



*St Mary's*  
**House of Welcome**

Standing with the disadvantaged. Support - Solutions - Hope

# ANNUAL REPORT 2013-2014



A work of the Daughters of Charity



## From the Chair

St Mary's House of Welcome was established by the Daughters of Charity in 1960, to provide food to homeless men in Fitzroy. St Mary's has since evolved as an organisation to provide specialist services, including a range of homelessness and mental health services, for a special group of women and men who do not or cannot access mainstream community support services.

During the 2014 financial year, St Mary's faced some significant challenges in light of the Liberal State Government's mental health program funding reforms. Ultimately, St Mary's was unsuccessful in securing the essential ongoing funding required to provide community mental health services for our participants. Unfortunately, the outcomes of the funding reform process did not appropriately recognise the importance of strong community connections forged by many smaller social services organisations. Over many years St Mary's has developed significant expertise in working with disadvantaged and marginalised people with mental health issues, in a welcoming and non-judgmental environment.

Changed sectoral conditions caused the Board to critically reevaluate how St Mary's programs and activities could continue to provide a sense of community and support for Melbourne's marginalised and disadvantaged in a sustainable way. Coinciding with the conclusions of our existing government funded community mental health services, the difficult decision was made to implement a limited program of staff redundancies.

Notwithstanding the setback brought about by sectoral reforms, the Board remains firm in its conviction that

the services offered by St Mary's are essential for our local community. In fact, it is our view that St Mary's approach and model of service, catering especially to those who are excluded from the community on many different levels, is even more relevant than ever before. In this regard, the Board has been busy pursuing direct initiatives that will help ensure the longevity of the organisation. This includes a targeted campaign to regain funding for community mental health services and rallying support and funds to ensure we can keep our Saturday meal services going. The Board is also very heartened to see early indications of strong grassroots support for St Mary's during these challenging times. This includes from within our local community (and further afield), the City of Yarra as well as support from Richard Wynne MP.

The composition of St Mary's Board has also seen some changes during the year. We farewelled long serving director John Cowlshaw and welcomed the appointment of new directors Amelia Dixon and Simon Esposito. During the year, Michael Kee was also appointed to the position of Deputy Chair. I thank each Board member for their commitment, dedication and pragmatism. The Board is also extremely appreciative of the tremendous efforts of St Mary's CEO Tony McCosker and St Mary's talented management team and staff who faced this challenging period with poise, always ensuring that St Mary's remained a house of welcome to all. On behalf of the Board, I would also like to take this opportunity to extend a heartfelt thank you to St Mary's many volunteers, supporters and champions and for the significant role each of you play in making a direct contribution to serving Melbourne's most marginalised and disadvantaged people.

Luke Fitzgerald, Board Chair





## From the Chief Executive Officer

St Mary's is a COMMUNITY, a community where people who are socially excluded, for whatever reason, can find a safe place to be, to learn, to grow, to recover.

In the many challenges that we have faced this year, time and again we have been drawn back to reflect on **our mission**: to be a community, a safe haven, a place of refuge for those who do not have one.

I am happy to be able to report that the staff, the volunteers and the donors have been very successful in achieving this mission this year. We have jointly met all the targets set for us: we have provided "community" as demanded by our mission; and in addition we have met all the targets required of us by government funding agencies and philanthropic bodies that have funded us through grants.

The most challenging feature of this year has been the loss of our funding for the Psychiatric Disability Rehabilitation Support Service as the Victorian Liberal Government set about reforming the system. In the new system, "day centre programs and activities" and block funding were discontinued. We have been most concerned about the plight of many of our regular service users who will find no, or little, place in this

new system. The specialist responses offered by Homelessness agencies to people with mental health issues have been overlooked and devalued. It has been a decision of the Board to continue to advocate for these most vulnerable and socially isolated service users.

The defunding situation has also brought about a challenge in terms of ongoing funding in order to continue offering programs and activities. Plans are in place to initiate a fundraising campaign aimed at saving our Saturday services. The campaign is ongoing but the response at this point is very heartening with many of our long-time supporters coming to our aid.

My thanks to the Chair of the Board, Luke Fitzgerald and Board members for their support and direction; to Sr Margaret Armstrong for her "mission spirit" and advice; to Operations Manager Kathy Hogarty and to Services Manager Lee-Ann Boyle as part of the Executive Team for their professionalism; to the fundraising team and the direct service delivery staff for continuing to put in the hard yards in making St Mary's a safe and welcoming place to be.

