

ST MARY'S

HOUSE OF WELCOME

ANNUAL
REPORT

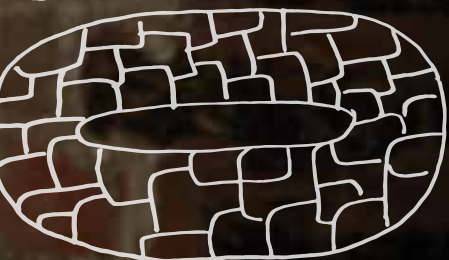




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OUR MISSION

Inspired by the spirit of the Daughters of Charity, St Mary's House of Welcome seeks to further social justice by standing with disadvantaged people offering support, solutions and hope.

OUR VALUES

- » Respect
- » Relationships
- » Welcoming
- » Hopefulness
- » Responsiveness



A REFLECTION FROM A TRUSTEE

"Love is inventive to infinity" [St Vincent de Paul]

Availability and flexibility have been central to the spirit of the Daughters of Charity since being founded in Paris in 1633. St Vincent de Paul and St Louise de Marillac recognised that current models of service delivery were inadequate to meet the needs of the most abandoned. To counter this they developed a new more open model of religious life, new ways of funding ministry, clear processes of accountability and quality care.

Sixty years ago the Daughters of Charity in Carlton and Fitzroy recognised the need for a centre to provide more to the local homeless. With generous donations, St Mary's House of Welcome was born on the 30th May 1960 offering a cup of tea, soup, a meal, clothing, showers and facilities to support children including a clinic.

St Mary's House of Welcome became a Company with a Board of Directors in 1991, however the Daughters of Charity remain the Trustees. The spirit of the Daughters lives on in the dedicated staff, volunteers and skilled management.

Vincent would say "love is inventive to infinity" and "and that was the beginning....As it was not then what it is now, there is reason to believe that it is still not what will be when God has perfected it." Those on the margins call us to change, to do better, to provide quality service delivery.



2020 has presented new challenges and opportunities. March was a landmark month for St Mary's House of Welcome and the Daughters of Charity! Recognising a small and aging community of Daughters in Australia and wishing to support our Works, the Sisters in Australia have integrated with the Daughters in Great Britain becoming the Province of Rosalie Rendu, a pioneering Daughter from the time of the French Revolution. Her spirit is well summarised in this quote attributed to her "Welcome everyone, speak to the poor with kindness and dignity, do not make them wait."

March 2020 also saw many changes to St Mary's House of Welcome in response to COVID 19. It was imperative to safely continue to support the increasing number of homeless, NDIS clients and vulnerable with meals, showers and personal professional support. The model of care-giving has changed many times as the needs of clients and government regulations changed. The flexible, safe, quality and personal service given at St Mary's House of Welcome has been truly inspiring.

Through all the perils of building expansion, new challenges, funding struggles, ideological shifts, new insights and COVID 19, St Mary's House of Welcome for 60 years [and more] has walked with those on the margins. Well done!!!

Debra McCarthy DC







CHAIR REFLECTION

For over sixty years, St Mary's House of Welcome, under the auspices of the Daughters of Charity, has provided essential services to people in need in our local community. The services we provide have shifted and changed as the needs of our community have changed. No more so than in 2020, as we have responded to a global pandemic – and our community continued to need our services even more. We focused on safe physical distancing and keeping people connected as they needed our services.

The Board of Directors (The Board) has focused on the implementation of our 3-year strategic plan and enterprise risk assessment, the growth of our NDIS program, revised Board governance structures and new Director recruitment. We conducted a review of our services during the pandemic response and continued our focus on mission.

As a Board, we have continued to provide guidance and support as we ran our services in new and responsive ways. We are now looking forward, hopeful that the worst of the pandemic is behind us. While we recover we continue to support our community as its needs change.

I want to thank our wonderful staff, led by Robina Bradley, our CEO, who have been flexible and adaptable as we shifted our services to meet the new circumstances.

