

ISSUE 1 {2020}

networking

BRINGING THE LIGHT OF CHRIST INTO COMMUNITIES



Welcome

Month of Prayer

Country communities come together

Friendship with Frank

Helping our heroes on the front line



Churches
of Christ
in Queensland

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networking

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networking contains a variety of news and stories from across Churches of Christ in Queensland. Articles and photos can be submitted to communications@cofcqld.com.au. The submission deadline for the next edition of *networking* is 30 April 2020.



CEO update



It has been a humbling summer witnessing the devastating fires across Australia and the way the country, and international community, have pulled together to help all those impacted by the crisis. I was inundated with questions from members of our churches and services about what they can do to help as well as stories of initiatives undertaken. You can read some of these within the magazine.

Month of Prayer

It was, without doubt, a sobering way to enter 2020. In the lead up to Easter, it is now our time to reflect and take stock of these events and use the gift of prayer for the year ahead, that it might be filled with the community spirit exhibited in the face of these disasters. To aid with this, we have launched the Month of Prayer again for 2020, to guide our prayers and devotions. Over the five Sundays from 12 March to 12 April (Easter Sunday), we will focus on the five elements of our Churches of Christ Way – welcome, wellbeing, home, community and faith. You can view the prayer guides online at cofc.com.au.

Strategic Plan

Six months ago, we started on the path guided by our new Strategic Plan 2019–2024. Plans for our organisational areas continue to be developed, giving more specific direction for how we can all achieve the plan's priorities. As we progress through the year, I look forward to reporting some of the outcomes with you.

Last year, we were focused on the theme of 'better before bigger' as we examined the organisation and discovered the gamut of what we could be doing better. This year, we are focusing on how we can enrich our organisation to take us forward on our Strategic Plan journey.

Welcome

Coming up, I will be visiting a number of churches and services across the state. This is one of my favourite things to do: to meet with staff, volunteers, clients and church communities, and listening to their stories about life in their workplaces and communities. I look forward to meeting and engaging with more of you this year as you welcome me to your community.

“

We see ourselves as a movement more than an organisation, and as such there is always room for people to join us and contribute. We practice warm hospitality and seek to act in love towards all people and to embrace their unique gifts, abilities and experiences.”

Recently, I have been travelling the state to welcome new pastors to a number of churches. Thank you for the warm welcome I have received.

On the weekend of 1 February I travelled with our Director Church and Community Engagement Tim McMenamin to St George. I could not have asked for a warmer welcome. Thank you to Derek and Jodie Schriller from the new St George Church of Christ, you are living the love of Jesus Christ in your community. The couple have also set up a new church in the community of Dirranbandi, south of St George, and are currently seeking a larger meeting space as they have outgrown their current location, which is a wonderful testament to their connection to their community and joy in delivering the word of Jesus Christ in south west Queensland.

I hope you enjoy this edition of Networking, finding inspiration, motivation and enrichment in the stories from our churches, mission and services.

I wish each of you a blessed Easter season, may you remember the sacrifice of Jesus Christ at this most holy time while cherishing time with your loved ones. ■

Gary Edwards
Chief Executive Officer

Welcome new leaders

The end of 2019 and the start of 2020 has welcomed in a season of change for many of our churches, with new leaders taking the reins of their church communities.

- Bundaberg – Avenell Heights Church of Christ appointed Pastor Trevor ‘Rev’ Springate
- Bundaberg – Bundaberg Church of Christ Evan Trebbin interim Senior Pastor
- Brisbane North – Sharon Edwards started at Brisbane North Church of Christ in November as Community Minister.
- Dalby – Kedron Schneider welcomed recently.
- Gladstone – Colin Christian was inducted as Pastor at Gladstone Church of Christ on 26 January.
- Mackay – Paul Hicks was inducted at Mackay Church of Christ on 9 February
- Maryborough – Jeff Lawrence finished with the church on 31 January, with Phillip Crimes starting in the position on 2 February.
- Nambour – Steve Nixon commenced a six-month interim position as Pastor at Sanctuary Park Church of Christ.
- Springwood – Dale White, having moved from HumeRidge Church of Christ, has commenced as Pastor at Springwood Church of Christ. Dale’s wife Wendy has commenced as the Women’s Pastor. They were inducted on 16 February.
- Raceview – Mark Westhuyzen finished up as pastor on 2 February, with Roger Harris to commence as new Pastor.
- Highfields – Chris Gribble continuing until Easter, with Matt George appointed as his replacement. ■

“

We pray for our church leadership. May they guide their communities in the love and grace of Jesus Christ.

”

Board and Council in 2020

The Board and Council have returned for 2020, with their first meetings held on 28 January and 12 February respectively.

Last year the Board and Council hit the road, holding meetings in various regional centres to get to know the local churches, services and broader communities.

This year they will be doing the same and savouring the chance to connect with more members of our movement.

Following the introduction of new aged care quality standards and the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, there has been more scrutiny and audits by state and federal government departments of aged care services' boards. Some of the audit requirements allow departments to attend (announced or unannounced) board or board committee meetings. Also during audit interviews, there is more interest in good governance of boards and how they implement and adopt board matters.

Our Board, who are responsible for the governance of our organisation and our strategic direction, and all business areas of the organisation, endeavours this year to be more visible, particularly to our aged care services. During 2020 the Board will undertake, for the first time, an external Board and Chair performance review. This will ensure that we continue to operate at best practice for the organisation and at law.



We are looking forward to meeting our church leaders and those in our services.



Board Chair Ken Ewald said the board members are looking forward to visiting our services, meeting staff, volunteers, residents and families.

“We come from a wide range of backgrounds; from finance, commercial industry and ministry, and visiting the services allows us to see and understand the nature of the work they do and the environments they do it in,” Ken said.

“In our visits to the Wide Bay region in 2019, we all came away having learnt so much from the conversations and inspirational stories that were shared. We look forward to hearing more stories on our travels in 2020.”

In May, the Board and Council will be travelling to the Southern and Darling Downs regions to meet with our communities that have been so deeply impacted by the drought and bushfires, and to tour some of our newer facilities.

“We are looking forward to meeting our church leaders and those in our services and hearing first-hand what God is doing through you to shine the light of Christ into our communities,” Ken said.

The Council guide the mission and objectives of the organisation through intentional prayer and encouragement. Conference Council Chair Geoff Charles is also excited to be hitting the road for the regional tour, and seeing how our mission is being lived and God's grace delivered in our communities. ■

Month of Prayer

From 12 March to 12 April we will once again unite in prayer in the lead up to Easter.

We encourage everyone to join in this time of focus, reflection and dedication.

Our Conference Council is calling on church members, staff, volunteers and our community to join in this special time of prayer.

We will focus on all aspects of how we can bring the light of Christ through our churches and services framed by the five elements of our Churches of Christ Way – welcome, wellbeing, home, community and faith.

Prayer was a priority for Jesus. His life and ministry were built on it. If Jesus needed to pray, then how much more do we? During this time let us give ourselves to prayer for everything we do ourselves and as a movement of God throughout Australia and beyond.