Tony McCosker, CEO

## Board Membership

The Membership of the Board remained constant except for two changes: the Deputy Chair John Cowlshaw's term of nine years finished in August

2013; Simon Esposito and Amelia Dixon were appointed to the Board on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2014. Michael Kee was appointed Deputy Chair.

## Directors

The names of each person who has been a director during the year and to the date of this report are:

Luke Michael Fitzgerald, appointed 16/6/2011

Michael Morrison Kee, appointed 23/11/2012

Sam Biondo, appointed 6/5/2004

Ralph Hampson, appointed 7/5/2013

Margaret Lodge, appointed 11/10/2005

Kate Fiona Fazio, appointed 2/4/2013

Jennifer Smith, appointed 27/10/2005

Simon Esposito, appointed 6/5/2014

Paul Bridgeford, appointed 20/11/2007

Amelia Dixon, appointed 6/5/2014

Mark James Lafferty, appointed 22/7/2010

John Harvey Cowlshaw, resigned 20/8/2013





## From the Volunteer Coordinator

St Mary's is very grateful for the support of 180 active and dedicated volunteers, who provide over 12,000 hours of support in the dining room, and over 3,000 hours of event support. If the base hourly rate of \$25.00 was paid to volunteers, this would represent a labour cost to the organisation of \$377,675.00 per annum. There are 123 females and 56 males currently volunteering across St Mary's on a regular basis. There have been 35 new recruits since July 2013. These have mostly helped in the Dining Room. Some volunteers have ceased volunteering due to ill health or changed work circumstances but we have also welcomed many back to the Dining Room after breaks for study or travel.

St Mary's also encourages service users to participate in volunteering. The number of service users who volunteer has remained steady, helping mostly in the Dining room and with odd jobs and gardening.

### Types of Volunteers

There are 5 main types of volunteers

**Community Volunteers (individuals):** Usually an individual who has had no previous experience of St Mary's. They may have heard of us through a friend, an existing volunteer, our website, one of our events or through living in the nearby area.

**Corporate Volunteers:** Come to us as a part of their Corporate Responsibility Day. It is a great opportunity to build strong ties with these corporations for mutual

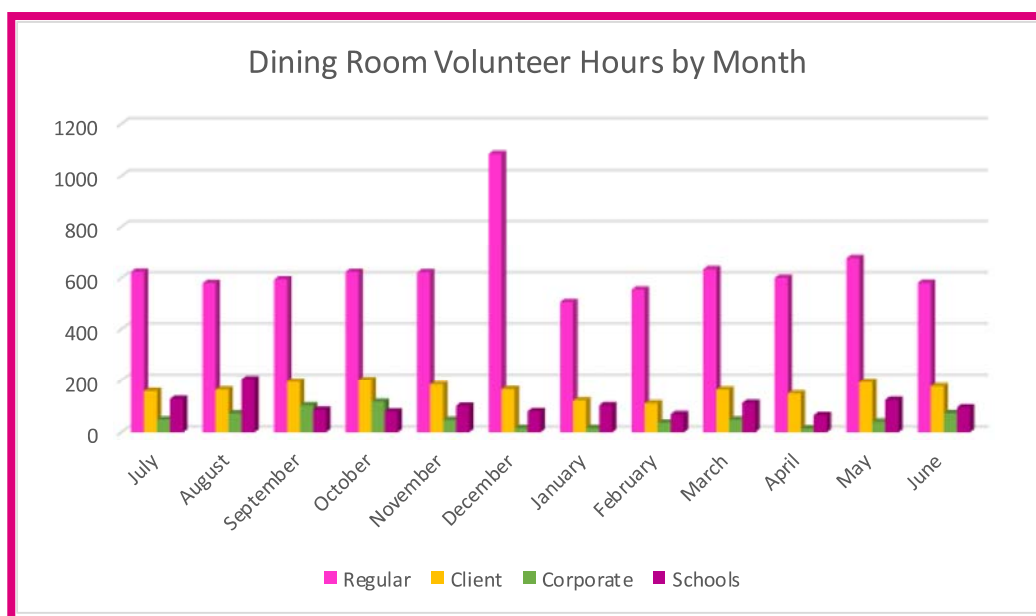
benefit. In financial year 2013-14 we had corporate groups volunteering from NAB, Launch Recruiting, Aspect Personnel, Nelson Alexander, Fridcorp, Computershare, Australian Unity and Buildex.

