

networking

ISSUE 2 {2020}

BRINGING THE LIGHT OF CHRIST INTO COMMUNITIES

Home

Coordinated
coronavirus response

Time for home

New season for health
services in Vanuatu

#thanksforcaring



{ Contents }

Find us on 



CEO update	4
Technology helps churches gather remotely to hear his word	6
No lingering regrets in surge towards success	7
Coordinated coronavirus response	8
Local unity in Hervey Bay	9
Time for home	10
Kelly is a much loved friend	11
Community partnership laps \$10,000 in auction proceeds	12

#Thanksforcaring applauds aged care superheroes – today and everyday	13
Melinda's passion in pursuit of caring career heightened in pandemic	14
Angel makes a difference with Access Place	15
Men's Shed gives blokes the tools to build community	16
Bringing hOPe to the community of Gladstone	17
Home Assist Secure celebrates client's 72 nd wedding anniversary	18



Paula opened her heart and her home	19
New season for health services in Vanuatu	21
Q&A – Sheelagh Henson	22
People and Events	24
The Coronavirus Killer by Jean Dendle	27
Events	27

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 31 July 2020.



CEO update

What a year 2020 has been so far.

Firstly, I would like to thank everyone in our Churches of Christ in Queensland community. You have pulled together, shown unity and love for and with each other, and acted with the grace of God in your day-to-day work.

Thankfully, we are seeing the light at the end of the tunnel and a new sense of normal is emerging. While some things may never be the same again, some things, I hope, have changed for the better.

Our churches have adapted to bringing their services online. In this issue you will be able to read about how Gympie Church of Christ has embraced technology to engage with their community, just like our other churches across the state.

During this time of social distancing it's been heart-warming to see our Children, Youth and Families team host virtual yarning circles. We had 49 of our staff across Queensland Zoom into these circles to discuss ways in which we can keep young people connected to their culture through this period of isolation.

Thank you to all for facilitating this.

Our Housing Services team provided extra support for housing residents by sourcing food and essential items, particularly for those impacted by the virus shut-down, and attended to their emotional wellbeing during this time.

I have been humbled by the stories coming out of many of our services, particularly our residential aged care services which were greatly impacted by restrictions. The teams developed creative ways to keep residents connected, engaged and active when visitation was limited. We released iPads to our residential aged care services to be used by residents to connect digitally with their loved ones.

Meanwhile, our Home Care staff have conducted in excess of 17,000 welfare calls to vulnerable Queenslanders confirming they are safe and well. These welfare calls identify whether our clients require support with groceries or medical items, provide them with the latest official COVID-19 information and important contact numbers to call in case of an emergency.

I was delighted to hear of one case where our staff member conducted a welfare call with an older lady in the community and they ended up chatting on the phone for hours. The client then called through to check it was really Churches of Christ in Queensland she had been talking to, as the call had made her week and she was in disbelief that we had spent the time talking to her about her life.

Our Retirement Living team have also been doing a great job at keeping their residents up-to-date on the latest COVID-19 information and responding to the latest directives from the government to keep their villages safe.

To thank our aged care staff for their tireless work during this unprecedented time, and to recognise them for the work they do every day, we launched the #Thanksforaring campaign. This campaign has now been picked by Leading Aged Services Australia and is being promoted across the nation to thank aged care staff for the work they do. I encourage you all to leave a message of thanks at www.thanksforaring.com.au.



■ Prior to the COVID-19 restrictions, Gary was proud to attend inductions at Springwood Church of Christ for Dale White (above), Kedron Schneider at Dalby Church of Christ (right top) and Roger Harris at Whitehill Church of Christ (right below).



While some of our work and the way we do things was interrupted over the past months, our development projects have powered ahead and been delivered on time, and even ahead of time. We are delighted to welcome residents to our new Lady Small Haven Retirement Living development on the Gold Coast and we will shortly welcome residents into the new development at Fassifern Aged Care Service in Boonah. These developments have been completed on time or ahead of schedule.