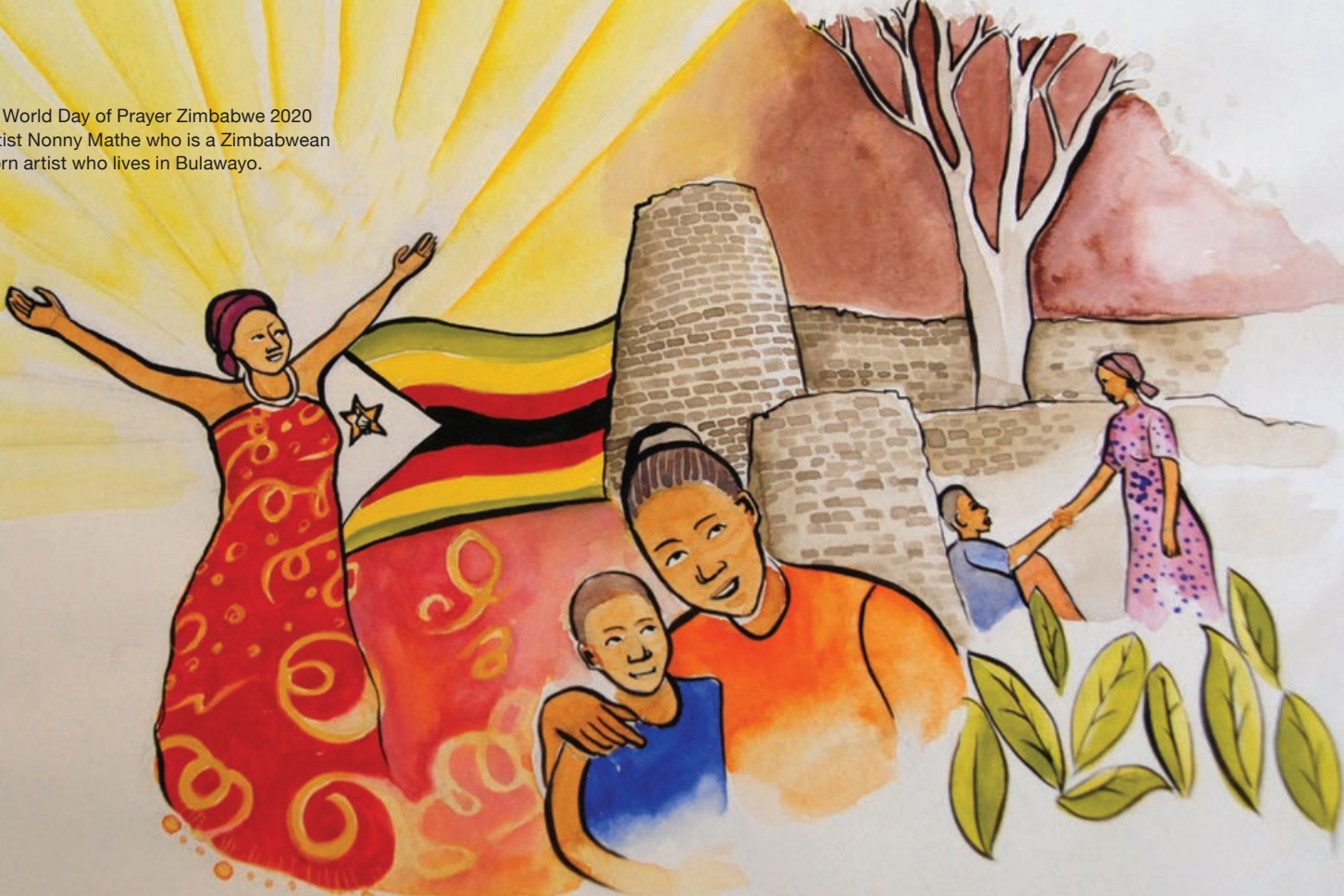
Pray for the leadership in our conference and churches, our state, our nation and the world. Pray for the

staff, carers and those we serve in our various services, for our chaplains working in communities all over the country, for our church and community engagement teams and all our volunteers.

Importantly pray for all those staff who support these front line services with their varied skills and expertise. Pray for every church and each member, that they will know the transforming power of God's love, and share that love with others in the unique way he has gifted and called them to. We are inviting as many as have a heart for the Kingdom, to join us at Churches of Christ as we dedicate the month to prayer. We are seeking God's direction for our work and listening to what amazing things he will lead us into in 2020 and beyond.

Go to cofc.com.au where you will find weekly prayer guides to lead you during this holy time of prayerful reflection. ■

■ World Day of Prayer Zimbabwe 2020
 artist Nonny Mathe who is a Zimbabwean
 born artist who lives in Bulawayo.



World Day of Prayer joins in prayer and action to kick-start Coffee Chaplaincy

World Day of Prayer is a global ecumenical movement led by Christian women who welcome all to join in prayer and action for peace and justice especially on the first Friday of March each year.

This year that is 6 March.

Each year a different country writes the program that is celebrated in over 100 countries, translated into 79 languages, with 1.5 million people participating.

The World Day of Prayer 2020 host country is Zimbabwe and the theme is 'Rise! Take Your Mat and Walk' John 5:2-9a.

Our sisters from Zimbabwe are taking Jesus' encounter to be a call to act in love for peace and reconciliation. The theme suggests that we should not be afraid to act on the word of God: God is offering us the steps for personal and social transformation. This is the time for change!



■ Justine Cadena, Regional Engagement Partner, Church and Community Engagement receiving funds from Vicki Marney, World Day of Prayer Qld to kick-start the Coffee Chaplaincy.

We are empowered to take up our mats. Let us give a healing hand to the needy, let us embrace children with love as their future is ahead, and let us open our arms in joy as the time to rise up has come.

One way of living out prayer and action is through support for community initiatives such as Churches of Christ in Queensland's Coffee Chaplaincy, which

is now supporting people receiving treatment for mental health illnesses at an Ipswich hospital. The aim is to engage with people who are undergoing a season of darkness and despair. Through the relationship, the volunteer chaplain is able to model unconditional love, humility in service and a joyful spirit, with the aim, when invited, to speak of the hope we have in Jesus.

With prayer and practical support, the Coffee Chaplaincy in Ipswich commenced in February.

Do you like a coffee and a chat? Volunteers are needed along with donations of coffee beans. If you would like to know more about the Coffee Chaplaincy, contact Justine Cadena at justine.cadena@cofcqld.com.au or drop in at 41 Brookfield Road Kenmore Qld 4069.

For more information about World Day of Prayer, visit: www.worlddayofprayeraustralia.org/ ■

Jesus and the Ferret: an Easter analogy

By Ben Boland – Seniors Chaplain

The pet store was huge – fish, coral, parrots, puppies, kittens, ducklings, snakes, lizards, tarantulas, scorpions and ferrets – so we visited one afternoon as a cheap ‘zoo’ trip.

Exchanging ‘G’days’ with the Sulpha Crested Cockatoo, I read his sign ‘I bite’ to the boys. We were immersed in the sights, sounds and smells of the animals. I was dragged to the freezer to examine the dead rats (snake food) and then to see the Nemos (clown fish) and the coral. As the boys marvelled at the various animals my focus was making sure I had an eye on them at all times.

“Dad, what’s in here?” I came over to Ethan and explained that it was the ferret cage and read aloud the sign ‘Do not put your fingers in the ferret cage – WE BITE’, and explained that ferrets were hunters with sharp teeth and to stay well back from the cage. I then turned around to rescue a duckling, which another son was ‘loving’ far too much for the duckling’s comfort.

“ARRRRRAH!!” I spun to find Ethan with his finger in the cage with a ferret attached! I dashed over and tried rescue him. The cage door was locked and trying to pull Ethan’s hand from the ferret’s jaws only increased the volume of his cry.

“

Jesus loved us so much, he gave his finger for us, and he gave his life to enable us to have a relationship with God now and evermore.