The Board of Directors looks forward to working with our community – clients and service users, The Daughters of Charity, our funding agencies, donors, volunteers and staff as we reshape our services to meet the changing needs of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable in new and responsive ways.

Ralph Hampson



CEO REFLECTION

As we consider the past year, and look towards the coming 12 months, we are heartened by the fact we have offered hope, and will continue to offer hope to some of the most vulnerable people in our community. Inspired by the spirit of the Daughters of Charity, our mission and values remain central to the way we serve those who rely on us for help.

This year, St Mary's House of Welcome celebrated its 60th anniversary in May. That is, 60 years honouring our commitment to standing with our community.

One of the highlights of this year has been the way our small organisation has responded to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. I am very proud to have worked with such a committed team who were focused on ensuring that, during this period, we have continued to provide food security, outreach support and have strengthened partnerships.

Our NDIS program has continued to respond to need with the aim always to be significant in the life of each person we assist. The service is giving support, hope and the ability to focus on each client's own goals and abilities to develop solutions to their individual concerns. We have been able to provide purposeful change in small and significant ways, supporting skill development from financial self-sufficiency, to deciding which recreational goals are important to individuals. The simple act of going shopping, or a walk in the park, allows one-on-one time with their support worker to talk about life and future hopes. It's a time to support participants to take greater control in their lives with someone to listen and support them grow as they grow in confidence.

As we look to, and prepare for, a year unlike we have known before, we confidently see the House of Welcome as a very real and strong presence for those in need in our community. We foresee a very different future for service delivery with those in our homeless and disability sector. We will focus on developing new ways of community and program delivery in Covid-safe ways. We look forward to re-engaging with our amazing volunteers - the life blood of our service model. We will keep the Welcome very much alive.

I would like to acknowledge the tireless work of the senior management group as we have adapted quickly to changed circumstances. None of the work we did in our community this year would have been possible without our wonderful staff and volunteers and the incredible support we have received from our donors and supporters. Each member of the broader St Mary's House of Welcome community has played a vital role in helping us provide exceptional care, build strong connections and ensure our service users experience our values of respect, relationships and hope.

Our vision is that St Mary's House of Welcome will be universally acknowledged as a professional, cost efficient and effective organisation providing relevant services to the homeless and disadvantaged in accordance with the Vincentian Spirit.

We will continue our strategic focus on evidence-based models of service delivery, building effective partnerships and industry connectedness, with an eye to secure public and private funding and the pursuit of opportunities to establish satellite services as demand grows as our operating hallmarks. Thank you,

Robina Bradley



'It might have saved my life coming here.'

Things started to fall apart for Mark following his divorce, which left him with massive debts and a sense of hopelessness. He started to drink in an attempt to escape the reality of his situation, and to mask the pain he was feeling.

Soon, Mark couldn't go a day without drinking at least two bottles of wine - he even had a bottle by his bedside. Drinking was the first thing he did when he woke up, and the last thing he did before he went to bed.

He knew he had to stop drinking, but felt impossible to do it without help.

"It was like getting on the Titanic: I knew I was going to sink."



Mark knew about St Mary's House of Welcome, as he had often walked passed. He knew it was a place he could get help to turn his life around.

Mark was linked in with a community support worker who not only helped him access alcohol counselling, but also helped him navigate other areas of his life in which he was struggling. It hasn't been easy, and Mark has had a few setbacks along the way. But he credits the team at St Mary's House of Welcome for helping him find a sense of purpose and belonging, and turning his life around.

"I find it hard sometimes to be in the outside world. It's become a home to me... I can come in and have a hot meal - they are exceptional...I can have breakfast, lunch - you get really looked after. I can't thank St Mary's House of Welcome enough...I probably would have kept drinking if it were not for St Mary's House of Welcome. If I kept the way I was going, I might have been a goner. It might have saved my life coming here,"

For many of our regular service users, like Mark, St Mary's House of Welcome is a "sanctuary". It's a place where people can come and get the support they need with no judgement or expectation.