Residents also moved into their new homes at our latest housing development for seniors at Hillcrest, collocated with our Clive Burdeu Aged Care Service. Our other housing development at our campus on Bribie Island is also well underway.

We are implementing our recovery plan across the organisation to guide our way forward in a post-pandemic world, with the safety and wellbeing of everyone in our community the main priority. We will continue to follow the latest government advice and directives as the COVID-19 situation continues to progress. Thank you everyone for your patience and diligence during this time. We are thankful that the virus has not spread in our organisation.

We pray for all those who have passed away from the virus in Australia, particularly the vulnerable seniors in aged care services. We pray for those

around the world who have been so deeply impacted by COVID-19, those in developing nations without the health infrastructure and those whose livelihoods and way of life have been affected. May we all continue to come together to beat this pandemic.

God knows the concerns on our hearts and He can provide and the peace, strength and courage we need. Remember to keep praying, keep caring and working together to bring the light of Christ into our communities.

We are now implementing our recovery plans and working inside the directives laid out by our State governments regarding easing of restrictions. I am sure you are all as excited as I am to be able to get out once more and enjoy the simple things such as attending church, dining with family and friends and taking weekends away. Our diligence in remaining in isolation and stopping the spread has paid off and we will get to enjoy these things once again, much sooner than I am sure many of us expected.

I am sincerely looking forward to the rest of 2020. With restrictions easing, I cannot wait to get out to services and churches once more, I have truly missed travelling out to communities and meeting with you all. ■

Gary Edwards
Chief Executive Officer

“
I have truly missed traveling out to communities and meeting with you all.
”



■ Behind the scenes filming a COVID-19 video message update.

Technology helps churches gather remotely to hear his word

Like much of Australia, our churches helped play their part in preventing the spread of COVID-19 by suspending their usual services. With buildings closed to meet social distancing requirements, our focus was on finding new and innovative ways to BE the church in our communities. We looked for ways to offer a form of inclusive worship and enable congregation members to keep in touch and maintain their wellbeing.

Gympie Church of Christ is just one example of how we adapted to these challenging circumstances, providing online and accessible services that maintained a sense of continuity and social connection.

“There’s a history of cooperation and trust in Gympie: six local churches were already working together informally, holding a combined church service at a neutral location every three months. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, we held one of the services online. It went so well, we decided to collaborate more often,” Kevin Dunn, Gympie Church of Christ Pastor said.

Gympie Church of Christ turned its building into a recording studio and began working with the other churches to produce a regular stream of content for all their members.

“At the start none of the churches had the expertise AND the equipment needed to do this well. This was an opportunity to prove how together, we’re better,” Kevin said.

In addition to producing daily content, each church recorded a weekly Sunday Service according to a roster, which was upload onto a shared YouTube channel and Facebook page www.facebook.com/gympiecofc

The initiative has developed a significant online audience, with followers as far away as the US, New Zealand and India. More than 2,000 people tuned in for the Easter



Sunday service, five times more than the usual combined church reach.

Kevin has discovered some surprising insights, such as the popularity of the online content with younger people with children. The flexibility of YouTube meant families could gather at home to worship at times to suit them.

Of course, not everyone is online. To ensure all community members could still access services, the churches pre-recorded sessions for twice-weekly broadcasts by the local radio station.

“Rather than trying to be everything for everyone, we focused on having something for everyone. This meant we could have content tailored to children,

people wanting more worship, even comedy! You can never have too much YouTube content, and with six churches involved we could produce far more than just me on my own,” Kevin said.

“Trust in the Lord, and what he wants. Prior to this, if you’d told me that six churches would be working in partnership to serve the Gympie community, I would have laughed. Although we’re unlikely to collaborate at this level in the future, we will continue to work together - this experience has been a great example of Christian unity.”

You can view the list of Church of Christ churches with links to their online services at cofc.com.au. ■

No lingering regrets in surge towards success

L Laurence* spent nine long months of his 17th year homeless, often fighting hunger, and constantly learning how to survive.