”

I put my finger in the cage and poked the ferret. Success! Ethan was free, bleeding, but alive. However the ferret was now attached to my finger, which was also bleeding significantly. Eventually, and with not insubstantial suffering, I extracted my finger.

Before we had to the chance to leave the shop, Ethan screamed again: “ARRRRRAH!” This time he had put his finger in the cockatoo cage. Again I rescued my son at great cost to my finger!

What does this have to do with Jesus and Easter?

Well to start with, Jesus’ death on the cross has much better evidence than my afternoon in the pet shop – both are real events with real blood and pain. However there are other strong similarities.

Jesus taught people to live lives of love and he warned them of the consequences of not loving, just as I warned my son about the consequences of not keeping his fingers out of the ferret’s cage. But we ignored Jesus and failed to love God and each other. The consequences of our lack of love being death and separation from God. Jesus loved us so much, he gave his finger for us, and he gave his life to enable us to have a relationship with God now and evermore. More amazingly, he continues to love us when we continue not to love, when we put our finger in metaphorical cockatoo cage.

Friends, too often we think Christianity is an option for good people. The truth however is Christianity is for bad people like me. Just as Ethan could neither keep his finger out, nor rescue his finger. I cannot live a life of perfect love, nor can I rescue myself. If I had just needed instruction, Jesus could have just taught. If I had just needed an example, Jesus could have just lived. My lack of love had a cost I could not pay – so Jesus died for me. Indeed ‘God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son, that whoever believed in him should not perish but have eternal life. God did not send his son to condemn the world but to save it.’ ■

Helping our heroes on the frontline

Ministering at home and abroad, during times of peace and war, chaplains are an integral part of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) community.

Accompanying ADF personnel on exercises and into operations, a chaplain's pastoral care supports them through their anxieties, fears, moral dilemmas, guilt, fatigue and loneliness.

Chaplains also provide opportunities for people to come together and worship, which is particularly important when far from their usual community facilities. Spiritual ministry can foster high qualities of faith, character and conduct, which inspire courage and self-sacrifice in adversity.

Churches of Christ in Queensland members have served and still serve in all three services of the defence force: army, navy and air force. A number have reached senior positions within their services.

Peter Willis joined the army after 15 years in the reserves. His 17-year Army career culminated in his appointment to Australia's second-highest ranking chaplain. Deployed to conflict zones such as Afghanistan, Iraq and Timor-Leste, as well as Banda Aceh in the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami, Peter helped people in times of extreme distress and provided God's blessing to the lives of those who give so much of themselves in keeping our nation secure.

Peter now leads the congregation at Caloundra Church of Christ and is enjoying being back with his family.

Mike Folland, whose usual role is General Manager – Office of the CEO, was recently deployed to Operation Bushfire Assist in Victoria. The ADF has been assisting the civil authorities in their bushfire recovery efforts including providing transport and clearing land.

As a chaplain with the army reserve, Mike is providing pastoral support to

reservists who are demobilising after helping communities in the immediate aftermath of the fires.

"The troops have witnessed some very traumatic and upsetting scenes. Most people will be fine and just want to go back home. But some may need support with managing and processing their emotional responses to their experiences," Mike said.

"I'm there to listen whenever someone wants to talk. And if it will help, I can suggest they seek medical or psychological support if they're not coping. Conversely, if someone needs spiritual support, the health team will refer them to me."

Mike joined the reserves as a chaplain in 2001 and has assisted with previous bushfire recoveries and other major exercises in Australia. Part of the Queensland University Regiment's senior leadership team, he also provides advice to his commanding officer on moral guidance and ethics. ■



■ Mike Folland, left, was farewelled by CEO Gary Edwards and his team before setting off to help with the bushfire recovery.



"People with strong belief structures have been shown to be more emotionally resilient. An important part of my role is advising on how we can support soldiers to build such a structure, enabling them to make the right decisions in times of huge stress."





Love with no strings attached

Written by Amanda Wright for Core Life Magazine

“It starts with breaking the cycle. Imagine if everyone was brave enough to foster just one child, how different the world would be.” Foster carer, Lisa.

To love another human being with no strings attached is what we were created to do as human beings. But this amazing gift that allows us to care for complete strangers, is what makes fostering the hardest, yet the most rewarding, thing a person can do.

Lisa Metten and her husband, Graham, started their fostering journey with us eight years ago.

“I saw another mother, one I respected and admired, foster children and I wanted to be like her. They had been fostering in our community for more than 25 years. Whenever anyone asks me why I decided to become a foster parent, I always laugh and say I copied Trish,” Lisa said.

Lisa and Graham have three biological children who are now adults aged 24, 22 and 20. But currently in their Mackay home are three young children, aged 2, 7 and 9. While Lisa doesn't know the exact number of children she has cared for over the years, she estimates it to be more than 70 who have come into her home, some only for a night.

“I look after mainly emergency foster needs. What that means is in the next 10 minutes, I could receive a phone call to say that a new child will be at my home within hours. They may only stay a couple of days before they are returned home. While a lot of situations can be long-term, many are short-term and urgent,” Lisa said.

She added that you need to have

patience and be non-judgemental to be a foster parent.

“We can't judge what they have been through. To have your children taken from you is to hit rock bottom. It's not about punishing them, it's about resolving the situation and healing the family dynamics to allow the child to return to their family.

“To work through the reunification process and see a child go back into a loving family is the most rewarding experience.”

19 to 26 April is Queensland Foster and Kinship Carer week, a time when we thank our dedicated and selfless foster and kinship carers for opening their hearts and their homes, just like Lisa and Graham, to child and young people in need. ■



Volunteers bring tech literacy to the streets

In December 2017 we launched an outreach service, DigiAsk, providing digital access and education to marginalised individuals and communities in Brisbane, Ipswich and the Gold Coast.

The ‘all things digital’ service enables individuals to remain connected to their community, family and friends as well as other government and specialist services.

Acting General Manager Housing Services Alicia Follent said one of the main cohorts of people accessing the service last year were those experiencing homelessness.

“Our goal of bridging the gap between disadvantaged groups in our communities and the digital tools they need to utilise to improve their situations is still in full effect. This year, over 50 per cent of those who accessed the service were experiencing homelessness, a third had visited us before and twice as many males than females engaged with us,” Alicia said.

The DigiVan was a regular at homelessness support locations, housing developments across Brisbane, Ipswich and the Gold Coast, often attending with other agencies and services to provide a range of outreach services to the patrons, including the new location at Yumba Hostel (part of Aboriginal Hostels Ltd.) in the West End (pictured).

“Thanks to a wonderful group of volunteers, the DigiAsk program was able to connect with 350 people over 69 outings in 2019.”

“It is thanks to our core group of volunteers that DigiAsk continues to deliver this service,” Alicia said.

The volunteers come from a variety of backgrounds—different ages, nationalities and careers. Jack, An, Esther and Alli are just four individuals who each take time out of the busy lives to regularly volunteer with the DigiVan.

Jack started volunteering with DigiAsk in December 2018. Despite leading busy life with work, caring for an elderly member of his family and being called on as the family handyman, Jack is consistently available to volunteer in the van.

An has volunteered with DigiAsk since October 2018. An now has a fan-base of patrons who appreciate his particularly impressive insights into the IT world. Since starting as a volunteer, An has graduated university and started full-time work, but still finds time to venture out in the van regularly.

Esther works part-time, studies full-time and is completing a placement with Churches of Christ in Queensland, yet has kindly offered her time and skill as a volunteer since April 2019. While Alli began volunteering after seeing a DigiAsk presentation, and has no issue in paying the “outrageous” Brisbane City parking fees so that she can give her time on a Monday night with the van in Roma Street Parklands.