It's a place where they can begin to turn their lives around.



OUR WORK – At a Glance

Provided **81,174**
meals/meal packs



Provided over **17,467**
'periods of support'



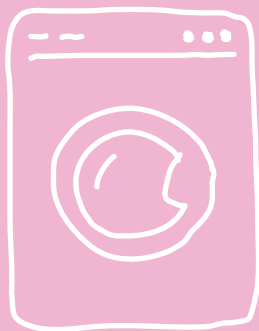
Provided
rough sleepers
with **4,200**
showers and
personal hygiene
packs



Gave out **180**
café meal vouchers
and **3,626**
emergency
food hampers to
those in need



Distributed
over **135**
laundry
passes



Had **901**
people
volunteer
with us



Benefitted from **9,036** volunteer hours





VIP VISITS

The Premier of Victoria, Dan Andrews and Richard Wynne MP made a special pre-Christmas visit to St Mary's House of Welcome in December, chatting to staff and service users and learning more about our programs. A special team from the Premier's Office stayed to serve lunch and wrap Christmas presents for our community members. St Mary's House of Welcome is grateful for the ongoing support of the Victorian Government and its commitment to the vital work we do.

WELCOME RELIEF

ST MARY'S HOUSE OF WELCOME'S COVID-19 RESPONSE

Sixty years ago, the Daughters of Charity saw a desperate need and responded; opening a soup kitchen on Brunswick Street to feed people who were destitute and homeless, living in the slums, and on the streets, of inner-city Melbourne.

That soup kitchen became known as St Mary's House of Welcome.

Sixty years later, in 2020, Covid-19 has devastated lives across the globe. St Mary's House of Welcome has remained steadfast in its commitment to serve those most in need.





From March, we had to change the way we did things. As an essential service, we temporarily changed our service model to provide substantive “Welcome Relief” take-away meal-packs to rough sleepers and other highly vulnerable, disadvantaged people who visit our service, as well as delivering hundreds of meal-packs each day to homeless Victorians placed in temporary motel accommodation across suburban Melbourne. We also provided showers, fresh underwear, hygiene packs, hampers and resources, and outreach support to service users via telephone where possible.

To be ‘social distancing’ compliant, we had to suspend our social programs, organised activities and outings. We also asked our amazing team of volunteers to take a well-earned break.

This altered response ensured we could continue to be there for the people who rely on us for help and support, while still be compliant with health and regulatory imperatives. Not only did this program provide vital food security and material support to highly vulnerable community members, but it also sent an important message to them that they were not forgotten in a time of crisis and that they are valued and cared for by their local community. This proved particularly important during this time of fear and uncertainty.

Service users were able to maintain a sense of connectedness through their interactions with St Mary's House of Welcome Community Support workers when they attended the service to pick up meals or have showers, and/or receive telephone outreach support.

The Welcome Relief program also allowed St Mary's House of Welcome staff to monitor the needs of people presenting, so that we could refer service users to health and allied services where needed and ensure that other support, including COVID screening questions, temperature checks and mental health first aid we available as required.





From the beginning of the pandemic in March to June 30, 2020, we:

- » Distributed **14,533** meal packs through our front-door service
- » Delivered **27,355** meal packs to homeless people in temporary hotel accommodation
- » Provided rough sleepers with **1,400** showers and personal hygiene packs
- » Gave out **180** café meal vouchers and **476** emergency food hampers to those in need
- » Distributed over **50** laundry passes

HOMELESSNESS

The St Mary's House of Welcome Homelessness Program provided practical and hands-on support to hundreds of people experiencing chronic homelessness over the past 12 months, achieving outcomes well beyond expectations.

There were 17,467 episodes of support provided to service users, including meal provision, showers, distribution of material aid, information and referrals. St Mary's House of Welcome provided an average of 350 showers per month, providing basic hygiene packs and new clothing and underwear.