Today, at 20, Laurence is mastering the art of coffee and dreaming about the spectacular family home that may one day become a reality.

Laurence has the fondest of memories of his childhood. One of ten siblings, he was surrounded by family, including his beloved grandfather, who he affectionately remembers going fishing with.

Unfortunately though, by the time Laurence was 17, things weren't so smooth sailing, and a fight with his parents left him homeless.

"This was a decision I made on my own. It was hard at times, I remember always feeling hungry. For nine long months I lived on the streets," Laurence said.

But, the resilient young man said that he wouldn't change this experience for anything.

"It taught me how to survive," he said.

Laurence's life began to change when he signed up to the Youth CONNECT program in February 2018 and he met with his case workers Alannah and then Kathryn, who each had a lasting impact thanks to their kindness.

"Through Youth CONNECT I was able to get my own place," Laurence said.

"I remember thinking when I got my

first place it was somewhere I could call my home, and it was somewhere I could give my partner that was safe too."

In March 2019, Laurence started a traineeship at a local community centre, which he proudly graduated from on 16 August 2019.

"This was one of the best moments of my life. I built so many positive relationship with peers and the staff."

Laurence passed all his courses and gained experience as a barista, as well as other café skills, which he hopes to use to open his own café one day, where he can give other people jobs and help feed people who are hungry, just like he was when he experienced homelessness.

Through the traineeship he was also able to get his Responsible Service of Alcohol Certificate and completed a Certificate in Successful Tenancies, which he said he wished he had done before he was left with a hefty maintenance bill from one of his tenancies.

Laurence's traineeship supervisor, Franklyn, said that "He was a pleasure to have from the start. He has a great personality for hospitality and had great abilities working on computers and was a good at problem solving."

As the end of his traineeship approached and he had a panic about what he was going to do next, he proactively applied for a number

of barista jobs. He was delighted to receive a great deal of interest and was able to choose a café that as the right fit for him working five days a week. His partner also was able to get a good job.

With stable housing, a good steady job and a girl he loves, Laurence is now able to concentrate on achieving his future dreams, something that would not have been possible when he was homeless and hungry.

"My future goals include owning my own home, with five bedrooms to shelter my family; even my parents, as our relationship has improved over the past two years. I would also like a make-up room for my partner, have gold door knobs and a massive bike track," he said.

Laurence is a true success story and what the Youth CONNECT program is about—helping young people experiencing vulnerabilities to find the supports they need to thrive in adulthood.

With the support of dedicated Case Managers, they are able to find appropriate accommodation as well as education and employment options to help them achieve their goals. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, they are also assisted to maintain a connection to their culture and kin.

"It's through my strong sense of culture and family that I want to help those less fortunate than me". ■

**name and image changed for privacy reasons*

Coordinated coronavirus response

The response to the COVID-19 pandemic was the largest coordinated response to a crisis in a lifetime.

Governments, organisations, education institutions, religious groups, retail, and, most importantly, the health care sector implemented rapid response plans in preparation for a crisis that had the potential to devastate the nation.

At the onset of the developing crisis, before the pandemic was declared, Churches of Christ in Queensland swiftly jumped into action, bringing together experts from across the organisation to create a taskforce. This group delved into the organisations operations to determine risks and required responses to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all.

Chief Executive Officer Gary Edwards said this swift action was crucial for the organisation.

“We needed to understand what the impacts of this pandemic were going to be on the people we care for, our staff and our communities. A great deal of work went into understanding our strengths and weaknesses and determining the areas requiring immediate action,” Gary said.

The coordinated approach focused on all aspects of the business and included clinical health responses and resourcing implications.

“There was the potential for our services to be hugely impacted. It was truly unprecedented for our organisation. We continue to undertake planning to respond to the remaining threat.”

One of the first hurdles in the pandemic response was sourcing personal protective equipment and hand sanitiser, which had run off the shelves. Adequate supplies though were able to be maintained at services.

Throughout the emergency staff adhered to self-isolation and quarantine directives put in place to stop the potential spread.