The DigiAsk program has received funding to continue to deliver its innovative and highly regarded service until June 2020. ■

Celebrating our volunteers

From 18 to 24 May 2020, we will join thousands of organisations across Australia to mark National Volunteer Week.

For more than 30 years, National Volunteer Week has been the largest celebration of volunteers and volunteerism in the nation.

This year’s theme ‘Changing Communities. Changing Lives’, acknowledges the generous contribution of volunteers who have donated both their skills and time.

Chief Executive Officer Gary Edwards said volunteers provide indispensable support to many of the organisation’s communities, and deserve recognition for the substantial contributions they make to society.

“We celebrate and recognise our volunteers every day, but this week is a timely reminder of the need to honour our exceptionally skilled and valued volunteers who are not only an asset to Churches of Christ in Queensland and to the way we provide services, but strengthen our communities as well,” Gary said.

This year we will recognise more than 1060 volunteers across all our services and in our mission activities.

Volunteers help bring the light of Christ into communities by connecting people with culture, community and spirit.

They facilitate a range of activities including companionship and pastoral care, as well as much needed practical support in the areas of gardening, maintenance, social and recreational activities, and administration.

If you’re looking for more meaning in your life and would like to volunteer with Churches of Christ in Queensland, visit Imaginevolunteering.com.au ■

NATIONAL 18-24 MAY 2020
VOLUNTEER
 CHANGING COMMUNITIES. CHANGING LIVES. **WEEK**



Friendship with Frank



Frank always has a story to tell and has been attending the barbeques for the past four years.



In our Housing Services, community barbeques not only allow residents to come together, they are a great way to build friendships in the wider communities our residents are a part of.

Our chaplains play a key role in developing community engagement opportunities across our housing complexes. Housing Chaplain Dave regularly brings residents together from across our north Ipswich complexes to share a delicious barbeque lunch.

Frank is a regular, much loved face at these events, despite the fact he is a neighbour to one of our complexes, rather than a resident. He has become a wonderful part of the housing family, and a valued member of the community.

Frank always has a story to tell and has been attending the barbeques for the past four years.

At 83 years young, he has lived in his home since July 1936, which his family moved into when he was just a little lad after losing their small farm in Mt Crosby due to hardship.

Frank is a railway man through and through, having worked at every railway station between Helidon and Roma Street. He was a Relief Station Master for many years, and remembers when Morse code was the main form of telecommunication between the stations.

Frank still lives an active and colourful life – he rides his push bike, and he keeps bees and sheep and is a super keen gardener. Frank's ladies (his trusty sheep) are called Lucky Suzie and Persian Princess.

Frank says that his faith is the glue that keeps his engine room running and holds everything together. ■



Country
communities
come together
to conserve water

It's been a tough few years for rural Queensland. Drought and bushfires have pushed communities to the brink, threatening the country way of life.

Despite the recent rain, water is still in short supply in many parts of the state and communities are taking drastic action to prevent it running out.

In response to severe drought and emergency water restrictions introduced by Southern Downs Regional Council, we implemented a range of measures at our services such as Stanthorpe Aged Care Service to reduce water consumption.

"We made changes in how we operate and our water management practices, both as a service and as individuals, to face these water challenges and continue to make progress in conserving one of our most important resources," Donna Hart, Regional Manager said.

"One of the water efficient practices we introduced was to modify the cleaning routines in our laundry. This reduced water usage by up to 35 per cent."

Other water saving measures include replacing water for hand-washing with liquid hand sanitisers, and replacing tap drinking water with boiled and bottled water.

With Stanthorpe now depending on water trucked in from the Connolly Dam near Warwick, everyone is considering how they use water.

"We have been building awareness of water use by informing and educating our staff and residents on methods to reduce waste. We are always happy to share tips!" Cynthia Bull, Service Manager said.

"Stanthorpe is a strong community, and the residential aged care service is a community within the broader one. Each one of us can definitely do our part."

In addition, we have been in regular contact with Council to ensure we are engaged in the planning for this major water supply issue.

"Sustainability has long been an integral part of our operations," Donna said.

"But the severity of the drought has led us to take additional action above the water conservation measures we already had in place at Stanthorpe. We will continue with our efforts to save water as part of the community until significant rainfall occurs."

Also in the Southern Downs region, residents at Warwick's Regency Park Retirement Village have reduced their water consumption by almost 50 per cent over the last year since adopting some simple measures. They are now below the council's emergency water restrictions level of 80 litres per person per day.

Their measures include only using the washing machine for a full load, putting a bucket under the tap while waiting for hot water and using it later, and changing to waterless soap.

"Many of our residents lived on rural properties and were used to saving water every day," Chris Newley, Regency Park Retirement Village Manager said.

"Now the village has wholeheartedly got behind the wider community effort to conserve water. They've done a great job in changing their daily habits, and the results have been impressive. The changes may be small, but they're highly effective!"

Our Community Care team is supporting clients in their home to be 'water wise'. They are providing a range of home and garden maintenance services, including fitting plumbing fixtures such as water efficient showerheads and inserting flow control devices on taps. The team is also assisting with gardening tasks to minimise water use, such as placing wetting crystals around shrubs, mulching garden beds and cleaning gutters.

"As a result of the drought, we have been receiving a steady flow of enquiries about the water efficiency advice, services and products we can provide," Burnard Cross, Maintenance Support Manager said.

"It's great that we've been able to help people reduce water consumption in



Sustainability has long been an integral part of our operations. ”

their home and garden by carrying out timely maintenance services and retrofitting water efficient products. The water savings for our clients are immediate."

Seniors chaplains Jane Ott, Jim Hodge John Teunis and Ben Boland (Toowoomba, Warwick, St George and Stanthorpe respectively) are on the ground supporting families and communities affected by drought and providing emotional and spiritual uplift. By offering a confidential and safe environment for individuals to express their concerns, they are helping to restore spirit and hope.

"Stanthorpe has two major industries, agriculture and tourism. When the crops fail, the effects are far-reaching – for example, the orchards can't hire backpackers for fruit picking and then the hostels are empty. Additionally, the water restrictions and bushfires have deterred tourists from visiting. The cumulative effect of these multiple environmental challenges is devastating to the region. Many people have lost their livelihoods as a result," Ben explained.

"When people don't really have someone to talk to, a chaplain can be an invaluable resource. In one sense it's not a big deal, but listening to people, reassuring them that they are being heard, and being happy to pray for them can have a hugely beneficial effect. I can also point them towards counsellors if they need further support and sources of food and fodder relief.

"My message for people outside of the region is please keep praying for us. We've had some rain, but it's not drought breaking.

"And please, come and visit our wonderful region – you will be very welcome! Taking a break in one of our country towns, and supporting local businesses, is the best way you can help rebuild communities." ■

Partnership brings ground-breaking dementia specific training to the West

The Virtual Dementia Tour (VDT)[™] rounded out 2019 with an inspiring visit from PK Beville and the team are looking forward to the year ahead with a number of exciting developments and partnerships coming to fruition.

On 27 November, we were encouraged to transform the way we think and care about ageing and dementia when a panel of international dementia and aging experts presented at our Kenmore Campus.

Renowned American dementia advocate and educator PK Beville was joined by Gwenyth Johnson, CEO of Second Wind Dreams[®] and local experts Ilsa Hampton and Dr Cherie Hugo in sharing their inspiring approaches to supporting older people to experience purposeful and meaningful lives. PK also spoke at our Little Mountain Campus, where guests heard her vision to break down the stigma of people living with a diagnosis of dementia.