Beginning March 2020, St Mary's House of Welcome's service delivery was significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent government restrictions. While the public health restriction limited the amount of community members we could have on site, we were able to remain open through-out and continued to provide interim crisis support and referral, nutritious take away meals, showers and personal hygiene packs and laundry passes to our community.

St Mary's House of Welcome also provided significant Alcohol and other Drug prevention services and supports (Assessment, counselling, information, advocacy, referral and occasional brokerage for opiate replacement therapy script assistance (naltrexone, methadone, etc) to 21 service users.

Over 24,000 Victorians and 116,000 Australians are homeless on any given night. This includes families, young people, older people, single adults, people with disabilities, people in regional and rural Victoria and people in urban neighbourhoods.

Homelessness is not a choice. Homelessness is one of the most compelling examples of disadvantage in the community, and one of the most important markers of social exclusion.

HOMELESSNESS FACT



As part of our Homelessness Week advocacy work in October, St Mary's House of Welcome invited various Federal, State and Local Government politicians from all sides of the fence to visit us, serve breakfast and lunch to our service users, and learn first-hand about the issues facing people experiencing chronic homelessness and disadvantage.



National Disability Insurance Scheme – Psychosocial Support Program

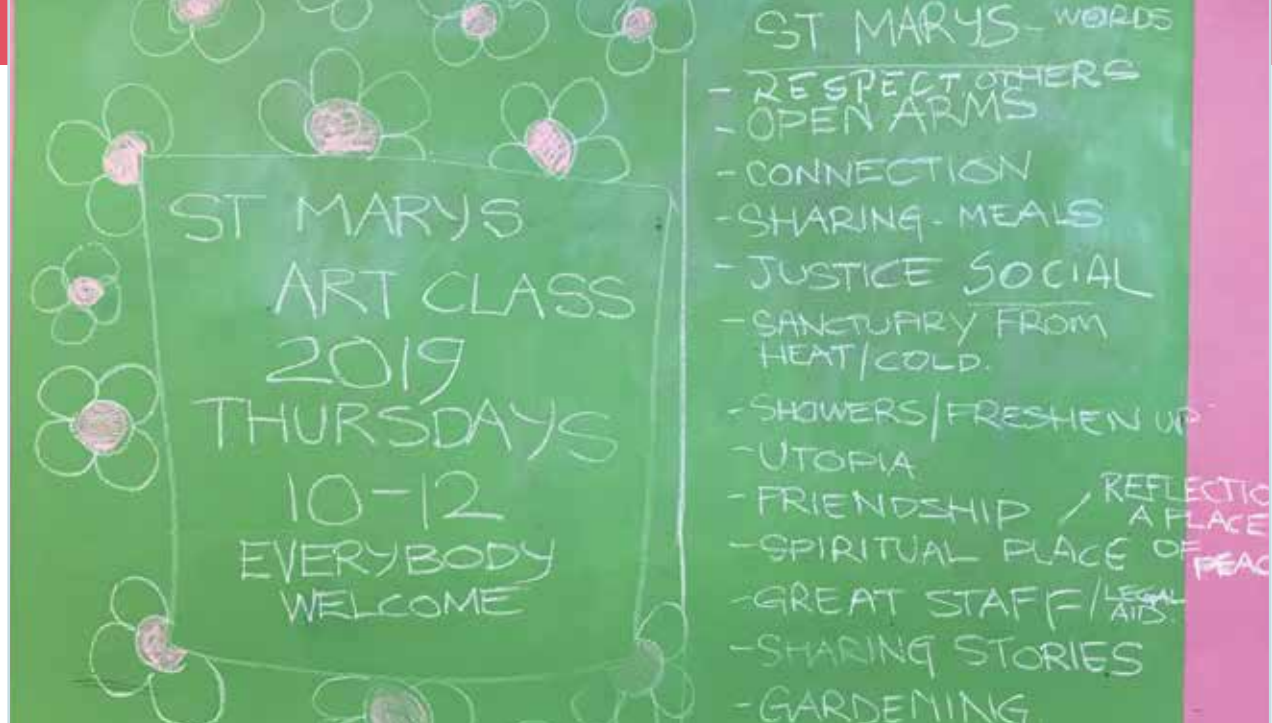
St Mary's House of Welcome became a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) registered provider in 2017. This followed the closure of the Day to Day Living (D2DL) program, which had provided activities to improve the quality of life for individuals with severe and persistent mental illness. This included activities which delivered social connectedness, an important factor that contributes to people's recovery.