“Thank you to our staff who determined they were potentially at risk of carrying the virus and isolated themselves for the protection of their clients and colleagues. This diligence and adherence to the directives avoided potential disaster.”

The COVID-19 Taskforce

The COVID-19 taskforce collaborated with all the teams in Churches of Christ in Queensland to provide education, review of State and Federal directives to ensure compliance and to ensure we have communicated to all stakeholders.

The taskforce developed plans to manage business continuity (including human resources and procurement), clinical response and communication which are reviewed continually to ensure they address the needs of the organisation and all that we support.

General Manager Clinical and Care Governance, Sheelagh Henson, played an active part in the Taskforce, providing expert advice regarding clinical requirements in preventing the spread of the virus.

“We rolled out additional education in infection control and hygiene for

staff to complete additional refresher training. A good hygiene campaign was also released throughout our services and offices. We are providing the latest information to staff to ensure that they remain informed of the current situation and what we are doing, and continue communicating to our clients, residents and families regularly,” Sheelagh said.

“We assessed and monitored our inventory of personal protective equipment ensuring we have adequate stock levels and that they are stored securely and easily accessible by our services when required.

“We are also working closely with relevant government departments and official agencies in providing a coordinated response and appreciate their direction and action at this time. We were aware that our agility was crucial and we had contingency plans for scenarios that may play out in the coming days, weeks and months, including in the case of an outbreak.”

The next phase

We are now working within government directives regarding the gradual easing of restrictions. At the core of our recovery planning is how we continue to deliver our services in line with our mission and vision and how we are guided by our values and the Churches of Christ Way.

We have welcomed visitors back to our aged care services in line with the latest Queensland Health Aged Care Direction and Aged Care Visitors



We strongly encourage families and friends to maintain ongoing contact with residents during this time.



Access Code, which General Manager Residential Aged Care, Anne McGill, said has brought smiles to the faces of residents and staff.

“Thank you to all the family and friends who have visited residents since visitors were welcomed back to services. You bring life into our homes for the residents and staff who care for and support them. Your commitment to strictly observing the protocols for visits continues to assist in our efforts to protect residents from COVID-19 and influenza at this time,” Anne said.

While visitors are allowed, it is still recommended that families and friends find alternative ways to connect with loved ones in aged care.

“We strongly encourage families and friends to maintain ongoing contact with residents during this time, either in person, via telephone or video calls, or through written communications. Our staff are able to assist in arranging contact, please talk to your service.”

Churches are also now preparing to welcome back their communities, with Queensland church-goers likely to be allowed to worship together in a church from 10 July. Our churches are working on their COVIDsafe plans to ensure the safety of their community. ■

Local unity in Hervey Bay

Christian churches in Hervey Bay united to help their local community during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Regional Engagement Partner for Churches of Christ in Queensland, Sue Ellis, is the chairwoman of Hervey Bay Combined Christian Churches. She said the response to COVID-19 by the group comes off the back of a really great history of unity.

“The Churches have come together at other times for prayer and for Church Services – for instance, each year the Christian Churches usually have a Combined Service for Pentecost. Hervey Bay is blessed to have a Ministers Association that has a history of working well together and supporting each other,” Sue said.

Initiatives implemented in response to the crisis included a Care Line for locals to call and access supports including food hampers, fuel vouchers, and support for paying bills. It is also there to provide a listening ear to those who need to have a chat, either with a member of the triage team or an experienced pastoral carer or qualified counsellor.

Through their Facebook page – @Hervey Bay Combined Christian Churches—they provide self-help videos from local Christian counsellors, with topics include loneliness and self-soothing. There are also videos of blessings and testimonies of faith from local ministering people. The Facebook page and phone line is supported by

a website, herveybaychurches.care, where locals can access a range of useful resources detailing where they can find support for their area of need, including homelessness, looking for work, food, domestic violence, mental health, help for seniors, and much more.