In January, we announced our partnership with Community Vision

Australia Limited, and its subsidiary entity Fortis Consulting, to bring innovative dementia education to Western Australia to assist to build inclusive and compassionate communities.

“We are thrilled to partner with Community Vision Australia as two leading not-for-profit community organisations located on opposite sides of the country,” Executive Director Services Bryan Mason said.

“We have a unified vision to further develop the aged care sector and wider communities’ understanding about the prevalence of dementia and the social and economic impact this illness has on our nation. The inescapable fact is that we need to act now to force change,” Bryan said.

“Dementia will impact most of us throughout our lives in one way or another, and it is time to bring that conversation to the forefront,” Community Vision Australia CEO Michelle Jenkins said.

“We need to acknowledge the impact dementia has on those living with the

disease, their families and care givers within our community,” Michelle said.

The VDT[™] encompasses a 10 minute immersive experience, followed by a facilitated 30 minute debrief by a qualified certified trainer, which assists to raise awareness and educate aged care staff to be more empathetic and compassionate when engaging with and delivering care to people living with dementia.

It is at the forefront in driving social change and is creating shared value across the diverse sectors. This education fosters a deeper community connectedness and is creating safe and supportive environments for families, friends and communities.

“Our collaborative partnership with CVA demonstrates our unified approach and commitment to raising standards in dementia care to improve outcomes for people living with a diagnosis, their loved ones and the wider community,” Bryan said.

“Together we are challenging industry norms and leading the way to create social change.” ■



■ CEO Gary Edwards (left), with PK Beville (second from left) with members of the panel following the event at Kenmore on 27 November.

Aged care residents still busy at the gym



■ Joe celebrated his 500th gym visit milestone.

Our Bribie Island Aged Care Service was a hive of activity with three residents marking huge milestones in their wellbeing journey.

Two residents celebrated their 500th visit, and one resident their 400th visit to the onsite seniors' specific gym since it opened three years ago.

The staff, volunteers, fellow residents and family members marked the momentous occasion by holding a presentation in the community hall, awarding the three achievers with custom made T-shirts, which will no doubt be worn at the gym.

Joseph (Joe) McCafferty and Beth Smith were the first two residents to accomplish 500 visits.

Joe, now 94, never skips leg day, remarking that he wishes the gym was open both Saturday and Sunday.

"If it wasn't for this gym, I would most likely be in a wheelchair," he said.

For many residents the gym provides a meaningful place to socialise while exercising and improves their physical and social wellbeing.

Beth Smith, 70, is often seen at the gym twice a day, and is recognised as one of the heavy lifters and a socialite among residents and staff.

Bev Concas, who celebrated her 400th visit, was advised two years ago by doctors that she would never be able to walk again. Now at the age of 79, Bev continues to walk through the service and to the gym every day.

During the presentation, Bev tearfully thanked staff and volunteers at the gym, saying she would not be standing today if it wasn't for them.

"I don't know what state I would be in if we didn't have a gym," Bev said.

Bribie Island Aged Care Service Manager Anna Ward said since opening the gym three years ago she has noticed a significant difference in the mobility of residents, remarking 30 to 40 regulars use the gym per week.

There are many benefits of physical activity and exercise for elderly people. The specially designed gym at Bribie Island Aged Care Service uses Helsinki University Research (HUR) gym equipment with the help of physiotherapists and nursing staff to assist residents to exercise safely.

"We are so grateful to Busy Fingers who donated \$72,000 for us to purchase this equipment for our residents," Anna said.

Secretary of Busy Fingers Sandra Tommy said when the fundraising organisation first donated the gym, they were unsure if many residents were going to use it.

"To be here today to celebrate three residents achieving incredible milestones at the gym is amazing.

"This service has and will always be a part of us. Since starting in 1982 with a group of local women who knitted or sewed to raise money for the residents, Busy Fingers has always had a strong relationship with Churches of Christ in Queensland," Sandra said. ■

“

If it wasn't for this gym,
I would most likely be
in a wheelchair.

”

Respite 'home away from home' gives carers a well-deserved break

Carers in communities across Queensland can now access a valuable respite service, allowing them to take a well-earned break and 'recharge their batteries'.

Our Home and Community Care service has expanded its popular respite care service, helping residents in the Wide Bay, Darling Downs and Gold Coast regions.

Respite care is a temporary, short-term care arrangement where an older person is cared for by someone other than their main carer. While their loved one is being looked after by experienced and friendly staff in a supportive community, carers can have a rest and take time to look after themselves, enhancing their own health and wellbeing and helping them to continue caring.

Charlene's mum Deloraine enjoys weekend stays at her local respite cottage every month. Now aged 88, the former hairdresser loves socialising with others in a safe and welcoming environment and being involved in activities away from home.

Always close to her mum, Charlene found it hard at first to admit that she needed a break from caring.

“

The respite cottage is marvellous for Mum's wellbeing.

”

“I thought I was fine, I didn't need help. But as her dementia worsened it was getting harder to care for Mum, and there's no other family support – I'm it,” Charlene said.

“I realised I needed a break from caring, and Mum needed a break from me too! At the respite cottage she benefits from having different people to talk to and getting out of the house.”

Knowing that her mum is happy, safe and being cared for by skilled and caring professionals provides peace of mind for Charlene.

“The Community Care services are a life saver! Mum has monthly respite care, plus it's there for emergencies. The staff are lovely and they really care for Mum. When I pick her up, she tells

me all about her stay and doesn't want to leave,” Charlene said.

When her mother is being cared for at the Gold Coast respite cottage, Charlene enjoys spending time with her daughter, going out for lunch or shopping, and she recently studied genealogy.

“You're a better help when you've recharged your batteries,” Charlene explained.

Jenny has been caring full-time for her 95-year-old mother Dorothy, who is living with dementia, for more than four years.

“It's mentally draining caring for Mum and I get really tired. For me, respite care has been so good. It gives me a breather and means my husband and I can go out and not worry about Mum's safety. We can go to the movies, go away for the night, or just stay home and relax,” Jenny said.

Dorothy stays once a month at the homely respite cottage, and says it feels like she's visiting friends for a 'sleepover party'.

“The respite cottage is marvellous for Mum's wellbeing. The social activities stimulate her, and she sees new people and does different things,” Jenny said.

“Knowing she's well looked after, we can drive off with no qualms.” ■



■ Charlene with her mother Deloraine.



■ Jenny's mother, Dorothy.

Youth CONNECT continues to bring hope

On 1 December 2017 Churches of Christ in Queensland, in partnership with the Queensland Government, officially commenced the Youth CONNECT program.

We recently completed and reported on the second year on the program, which has over 130 young people engaged at various stages of their journey to independence and successful adulthood.

Kate Martin, Children, Youth and Families Strategic Manager Programs and Operations, said that over the past year the Youth CONNECT team had a strong focus on establishing relationships with partners, referral agencies and specialist housing services. Work also progressed on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Engagement strategy, with a focus on establishing appropriate mechanisms for state, regional and local engagement.

“The Youth CONNECT program supports vulnerable young people as they transition to adulthood. At the end of Year 2 of the program, we have continued to see positive and encouraging outcomes for young people in the program,” Kate said.

The Youth CONNECT program was developed with a ‘housing-first’ approach, with equal emphasis placed on supporting young people to develop foundational key resilience factors – education, employment, personal development – as well as a sense of connection to people and place. This

work is supported through the delivery of housing services and a comprehensive case management framework.