This change required considerable support to be provided by St Mary's House of Welcome to former D2DL participants to help each person gain access to an NDIS funding package. A Transition Support Worker was appointed with funding provided through the North Western Primary Health Network.

In June 2019, there were 24 participants with approved NDIS packages. This grew to 46 participants by June 2020, with a further 12 participants currently being supported to transition because they have been too unwell or unable to go through the process of testing eligibility at present. The Transition Support Worker role has been extended to June 2021 and some Continuation of Support funding has also been provided to support three participants who were found not eligible for the NDIS.

Most of the program participants live locally within the Fitzroy/Richmond area and there is a significant group of Vietnamese speakers (47%). Almost all participants have a mental health or neurological condition including schizophrenia, acquired brain injury or other psychiatric condition.

Services are aligned to NDIS funding types and include the following:



- » **Individual 1:1 Support:** Staff consider the person's challenges and goals and creates a pathway to meet their needs such as; Community Access, Housing Support, Maintaining Relationships, and Individual Skill Development.
- » **Groups Activities:** Both facilitated centre based or community-based group activities for people to meet others and learn new skills.
- » **Support Co-ordination:** Helps people navigate the NDIS, explore goals, and put the client's NDIS Plan and services in place whilst supporting them to eventually self-manage their own NDIS Plan.

From March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic social restrictions had a dramatic impact on the NDIS program and its participants. Stage three restrictions saw the cancellation of group activities and 1:1 community-based support. Support was provided to participants to apply through NDIS funding to purchase I-Pads, 1:1 on-site support, telephone group conferences and daily/weekly check in and support.

Over the year, the outcomes achieved for participants have been both large and small but always significant in the life of the person. The service continues to give each person support, hope and the ability to focus on their goals and the skills to develop solutions to their own concerns.

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Volunteers – whether they be individuals, corporate groups, school groups or client volunteers – are integral to the daily operations of St Mary's House of Welcome and are central to our ability to continue to deliver high quality services.

In usual circumstances, volunteers assist with running programs and outings, preparing and serving meals, running our reception area, helping with fundraising events and ensuring that St Mary's House of Welcome continues to be a warm and welcoming space.

Of course, this year, due to Covid-19, the Volunteer Engagement Program has looked very different. In March, the program abruptly ceased because of the lock-down and social distancing directions issued by the Victorian Government. This resulted in a 23 per cent reduction in total Volunteer activity during the year.

St Mary's House of Welcome staff undertook tasks that had been performed by volunteers during this period until it became apparent that client presentations were increasing and required greater support. There were some enthusiastic volunteers who returned to help in May following a partial relaxation of restrictions however, the Volunteer Engagement Program was closed again following the second wave of restrictions.

In financial year 19/20, a total of **901** people volunteered at St Mary's House of Welcome, devoting **9,036** hours of time to helping improve the lives of some of the most vulnerable people in the community.

The total nominal value of volunteer engagement for the year was **\$260,985**

We are incredibly grateful for the dedication, commitment and skill our wonderful volunteers bring to the House of Welcome. We look forward to welcoming them back in a Covid-safe way as soon as we are able.



In early December, St Mary's House of Welcome was very fortunate to be joined by a special volunteer team – the Governor of Victoria, the Honourable Linda Dessau, and her husband, Mr Anthony Howard. The Governor and Mr Howard joined our regular volunteers, serving a delicious lunch to our community members. It was wonderful to be able to share our work.