With COVID-19 thankfully settling down and the Hervey Bay community on the road to recovery, Sue said they are working on what the group looks like moving forward. Some initiatives supported by the group include Coffee Chaplaincy delivered by Churches of Christ in Queensland to mental health facilities across the Wide Bay region with volunteers from various churches. They are also considering programs such as Neighbourhood Helps to assist older people and those with mobility limitations with help around the garden and house, as well as spiritual retreats and Street Pastors ministry.

“It is very exciting, that out of such a terrible crisis, there is a deep sense of unity between the Christian Churches of Hervey Bay. There is a genuine united heart, to care for our local people – our slogan has been ‘locals caring for locals,’” Sue said.

“I am honestly privileged to have been asked to lead the initiatives to date, but to also be immersed in the future direction of Hervey Bay Combined Christian Churches.

“It really has been an amazing outcome from such a terrible crisis. And we are here to stay for the foreseeable future.” ■

Time for home

Over the past number of years Churches of Christ in Queensland has been on a journey developing new communities and services where people can find a welcoming home and caring support.

We have reached the end of the development journey for three of these projects, with the completion of construction at Benowa, Hillcrest and Boonah.



Lady Small Haven

We are delighted to have completed the first stage of the Lady Small Haven redevelopment in Benowa. While the development project has finished, this is just the beginning of an exciting new phase for our vibrant retirement living community as we have begun to welcome residents to their new homes.

The architecturally-designed building features 65 modern and stylish retirement living apartments. Delivered ahead of schedule, it is designed under the Liveable Housing Australia Guidelines, with the highest levels of accessibility standards allowing residents to age-in-place, and has a Green Star rating for reaching best practice benchmarks for sustainability in building. Other features include an outdoor pool, clubhouse, café area, hair and beauty salon, multipurpose entertaining rooms, landscaped gardens and outdoor barbecue areas.

Located across from the existing retirement village, the redevelopment is part of our vision to enhance retirement and aged care facilities for the Gold Coast region.

Hillcrest

Completed in March, the \$8.2 million Marblewood Apartments development in Hillcrest, Logan City provides 32 one and two-bedroom modern units for seniors.

The apartments, built in partnership with the Queensland Government Department of Housing and Public Works, form part of our integrated Hillcrest Campus. This campus model has a range of accommodation and care services in one location - the apartments are co-located and integrated with the existing residential aged care and community care services. Purpose-built to meet the needs of seniors, the development incorporates several adaptability features for people requiring additional mobility support. The design also aims to provide an environment where residents feel safe, respected and valued.

With social distancing restrictions in place, there was a gradual move in of new tenants over April and May. We look forward to holding an opening ceremony later this year when we can welcome our new tenants to Churches of Christ and into the wider Logan community.





Boonah

After a number of years in the planning, the Fassifern Aged Care Service development is now complete. We are now preparing the state-of-the-art facility in readiness for welcoming our residents to their new home from the end of June.

While the service is equipped with the latest technologies and equipment to support clinical and personal care, its unique cottage design gives it a homely feel. The four individually-styled cottages, named by residents after local bodies of water, each comprise 16 single rooms with private bathrooms and spacious shared areas. In addition to wonderful views of the local mountains and landscape, the building's design integrates with the environment through a variety of outdoor spaces including a central courtyard with walking paths and a covered BBQ area.

We thank everyone for their support during construction, and a community open day is planned for when COVID-19 restrictions are lifted. ■

Opening our (virtual) doors to the community

As part of a series of seniors' information sessions hosted by local experts, we will be livestreaming from Fassifern Aged Care Service's communal lounge on 26 June and 24 July. For more information and to register, visit cofc.com.au/Boonah. While there, take a look at the new building through the virtual tour.

Kelly is a much loved friend

Story thanks to Guide Dogs Queensland (guidedogsqld.com.au)

Seven years ago Kelly became a therapy dog and since then has gone on to change countless lives. Kelly spends her days at our Lady Small Haven Aged Care Service at Benowa, bringing joy to residents, receiving back scratches and helping provide comfort to those who are struggling.