“This framework focuses on therapeutic and practical strategies and actions to build resilience factors, which evidence shows significantly improve life outcomes and sustain long-term health and wellbeing well into adulthood, while reducing the risk of future homelessness and dependence on social support systems,” she said.

Youth CONNECT uses a four-phase service delivery model, with participant expected complete all phases within three years. Each phase is underpinned by ensuring access to safe and stable housing that is not reliant on social housing, and with a focus on moving the young person from reliance to resilience and from dependence to interdependence (living independently in connection with others).

Since establishing Youth CONNECT, Participatory Action Research (PAR) and Developmental Evaluation have been used as part of our practice.

“PAR is an approach to continual program and practice development and learning that emphasises participation and action by the people involved. A key factor of PAR and evaluation is including the voices and views of those experiencing the service delivery, and to learn and develop from these reflections.”

In keeping with our goal of continuous improvement, the program will be evaluated over the next few months to see how well the services are being delivered and to understand which parts of the program model are most important for the participants to meet their goals.

The evaluation team from University of Sunshine Coast will invite stakeholders to participate in the evaluation through interviews, focus groups and surveys.

“We would encourage you to use this opportunity to give us feedback on the program if you, your colleagues or your clients have been connected to it,” Kate said.

If you would like to be involved and provide your feedback, please contact youthconnect@cofcqld.com.au ■

Four phases of service delivery:



Q&A

Diversity is the mix, inclusion is respecting and valuing the difference

As **Director People and Culture, Jodie McAloney** wants all people to feel welcome—in their workplace, community and home. Her team is responsible for implementing positive workplace culture for our 3665 staff and 1060 volunteers and making sure people are valued for their difference, which is key to bringing uplift in the Churches of Christ Way—finding home, feeling welcome, having wellbeing, experiencing community and connecting to faith.

Q What does your role as Director People and Culture involve?

As a member of the executive team, I work with all areas of the organisation to implement contemporary and innovative human resource practice to co-create a workforce that is engaged and meets our strategic and operational objectives.

A large component of this is overseeing the cultural wellbeing of our organisation and spearheading projects that build our inclusivity. These projects include our Reconciliation Action Plans and current work on becoming an employer of choice for people living with a disability, gender equity and promoting women in leadership.

Through our Canvass Survey in 2019 some of the most encouraging

outputs were that, as an organisation, we have a culture of ambition, our staff genuinely care about the people in their services, and they believe our values set us apart from other employers.

Q What are some of the main projects that Churches of Christ in Queensland is undertaking to create an inclusive and diverse workplace and organisation?

In 2015, we released our first Reconciliation Action Plan, followed by our second Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan released in 2017. These plans help build our cultural competency based on an honest telling of the past of our country and the development of trusting and respectful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

More recently we have committed to understanding what is required to strive to become an employer of choice for people living with a disability. We can do this through small but significant changes in the way we advertise and recruit through to the ways we demonstrate inclusive leadership and create a knowledgeable and supportive culture.

We also are working on developing opportunities for women in leadership and in promoting a culturally inclusive and welcoming organisation for all.

Our journey to a more inclusive and diverse organisation is also guided by our values—unconditional love, continual innovation, mutual trust and wise stewardship—with each playing a part in our interactions and decision making processes.



■ Jodie McAloney (centre) with the rest of the Executive Group.

Q In our communities we can witness xenophobia, racism and discrimination. What can we do to counter this and make all people feel welcome?

Our nation has been built on immigration, and I am inspired and hopeful that as a nation, as an employer and as an individual, collectively and together we will strive to be better. I know that we can be better and, as leaders, we need to have courage and tenacity to speak out and stand against racism and discrimination as we witness it or maybe even experience it. Certainly as an employer of a very diverse workforce we are making sure we diligently apply and observe governing legislation and policy, and most importantly take responsibility for being just in our decisions.

We also need to listen. When we listen to understand, we develop empathy for those with a lived experience of racism. Understanding with empathy provides the ability to gain insight about how and why certain actions and words may be hurtful and bring back past pain. This is particularly true for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, who continue to experience discrimination and racism through well-meaning people and policies.

It's not always easy to walk in someone else's shoes. Through taking part in events such as NAIDOC Week and Reconciliation Week, I hope that more of our people gain a deeper understanding.

Q On 21 March we mark Harmony Day, which is on the same day as the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. In your experience, what makes a harmonious community?

For me, one of the prime ways we can have a more harmonious community is respect—respect for other cultures, religions, lifestyles, abilities and views. Each year on Harmony Day we celebrate the different cultures in our workplaces and communities and how we are able to work together in environments that are inclusive and acknowledge the unique qualities we each bring. We are blessed to have a culturally diverse workforce, which we choose to embrace and celebrate.

I acknowledge there is still work to be done across our society to ensure all people, regardless of race, have equal access to opportunities, and for the contributions of those from different

backgrounds to be embraced, valued and celebrated. We can all be catalysts for change in the way we interact with each other with love and compassion.

Q International Women's Day is celebrated on 8 March, with the theme #Eachforequal. What, in your experience, is something we can all do to create a gender equal society?

As a mother, a daughter and a woman in an executive leadership position, I want to encourage and champion more women in our communities taking opportunities to be in positions of influence and decision making. Men and women alike need to keep working together towards enhancing gender equality and valuing the unique contribution women make in all aspects of life, including work-life.

Over the past few years we have supported Queensland Women's Week and this year the theme is Celebrating our Diverse Community of Strong Women. We will be hosting an event at Kenmore where we will welcome strong women from diverse backgrounds to speak. We also provide an information pack to all our services and affiliated churches so that they can celebrate this and other events as they choose to do. ■

A bushfire response

"I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you for the support, kindness and sacrifice shown by all our fire and emergency services across Australia. The destruction and devastation caused by the drought and bushfires has taken a toll on many, including our elderly. We had a first-hand experience of being in the fire's path and evacuating from harm. We witnessed the community pull together during this crisis and the heroic and selfless actions of those on the frontline saving lives and properties. This has been repeated in countless communities across our great nation, for this, we give thanks. Our thoughts and prayers continue to be with those on the frontline, including our brave firefighters, volunteers and service people, as they continue the fight the fires, protect lives and property, and commence the recovery effort. Thank you for everything you do."

Gary Edwards
CEO, Churches of Christ in Queensland



Arcadia Aged Care Service

Our Arcadia Aged Care Service in North Essendon was feeling hopeless as the residents witnessed the devastation and destruction that fires were causing in their state.

Following an event at the service in November they

had some money which they used to kick-start a campaign to raise more money. The residents, their families, volunteers and staff all contributed, and they were able to raise over \$1900 for the Australian Red Cross Bushfire Appeal.

Buckingham Gardens Aged Care Service

The following prayer was written by Aurielle Green, a resident at Buckingham Gardens, and read out to all residents via loudspeaker at breakfast on 9 January.

Lord, we pray for those who have lost their lives. May their souls rest in peace and bring comfort to their loved ones and for those who have lost their livelihood, their homes and businesses.

For our wildlife organisations caring for our injured animals.

For the fireys, RFS and defence forces working on the front-line and behind the scenes.

For each and every person directly or indirectly affected by these fires.

Lord, bless each and every one of them, and protect us in this difficult time.

We pray to almighty God to bring rain upon our dry and fire ravaged country.

Thank you, and may God be with us all.

Oak Towers Aged Care Service, Oakleigh

With the devastating bushfires effecting the country, residents, staff and volunteers at Oak Towers Aged Care Service gathered together to help the animals impacted by the disaster.