VIP VISITS





STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT SURVEYS

In 2019 we undertook our first staff, client and volunteer engagement surveys. Supported by InSync, the survey results told us a lot about ourselves – our performance, our culture and values, our relationships and how we go about our work. The feedback identified what we do well, but also where we need to improve and what to put in place now and in the future.

The Board and Executive are pleased to know that St Mary's House of Welcome staff, volunteers and clients are highly engaged and proud of the work we do to make a difference in our community. Our clients rated trust, feeling valued and knowing staff would do what they said they would do in their three key areas of feedback.

Over 100 volunteers, 81 clients and 21 staff responded to the survey. On all questions, results were in the top quartile and top decile.

The surveys will continue to be conducted and repeated in early 2021.

EVENTS

St Mary's House of Welcome runs several events a year, both to raise funds to support our vital work, and to celebrate the community we serve.

The Big Give

The Big Give is a Christmas Lunch run annually by St Mary's House of Welcome for over 300 people experiencing chronic homelessness and disadvantage, held at the Fitzroy Town Hall.

This year marked the 17th year we have run The Big Give. Over 100 volunteers helped us to serve a traditional roast Christmas Lunch with all the trimmings. Entertainment was provided throughout the day, and the lunch topped off with a visit from Santa.

Each year, we are overwhelmed by the generosity of the broader community who give their time, money and gifts in kind to make sure no one misses out. A huge thank you to everyone who either donated or gave up part of their Christmas Day to volunteer at The Big Give and help make sure it was a special day for St Mary's House of Welcome community members.

"The Big Give is a very practical expression of what we do, offering support and hope... For both the regular guests and volunteers, there's a real sense of community and joy... Most of the guests are existing clients of St Mary's House of Welcome; vulnerable people who are dealing with hardships related to chronic homelessness... For Christmas day, our clients know they're valued, and they know that there's a community that supports them and thinks about them."

– Robina Bradley, CEO



Degustation for Dignity

The Degustation for Dignity gala fundraiser was held on Friday 25 October at the Collingwood Town Hall, with over 200 people in attendance. This year, we were honoured to have Max Allen, the award-winning Melbourne-based wine expert and journalist hosting the event. Max matched an amazing selection of local wines to a seven-course degustation menu, before sharing his in-depth knowledge and expertise of all things wine-related in a Masterclass for guests on the night.





“Wheels for Meals” Bike Ride

The annual ‘Wheels for Meals’ bike ride was held on Tuesday 12 – Saturday 16 November with 26 sponsored riders riding covering some of Victoria’s most picturesque countryside along the Great Ocean Road.

The ride began in Port Fairy, finished in Sorrento and stopped at Port Campbell, Apollo Bay and Torquay. It was a highly enjoyable week with a group of great blokes for a great few days of cycling while raising money for people experiencing chronic homelessness.

NICKY'S STORY

Nicky was born in Collingwood, Melbourne and she was one of three children. Her younger years were not easy as she experienced bullying throughout her school years, due to a being born with a speech impediment. However, Nicky remembers years with her whole family as happy ones. Until her father passed away suddenly. Her father is a man that she describes as a pure gentleman. It was after this tremendous loss that Nicky's life came to a crossroad.

Nicky's mother remarried shortly after the loss of her father, and Nicky's life was turned upside down. She experienced family violence at home and later become a victim of domestic abuse. After many years of abuse, Nicky made the brave choice to leave. As a result, Nicky found herself homeless and disconnected from family, friends, and more importantly, her children.

Nicky became chronically entrenched in homelessness for more than 10 years. One day, she was walking up Brunswick Street Fitzroy when she saw a "WELCOME" sign. Not knowing what this place was or what the word "WELCOME" inferred, she was cold and hungry, so she willingly went inside. She had found St Mary's House of Welcome.

Nicky talks about having an instant sense of safety, warmth, compassion and love upon entering St Mary's House of Welcome; something she hadn't felt since she was a child when her father was still alive.



