering Young Mums

Enhancing life skills for young mothers to promote health and wellbeing, increase employment readiness, improve safety and emergency preparedness and build peer support networks in the Bega region. (NSW)

17. Zahra Foundation Australia - EMBARK Workshop and Webinar Series

Workshop and Webinar Series to be delivered across South Australia to support women impacted by domestic and family violence to rebuild their lives through financial literacy, digital skills, and employment readiness. (SA)

18. Yedding Mura Aboriginal Corporation - Keep The Fire Burning

Recording Elder powerful oral histories for the next generation, providing them with vision, strength, and a lasting legacy. (ACT)

Thank you to our generous donors. Your support helps address disadvantage and restore dignity.



Home in a Box



A Fresh Start for 50 Lives

To date, the Mercy Foundation has distributed 50 Home in a Box sets to women, men, and families who have experienced homelessness for 3 months or more, and have few resources to set up their home. Homelessness has many causes, such as unemployment, family breakdown, illness, domestic violence and eviction. Each situation holds a deeply human story of pain, strength, and resilience. The solution is the same: affordable, appropriate housing with access to the supports needed to end homelessness.

A Warm Welcome Home

Each Home in a Box helps transform an empty space into a welcoming home. We sincerely thank the Sisters of Mercy North Sydney, the Mater Hospital Sydney, our suppliers and generous donors.

We sincerely thank the following people for their hand-made contributions:

- Sr Patricia for her colour-curated crocheted blankets.
- Our local neighbour Carolyn for her cheerful knitted rugs.
- The beautifully crafted pieces from the Knights of Malta Craft Group.

These personal touches remind our recipients that they are not alone and that the community is supporting them on.

Stories of Hope and New Beginnings: Recent recipients of Home in a Box include

- A woman in her 60's who spent many years living in boarding houses.
- A man who spent 19 years living on the streets.
- A woman in her 50's who became homeless after escaping domestic violence.
- A man in his 40's who became homeless after a brain injury.

"Home in a Box has been a vital support for our clients as they begin their journey into housing stability. These packages not only provide much needed essentials but also offer dignity, comfort, and a sense of being cared for." - The Station Ltd Sydney



Thanks to our Supporters



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

Donation Amount **(donations over \$2 are tax deductible)** A tax deductible receipt will be mailed to you.

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 Road 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.

Thank you for your support, it is greatly appreciated.



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