**Client Volunteers** - St Mary's demonstrates a commitment to increasing client "ownership" of the service. 12 client volunteers regularly help out in the Dining Room, as handymen and occasionally with cleaning and gardening.

**School/Uni Student Volunteers:** 23 schools and 4 Universities volunteered throughout 2013-14. Students and teachers who volunteer their time to St Mary's for their Social Awareness Programs and as part of their work experience programs. They either come in a small group with their teachers on a regular rotation or as a pair for the entire week. University students from Australian Catholic University, Melbourne University, Monash Paramedics and Deakin University have also volunteered during this time.

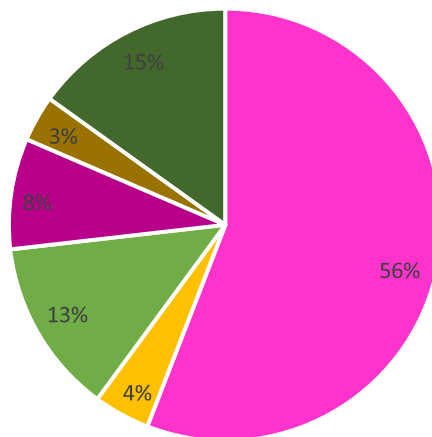
**Special Events/Big Give Volunteers:** These volunteers help out at special events such as Wine Rules, in-house dinners and at Christmas time for the Big Give including preparation and Christmas day. These volunteers often cannot commit to a regular volunteering role but love helping out for special occasions.

Gerardine Enright, Volunteer Coordinator.





### Where The Volunteers Come From



- Regular Community Volunteers
- Corporate Groups
- Client Volunteers
- Student Volunteers
- Committees/board etc.
- Big Give/Special Events



## From the Services Manager

### **Government Reform of Mental Health Community Support Programs.**

Over the past twelve months St Mary's has been engaged in the Mental Health Services reform process which saw the demise of the old Psychiatric Disability Rehabilitation Support Service (PDRSS) programs. St Mary's entered into a consortium with the Mental Illness Fellowship (Vic), Jesuit Social Services and North Richmond Community Health to tender for the new Mental Health Community Support Services (MHCSS). The consortium was invited to the second stage of the tender process. However, we were advised on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2014 that our tender bid was unsuccessful and that PDRSS at St Mary's would conclude at the end of July 2014.

St Mary's has been through two major restructures in this financial year, first to prepare for the changes to the Mental Health funding application, and then to cope with the changes brought about by the loss of funding. The main priority was that St Mary's could keep providing essential services to our service users despite the funding cuts and loss of staff.

As a result, some services had to be discontinued. The computer training program was closed and recreation programs were reduced. Essential services including meals and showers continued as normal. With reduced staff numbers, the remaining staff were extra diligent about maintaining St Mary's as a safe place to be.

### **Mental Health Support and Activities**

This financial year saw St Mary's offer its first accredited training program in partnership with William Angliss Institute. The project was funded by a grant from the Inner North Community Foundation. The six month program began with 12 extremely disadvantaged and marginalised participants signing up. Seven participants completed the program with one person gaining full time employment, one registering for further training with William Angliss Institute and with the remaining participants working with external employment agencies and case managers a long with linking in the St Mary's computer base learning and Job Club.

After of the success of the 12 week healthy lifestyle challenge in early 2013, participants were enthusiastic to continue to look at healthy life choices and get involved in health and wellbeing activities. We saw the introduction of regular yoga sessions and a cooking group that focused on preparing healthy budget friendly meals. Participants also continued to take part in weekly gym sessions.

In winter, 20 participants and four staff headed to Marysville for a 3 night/4 day snow camp. This was St Mary's first cross-cultural camp that included 10 Vietnamese and 10 non-Vietnamese participants, all of whom experience severe and persistent mental illness. The camp was a huge success with many participants stepping outside of their comfort zones and enjoying new life experiences because for many, it was the first time they had seen snow.

St Mary's has continued to provide a range of regular activities that promote social inclusion and mental wellbeing. Some of the activities include:

- ◆ Computer access
- ◆ Art and craft
- ◆ Sewing
- ◆ Gardening
- ◆ Choir
- ◆ Cooking
- ◆ Walking group
- ◆ Gym
- ◆ Ten-pin bowling
- ◆ Golf
- ◆ Swimming
- ◆ Tennis
- ◆ Lawn bowls
- ◆ RECLink pool comp and cricket
- ◆ Friday outings
- ◆ Blokes' BBQ and
- ◆ Picnics in the park

Special events include:

- ◆ Chinese New Year
- ◆ V-Line country road trips
- ◆ Where the Heart Is Festival
- ◆ The Beatles Exhibition



## From the Services Manager

### Food Security and Community Support

St Mary's has provided 9,216 hours of client participation this financial year, this is in excess of 7,900 hours which we are contracted to supply.