"Many of us have been watching the upsetting news and smelling the smoke in the air with feelings of helplessness," Service Manager Alla Kats said.

Fauna balls contain specific ingredients to give animals energy and nutrients, including spinach, carrot, oats, golden syrup, apple cider vinegar and peanut butter (with peanut butter that specifically did not contain Xylitol).

The fauna balls were delivered to wildlife sanctuaries in bushfire affected areas.

"Being able to actively contribute to assist our wildlife is not only supporting our Australian environment but also providing residents with feelings of being constructive and offering value in such devastating times," Alla said.



Sharing the Gospel to bring people closer together

By Global Mission Partners

Churches often bring together people from many backgrounds, through a shared belief of God.

In Australia, it's not uncommon to see many churches of different denominations along the same street.

But in remote Papua New Guinea, this isn't the norm. Communities have memories of past times with serious warlike conflict with one another. Some areas are also strongly denominational. But people are also working hard to use their faith to bring the people around them closer, and to heal past divisions.

This is what Pastor Simon does.

Based at Tsumba on the Ramu River, Simon works with churches along the Ramu. He visits with their pastors, prays with them and trains them – and even supports them with his own money.

Three of these churches have been planted by him, and cross cultural and denominational boundaries. Missingu, Kwanga, and Wangebu Churches of Christ are all in traditional Catholic areas, and villages where the people were 'sworn enemies' of the people of Tsumba.

Despite these barriers, Pastor Simon had faith that God wanted him to share with these people following their invitation to come. So he went, and started to build a church.



At first, the Catholic priest was upset, and worried that people would leave the Catholic Church. But now, he understands that more people have come to know God, and built a relationship with Jesus.

Now they have good news. People are seeing the power of God to bring them together in love and service. Women and men from these three communities travelled to Gandep to take part in ministry training. Pastor Simon was one of the people there who helped equip them to go back and lead their churches. Now, the three churches are self-led.

The people of Tsumba were once enemies of these villagers. Now, they are brothers and sisters in Christ. They share the same gospel and love of Jesus. One of the women who came to train as a pastor met a man from Tsumba, and they fell in love. They are now married – something unheard of between these communities before.

Through the power of sharing the gospel, Pastor Simon was able to bring these people closer. Closer with God, and closer with each other. Evangelism can help close the gaps that have formed between people. Through God, violent histories and vast differences have been overcome. ■

Shining a light on domestic and family violence

As an organisation, we are committed to speaking out against domestic and family violence.

Content warning: This article involves discussion of the experiences and impacts of domestic and family violence.

“When I was 26, I believed my future was so bright. I was a speech pathologist with a career that I loved and I was newly married to a man who loved me. He was an elder in training in our church. He led Bible study groups and we ran Youth Group together. We were a young couple passionate for Christ, and for 14 years I maintained this image.

“Despite spiritual abuse, sexual assault, physical and psychological trauma, emotional abuse, social isolation, financial deprivation and the neglect that were my life, I had to maintain an image of the perfect marriage because it kept my husband happy – and keeping him happy was all I was supposed to do. Whenever I told him to stop hurting me, he would simply say, “If you were a less demanding woman with more realistic expectations of what it means to be a Christian wife, you’d be content with the way I treat you. There’s nothing wrong with our marriage. It’s all in your head”. He’d use Bible verses and sermons to support this behaviour. My husband wanted perfection, and I had to comply. He convinced me that I was

crazy to complain about being his wife. I was stuck in the cycle of abuse.

“The cycle suddenly stopped 10 years later, not because my husband changed, but because I stopped being his wife. I wanted a life free of domestic and family violence, and he refused to change.

“For years after my divorce I focussed on repairing the damage inflicted by my husband by giving my children and me a life that defied the predictions of medical and legal experts. It took time but with therapy and counselling, patience, compassion, determination, understanding, knowledge and love, we built a life better than what I had imagined possible. I walked with faith and never gave up hope.”

If you would like to read Karina’s full story, visit cofc.com.au

Recognising domestic and family violence

Each May, Queensland marks Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month to raise community awareness of domestic and family violence and to send a clear message that domestic and family violence in families and homes will not be tolerated. Here are some tips to assist someone who comes to you for support:

- Acknowledge the courage it takes to come forward
- Listen and believe
- Don’t judge
- Allow silence
- You don’t need to be the expert
- Safety is the number one priority
- Respond using empathy and reinforce support is available
- Provide referrals options and make arrangements to follow up.

If you or anyone you know is affected by sexual abuse or domestic and family violence, please seek help and support. Below are family and domestic violence support services that you can refer to:

- InTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence: 1800 755 988
- 1800 Respect national helpline: 1800 737 732
- Women’s Crisis Line: 1800 811 811
- Men’s Referral Service: 1300 766 491
- Lifeline (24 hour crisis line): 131 114
- Relationships Australia: 1300 364 277
- DVConnect: 1800 811 811.



Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy. ”

Proverbs 13:8–9

**Help us create change...
join the Churches of Christ
CEO Challenge team**

For the fourth consecutive year, Churches of Christ in Queensland has registered a team in Australia's CEO Challenge, Darkness to Daylight Challenge, that symbolises the lives lost to domestic and family violence. The challenge is held annually during Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month at South Bank Parklands. This year it takes place on Wednesday 27 to Thursday 28 May and involves running and/or walking 110km – don't despair it's as a team.

You can join us by walking or running the course with the team at any time and for any distance. Your support can make a difference. To register, visit <https://www.darknesstodaylight.org/fundraisers/churchesofchrist>

Did you know?

- Approximately 80 per cent of families referred to our early intervention services are experiencing domestic and family violence.
- A large number of young people in our care has witnessed domestic violence and are recovering from this trauma.
- Domestic and family violence is the major cause of homelessness in Australia. ■



Development updates

It is all hands on deck at our development sites in Benowa, Boonah and Hillcrest, as the finishing touches are being made to the buildings and landscaping. The projects are running on time and on budget, and by mid-year the brand new retirement village, aged care service and community housing developments will have welcomed residents to their new homes.



Lady Small Haven

The construction of the new retirement apartments at Lady Small Haven on the Gold Coast is almost complete, with finishing touches taking place to the building, pool and landscaping. The first stage of the Lady Small Haven redevelopment project includes 65 retirement living apartments designed to allow residents to age in place, alongside a new clubhouse and other facilities for residents to enjoy. We look forward to hosting an open day in May and welcoming residents to their new home.



Hillcrest

Residents of the new Hillcrest Apartments in Logan are preparing to move into their brand new, purpose built homes. Over the coming months residents will be moving into the apartments, located on the same site as our Clive Burdeu Aged Care Service south of Brisbane. The 32-units are built to Gold and Platinum Livable Housing Australia standards, making it easier for residents to age in place in a community where they feel safe, respected and valued.

Boonah

The new Fassifern Aged Care Service building is nearing completion, with residents expected to move into the state-of-the-art facility in July.

The new development will comprise a 64-bed residential aged care service with safe and stimulating outdoor spaces. Our aim is to create a welcoming, home-like community where residents will continue to feel safe, respected and valued while receiving the highest quality of care. When complete, the development will boost the number of residential aged care beds we provide from 81 to 105, increasing the availability of high quality care and support for local seniors and their families.

It will integrate with the existing aged care service and retirement village at our Boonah Campus on Harold Stark Avenue. The Fassifern Aged Care Service currently offers, and will continue to offer, a full range of support, including respite, dementia and palliative care.