"Kelly sits for hours with new residents, helping them with sudden changes in their circumstances," Delma Glindermann, a physiotherapist at the centre, said.

"There was one lady who hadn't been able to sleep for days. Kelly lay on the floor beside the 96-year-old who put her sheet over Kelly and her hand on Kelly's back. The lady fell into a calm, deep sleep after days of agitation."

Kelly loves everyone at the service, but her best friend is Bernadette. The pair enjoy walking around the grounds at Lady Small Haven three times a day, visiting other residents on their way.

"Their friendship has given Bernadette such joy and companionship," Delma said.

Kelly's impact on the residents at Lady Small Haven is no small thing and it's difficult to comprehend just how many lives she has touched during her career.

"Kelly has worked four to five days a week at the service for the past seven years and she sees about 20 residents every day," Delma said.

Bernadette and the other residents are looking forward to welcoming Kelly back to the service once visitor restrictions to aged care services ease, her visits have been greatly missed. Kelly is also looking forward to visiting her friends. ■



■ Bernadette Douwes enjoys time relaxing with Kelly at Lady Small Haven Aged Care Service.

Community partnership laps \$10,000 in auction proceeds

Southport Church of Christ Pastor Steve Peach helps celebrate motor sport milestone

Since 1986 Motor Racing Ministries' chaplains have been regular attendees at motorsport events across Australia, helping guide drivers, teams, officials, volunteers, the public and families through many critical times when there are severe accidents or injury as a result of competition.

Last year, Brett Murray, the founder of Speedcafe – an Australian motor sport news website – selected the chaplaincy team, and Motor Racing Ministries more broadly, to be Speedcafe's charity of choice.

One of the key partnership activities involves donations of motor sport items by motor racing stars like Craig

Lowndes, Jamie Whincup and Brett Murray himself. Proceeds from the auctions of these items are donated to Motor Racing Ministries.

Recently the total for auction items surpassed \$10,000. To commemorate this milestone, Brett Murray handed over a giant cheque to Motor Racing Ministries' chaplain Steve Peach.

In addition to his role as lead minister at Southport Church of Christ on the Gold Coast (and Churches of Christ in Queensland Council member), Steve is one of 50 chaplains on the Motor Racing Ministries team.

His association with V8 Supercars goes back to 2008, when he raced with Andrew Fisher in the V8 Ute series.

Shifting into a chaplaincy role in 2012, Steve regularly volunteers at Supercar events across the Australia.

"These funds will go a long way to identifying and training new chaplains for circuits and categories across Australia in all forms of motor sport," Steve said.

"It's great to have the support and exposure of well-known motor sport identifies such as Brett. It adds industry credibility to the largely behind the scenes work our chaplains do, and we really appreciate it," Reverend Garry Coleman, who leads the chaplaincy team, said.

Garry highlighted that the chaplaincy team are a significant part of motor sport events, offering care and support for families when there are on track incidents, hospital visitation and counsel for officials and teams alike. The investment into the human side of is critical, as it is in any community, and the motor sport community is no different.

Motor sport has been on hold during the COVID-19 restrictions period, however the team remain busy. "There are always people to care for and follow up, even when we're not together at a track," Garry said.

Steve, along with Charlie Sandham from Whitehill Church of Christ in Ipswich – another Supercar chaplain – is doing great work within the motor sport community, "Bringing the Light of Christ to Communities" at race tracks across the country. ■



■ Brett Murray (left) handed a cheque for over \$10,000 to Steve Peach to go towards Motor Racing Ministries.

#ThanksforCaring applauds aged care superheroes – today and everyday

Everyone can now give a virtual thanks to the unsung heroes currently supporting our seniors as part of an online campaign launched by leading not-for-profit care provider, Churches of Christ in Queensland.

While the rest of Australia stays home our aged care industry is among the few essential services continuing to operate around the clock, caring for our most vulnerable population.

The COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic has turned our houses into safe havens, and highlighted those working on the frontlines as our unsung heroes. The nurses, personal carers, cleaning staff, lifestyle therapists, maintenance, laundry staff, cooks, allied health professionals and administration staff are the heroes helping more than 1.2 million Australians access aged care services and continue to remain safe, healthy and connected.

Nicknamed 'Thanks for caring', the campaign is encouraging members of the community to give a virtual shout-out to all the heroes supporting our seniors.

Churches of Christ in Queensland Chief Executive Officer, Gary Edwards said aged care employees are doing an exceptional job in challenging circumstances.

"We are so proud of everyone working in the aged care industry right now, they are going above and beyond to protect our vulnerable seniors, and each other.

"In this time of tremendous upheaval and uncertainty, they are out there working night and day delivering compassionate care," Gary said.

As the coronavirus pandemic continues to evolve, the organisation is calling on the community to show their support for frontline aged care workers as they work tirelessly to protect and maintain the physical, emotional and social wellbeing of older Australians.

"Through this campaign we want to give everyone an opportunity to publicly thank the people helping to keep our precious older citizens safe, healthy and connected as best they can right now," Gary said.

"It could be thanking the nurse caring for your mother; your neighbour who is volunteering at the aged care service to keep residents socially connected; the support worker delivering groceries and medications to your aunt; or the allied health

professional who continues to support your grandfather.

"Many of us are touched by the work these unsung heroes are doing each day to serve and protect, but may not be able to thank them in person.

"People can share their message, letter, video or artwork to thank their aged care superhero at thanksforcaring.com.au. People can also post a message of thanks on social media, and by using #thanksforcaring it can be shared and celebrated to their heroes.

"A simple thank you makes a world of difference to the day of an aged care worker. We'd be delighted if children and family members could get creative by writing a song, sharing a piece of artwork, or make a video for their aged care superhero," Gary said ■



#ThanksforCaring



Melinda's passion in pursuit of caring career heightened in pandemic

Working with some of the community's most vulnerable people, Stanthorpe Aged Care Service Personal Care Worker and nursing student, Melinda Wood, is one of the many healthcare professionals providing critical care in Stanthorpe during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Melinda Wood is among more than 360,000 aged care staff currently supporting more than 1.2 million senior Australians access aged care services nation-wide.

In mid-2019, Melinda enrolled to study a Bachelor of Nursing with the University of Southern Queensland alongside her role at Stanthorpe Aged Care Service.

Caring is engrained in Melinda's DNA, who shares a passion for nursing alongside her brother Andrew Myers, an Endorsed Enrolled Nurse at Stanthorpe Hospital.

"I watched my brother care for our parents full time. Seeing him devote his life to caring for people inspired me to travel down the similar path.

"When we were hit hard financially by the ongoing drought and a Personal Care Worker position at Stanthorpe Aged Care Service opened, it was almost like destiny," Melinda said.



The COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the healthcare industry has only heightened Melinda's enthusiasm and commitment to becoming a registered nurse as she has seen the vital role and need for nurses across the country.

"I have learnt so much from the people in our care. Older people are quite aware of themselves and their health care needs.

"I learned to be present; to pay attention even when attending their daily routine. I learned that I had power to make a difference, with simple kindness and empathy," Melinda said.

"Nursing is a beautiful profession and as a carer I have the privilege of being present during some of life's most precious moments."

Now in her second semester of tertiary education, Melinda finds herself privileged to be able to continue her studies whilst applying theoretical skills in a practical environment.

"I have a great group of supportive colleagues who are always willing to answer my questions and share their knowledge to make me a better nurse and health care professional," Melinda said.

The devoted mother of four is excited about her evolving career supporting older people, and being an inspiration to her children.

Melinda has a particular passion for supporting people living with dementia and would like to further her nursing career in the dementia care field.

Melinda was last year's recipient of Beryl Wiltshire Scholarship to assist her on her journey in the caring profession.