St Mary's is proud to have served over 34,000 meals in FY2013-14. Breakfast and lunch are available 6 days a week Monday to Saturday. Breakfast includes choices of porridge, cereal, toast, a hot main course, tea and coffee. Breakfast is free. Lunch menus vary and can include fish and chips, stews, BBQs, meat and salad, and many other things depending on the ingredients we can source. Lunch costs \$2 for those who can pay, and some people can receive free lunch by negotiation with their social support worker.

St Mary's serves an average of 1800 meals for breakfast each month, and an average of 944 meals for lunch each month including an average of 4

children's lunches. The division of men and women is about 42% men and 58% women for breakfast, and about 59% men and 41% women for lunch.

Showers continue to be used; about 20 people each day come to St Mary's for a shower and shave because they are sleeping rough or living in inadequate accommodation. St Mary's Emergency Relief program provides assistance with paying for medication, utility bills and the cost of emergency accommodation. Service users can access information and referrals for housing, assistance with navigating the Centrelink process with weekly appointments on site, monthly optometry and hair cuts. Service users with no fixed address, or people who wish to keep their address private, can have their mail sent to St Mary's PO Box. Above all, St Mary's maintains a safe place for all people who come through our doors.

Lee-Ann Boyle, Services Manager



Group outing to Tom's Paddock. Photo taken by Forde.







## From the Fundraising Team

### Fundraising Events

The two major events, Wine Rules and the Footy Greats Bike Ride, were held again in November 2013. Wine Rules welcomed 19 teams to play a Touch Rugby tournament. Most of the team were wineries who donated wine to be reviewed by event patron, UK wine expert Matthew Jukes. Wine Rules raised a net total of \$34,651. Sponsors included Steamrail beer, Two Churches wine, Jayco, Ethos Café, Sofitel, Brown Brothers winery.

The Footy Greats Bike Ride welcomed 14 riders to enjoy a week of riding with Footy legends Peter "Crackers" Keenan and Wayne Schimmelbush. The ride started in Toora in South East Gippsland and travelled west via Phillip Island and Sorrento to Elwood. The Bike Ride raised a net total of \$17,396. Sponsors included Jayco, Teamworks Performance and Hotel Sorrento.

### Other events

St Mary's held two in-house dinners, in July 2013 and April 2014. The July event welcomed 5 young guest chefs who cooked their signature dishes for 40 diners. The April event celebrated the graduation of 8 service users from a hospitality employment training program, run in conjunction with William Angliss and made possible by a grant from the Inner North Community foundation.

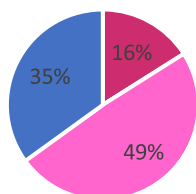
St Mary's held two trivia nights, in November 2013 and May 2014. The trivia nights aimed to make friends in the local community. We welcomed 170 guests to the November event and 195 guests to the May event. The two nights raised a combined total of \$16,053.

### Trusts and Foundations

St Mary's continues to receive grants from philanthropic trusts and foundations, generally for specific purposes. The trusts and foundations from whom we have received grants during 2013-2014 include:

- ◆ The Angel Foundation
- ◆ City of Yarra
- ◆ Father Kevin Broderick Memorial Trust Fund
- ◆ Grenet Foundation
- ◆ Inner North Community Foundation
- ◆ The Jack Brockhoff Foundation
- ◆ Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation
- ◆ The Magistrates' Court of Victoria
- ◆ The Marian and E H Flack Trust
- ◆ Minter Ellison Lawyers
- ◆ The Noel and Carmel O'Brien Family Foundation
- ◆ State Trustees Australia Foundation
- ◆ The Trust Company

Funding Sources  
Total Income \$1,876,882



■ Federal Government ■ State Government ■ Donations/Fundraising

St Mary's House of Welcome acknowledges the support of the Victorian Government for Mental Health and Homeless Support funding.

St Mary's House of Welcome acknowledges the support of the Commonwealth Government for support of the Day to Day Living program and Emergency Relief.





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*Financial Report available upon request addressed to the CEO.*