Bongaree

Ground has been broken on the new Bongaree Apartments long-term community housing for seniors. Comprising 82 units, the development will form part of our Churches of Christ Campus Bribie Island. Residents are expected to be welcomed into the purpose-built accommodation in mid-2021.



{ People & Events }

in our communities



Flo celebrates 100 fabulous years

Florence Ivy Rittmeester was born on 26 December 1919, and on 26 December 2019, she celebrated the magical milestone of her 100th birthday alongside family and friends at Stanthorpe Aged Care Service.



Up close and personal with some mean machines

Toowoomba Aged Care Service and Retirement Village residents were treated to a visit from 15 vehicles from Toowoomba Hot Rods. With cars on display from the 1920s to 60s, their inner rev-heads came out as they marvelled over the impressive machines.



Back to school ready

On 23 January our Families Together (Intensive Family Support Service) in Jamboree Heights reached out to community and hosted our first 'School Readiness' event. Together they shared sandwiches, laughs and puddles while little ones also visited health professionals, ticking off their 'school readiness' checklist.

Lollipops and fun between generations at Warwick

A group of local children aged 3 to 13 visited Warwick Aged Care Service over the summer holidays for a craft afternoon with the resident. They made wreaths for room doors in the cottages, as well as paper chains for the Christmas trees. It was a lovely pre-Christmas afternoon with young and old enjoying lollipops and a little creativity.





Future aged care leaders heading in right direction

Congratulations to our 2019 graduates from our Management Development Initiative! This is the second cohort to embark on a year long program to bring together our future aged care leaders to learn the art and science of excellent management and leadership. At their graduation, each person was handed a compass to symbolise the direction in which they take as leaders is in their hands. Well done to our future leaders!



Gardening good for the soul

Calm thinking, a little dreaming, a cool breeze, and working hands in warm earth as a lady beetle crawls by, children paddling around with the hose and playing with a grasshopper. These are the pleasant experiences of gardening that our Brisbane Intensive Family Support (IFS) Service (Families Together) is offering families. The community garden has created a shared space for the church, family day care and IFS service located at our Jamboree Heights site. In addition to the garden providing support to young people who have experienced trauma, it has become an outdoor classroom and safe space for children to grow and develop.



Ssssssseeking ssssssanctuary

Our Sanctuary Park Retirement Community residents got quite the show when this carpet python landed on their doorstep. With the drought, many native animals from the neighbouring national park are looking for water and food – this reptile found both!

Congratulations Les!

Local legend Les Meiklejohn, who lives at our Regency Park retirement village, was awarded an Order of Australia Medal (OAM) in the 2020 Australia Day National Honours. The OAM recognises the many years of service Les has given to local government and to the Warwick community. As well as serving on Warwick Shire Council for many years, he was a member of various committees and associations including Warwick and District Tourist Association and Regency Park's resident committee. You may have heard him on Rainbow FM too! Well done Les, and thank you for all you have done for the Warwick and wider community.



Bring Change Together at Sanctuary Park

Sanctuary Park Church of Christ hosted a Christmas luncheon for Principal Peter Bryant, from Bombua/Londua Campus, Vanuatu. This was a wonderful time to share stories from Vanuatu and thank those who have supported the school. Peter presented Ian Grieve with a hand-woven basket filled with blessings and thanks for the prayers and support from a grateful school community.



Australia Day brings residents together

Residents from our Gold Coast aged care services – Golden Age, Marana Gardens and Homesteads – got together to celebrate all things Australia. For the residents, it was a rare chance to all come together, with one resident stating: "I really enjoyed the memories of people from other countries. They came – Marana Gardens and Homestead residents – they were quiet at first, then they joined in with the singing. The cooee calling brought back memories of Broken Hill. Loved the singing, which brought unity".



Project Pouches to save injured and displaced wildlife

One of the most devastating things to witness during the summer bushfires was the impact they had on our precious wildlife. Kenmore staff did what they could to help a wildlife charity by putting needle to thread and sewing pouches for injured wildlife. Over 200 pouches were sent to Wildcare to help animals after the fires in south east Queensland.

Going to the chapel



A small church sitting on top of a mountain overlooking the Stanley River Valley, with the picturesque Glasshouse Mountains in the distance, is the perfect backdrop for any couple's big day.

Mountain Top Community Church positioned on the stunning Mount Mee, north-west of Brisbane, is expanding its wedding ministry. There are now more couples to take advantage of their stunning sandstone chapel set amongst the property's green pastures.

"Here is the opportunity for couples planning their wedding to experience the stunning beauty (from our chapel) on their special day. The chapel is a very special place where the Lord Jesus is worshipped and loved," Roy



Gillespie, Chairman of the Management Committee said.

The church is wanting to share the beauty of the chapel and facilities and provide a Christian blessing to couples starting their married lives together.

"The facilities provide excellent photo opportunities for couples to capture happy memories in the beautiful settings.

Morning and evening light effects are stunning. We also want to bless families and friends who come to the weddings," Roy said.

Newlyweds can celebrate their nuptials with their nearest and dearest in the new Family and Community Centre next to the chapel, with seating available for up to 200 guests. There is a spacious veranda for outdoor and casual catering, and audio visual equipment.

Mountain Top Community Church is located a little over an hour by car from Brisbane, along scenic roads, at the little rural community of Mt Mee. It has bountiful parking space and there is room for coaches to turn around and drop off and pick up guests. Accommodation is available at D'Aguiar and Oceanview. ■

We will remember them

This year, Anzac Day marks the 105th anniversary of Australian and New Zealand troops landing at Gallipoli in 1915.

But the passing of time, and the fading of that era from living memory, does not mean a lessening of remembrance.

Anzac Day, 25 April, is a day of commemoration, a day to salute the courage and valour of our soldiers who fought at Gallipoli, and a day to recognise their enduring sacrifice to protect our nation.

It marks the anniversary of the first major military action fought by Australian and New Zealand forces during the World War 1.

From a population of fewer than five million, more than 416,000 Australians served in the armed forces during World War I. Of those on active service, more than 60,000 casualties were recorded and 155,000 returned wounded.

25 April soon became the day on which Australians remember the sacrifice of those who had died in the war.

Today, Anzac Day has become a day to remember all Australians who have served and those who have died in all wars, conflicts and operations.

At the break of dawn, thousands across our great nation gather in the sight of God remembering with pride and gratitude those who served and those who died for our nation in times of conflict to secure the freedom and peace we enjoy, and for the opportunity that is ours to build a better society for the generations to come.

The spirit of Anzac continues to play a role in our sense of national identity through the qualities of courage, mateship and sacrifice, leaving us a powerful legacy. ■

“ For the Fallen by Laurence Binyon

They shall grow not old,
as we that are left grow old;
Age shall not weary them,
nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the
sun and in the morning,
We will remember
them. ”

{ Events }

Find us on 

March

6 MARCH

World Day of Prayer

8 MARCH

International Women's Day

21 MARCH

Harmony Day

April

1-9 APRIL

Queensland Youth Week

7 APRIL

World Health Day

10 APRIL

Good Friday

12 APRIL

Easter Sunday

25 APRIL

ANZAC Day

May

1-31 MAY

Domestic and Family Violence
Prevention Month

18-24 MAY

National Volunteer Week

26 MAY

National Sorry Day

27 MAY-3 JUNE

National Reconciliation Week

June

5 JUNE

World Environment Day

15-21 JUNE

Men's Health Week



Bringing the light of Christ
into communities



cofc.com.au