It has been more than 12 years since Nicky first walked through those doors on Brunswick Street and so much positive change has occurred in Nicky's life since then. With ongoing support and commitment from community support workers, Nicky now finally has a place of her own to call home. No longer homeless and disconnected, and now with a supportive friendship group.

St Mary's House of Welcome is now so much more to Nicky than just another service to attend. To her, it has become like a home, and more importantly, a family.



ABOUT US

Board of Directors

St Mary's House of Welcome is governed by a Board of Directors who are committed to preserving the spirit of the Daughters of Charity in their work with people experiencing disadvantage.

Board Directors bring extensive experience and diverse skills to support the governance of St Mary's House of Welcome, including financial, marketing, communications, social work, legal, health and infrastructure.

2019-2020 Board Directors:

- » Ralph Hampson – Board Chair
- » Sister Debra McCarthy DC – Trustee
- » Michael Morrison Kee – Deputy Chair
- » Simon Esposito
- » Jennifer Davidson
- » Bridget Organ
- » Amelia Dixon
- » Rebecca Derrington
- » Elizabeth Bishop
(retired October 2019)
- » Neil McCarthy
(retired November 2019)

Staff

St Mary's House of Welcome comprises a team of passionate and dedicated staff who work to support people who are sleeping rough and experiencing chronic homelessness and disadvantage.



Executive Team

In 2019-2020, the Executive Team comprised:

- » **Robina Bradley**
Chief Executive Officer, Company Secretary
- » **Kathy Hogarty**
Business Manager
- » **Stephen Milliken**
Operations and Services Manager
- » **Kristine Robertson**
Fundraising and Communications Manager



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

St Mary's House of Welcome gratefully acknowledges the ongoing support of the Victorian Government, the City of Yarra, community members, donors, volunteers, schools, businesses, and church and community groups which has enabled us to deliver much needed, quality services to people sleeping rough or experiencing chronic homelessness.

We would like to sincerely thank all of those who have contributed – either financially or in-kind – in 2019/2020. We would particularly like to acknowledge the following for their generous support:

The Victorian Government
Department of Premier and Cabinet
Department of Health and Human Services
City of Yarra
City of Melbourne
NDIA
Angel Foundation
Second Bite
StreetSmart Australia
Victorian Parliamentary Kitchens
Bagot Gjergja Foundation
James B Ryan Trust
Campbell Foundation
Merwe Laws Foundation
Xavier Social Justice Network
Valdichiesa Foundation
Michael and Janet Buxton Foundation
Minter Ellison Lawyers
Westpac Foundation
Jonamare Foundation
Gandel Philanthropy
Lochtenberg Foundation
Danks Trust

Bendigo Clifroy Community Bank
Isaacson Davis Foundation
Father Kevin Broderick Memorial Trust Fund
St Vincent de Paul Society Eastern Central Council
Catholic Church Insurance Foundation
Inner North Community Foundation
The Life Centre Trust
Order of Saint Lazarus of Jerusalem – Vic Commandery
Adaptalift
Pinchapoo
Today Design
St Vincent's Private Hospital
Orange Sky Laundry
St Mary's House of Welcome Volunteers
St Mary's House of Welcome Staff
St Mary's House of Welcome service users
St Mary's House of Welcome partner agencies
St Mary's House of Welcome school partners



What is the House of Welcome?

For over 60 years, St Mary's House of Welcome has worked to ensure community members who are chronically homeless, disadvantaged, and socially isolated to be nourished and safe, to have practical support and to find hope, experience belongingness and achieve to their full potential.

With your help, we provide:

- » Hot nutritious meals with table service, twice daily
- » Free showers, with towels and toiletries
- » Emergency relief (such as food hampers, clothing and accommodation)
- » Case management and psycho-social support
- » Comprehensive social inclusion program
- » Free monthly optometry and haircuts
- » Computer access
- » Centrelink access
- » Health and wellbeing
- » Community gardening
- » NDIS
- » Access to Fitzroy Legal Service

smhow.org.au

A work of the Daughters of Charity
ABN: 54 050 278 754

St Mary's House of Welcome

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