Supported by Churches of Christ in Queensland, the scholarship is designed to meet the tuition and associated costs for a person wishing to embark on a career of service within the social, welfare, human services and caring sectors. ■



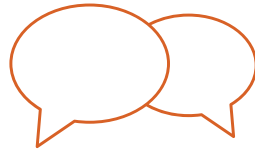
About Beryl Wiltshire

Beryl Wiltshire AM was a highly respected leader in welfare and community work in Australia especially during her long and distinguished career with Churches of Christ in Queensland.

Beryl Wiltshire had a particular talent for identifying the potential in people and quietly assisted many with funding for their education and training to get them started in their career.

This scholarship continues the tradition she established, and is offered to one person wishing to pursue a caring profession annually.

Keep an eye out for the opening of applications for the 2020 Beryl Wiltshire Scholarship.



Angel makes a difference with Access Place

Across our housing developments, the gardens are being superbly maintained thanks to Churches of Christ in Queensland's social enterprise, Access Place, team.

At the helm of the team is Angel Herrador, who is described by his colleagues as a 'smart, gentle guy' with a wealth of work and life experience.

Angel has experience working as an engineer, a builder and a horticulturalist. As Angel puts it, Access Place is his fourth life. Now he is putting all his experience to good use to support young people.

While he speaks quietly, Angel speaks with passion and it is clear that he loves what he does.

"Young people are often without mentors in their lives and, while they can be inherently 'good' people, they still need direction from someone," Angel said.

Without direction, Angel believes many young people can stray and choose to take the so-called 'easy way out'. Through Access Place, Angel is providing some gentle direction and sharing his life experiences to benefit his young team members.

Access Place offers its employees the chance to learn good work practices that are expected in the 'real world'.

Angel has a special way of turning the 'not so good' into a team learning experience. He believes it is the simple things that make the difference, like arriving to start the day work ready (with enough food and lots of water) and while being on-time for work is good, 10 minutes early is even better.

According to Angel, persistence is key. "As a team, we are learning that how we work as individual's impacts on all of us as a team. These sorts of things aren't always obvious unless you have been specifically taught them. Sometimes there is a need for weekly reminders. Sometimes daily. But always progress is being made.

"In all that we do, my own working life experience has taught me, it's essential to get our working day off to a good start with a smile.

"It's important that we have light-heartedness—it's key to our success as a team. This is particularly important if we've had words during the day. I try to make a point of learning from our discussion and then drawing a line under it and moving on. We end the day on a smile too," Angel said.

Change usually takes time. Angel's approach to managing the young people in his team is bearing fruit and seeing a real difference in how they approach life. ■



Young people are often without mentors in their lives and, while they can be inherently 'good' people, they still need direction from someone.



Men's Shed gives blokes the tools to build community

Popular outreach program, Beaconsfield Road Men's Shed, welcomed Gary Edwards during his visit to Mackay earlier this year.

Beaconsfield Road Men's Shed, which is supported and endorsed by Mackay Church of Christ, has firmly positioned itself as a 'home away from home' for the local community during its six years in operation.

Its part of Australia's Men Shed community program, which has updated the traditional concept of the backyard shed to provide safe, friendly and healing environments where people can work on meaningful projects in the company of others.

Coordinator Ken Crozier showed Gary Edwards, Churches of Christ in Queensland's Chief Executive Officer, around the Mackay facility and introduced him to some of its 40+ members.

"Blokes are what make Beaconsfield Road Men's Shed. Our focus is to advance their wellbeing by providing

opportunities for social inclusion," Ken said.

"Traditionally there's been little encouragement for men to take an interest in their own health. Unlike women, most men are reluctant to talk about their feelings and emotions and that means they usually don't ask for help.

"So this shed is more than a place for tools; it's where friendships are built and stories are shared.

"The activities and projects are secondary to our attempts to hang out and build a sense of wellbeing both for our members and the community at large. As an outreach of the Mackay Church of Christ to the local community, what we do is never more important than why we do it."

Members come from all walks of life – the bond that unites them is that they are people with time on their hands and they would like to do something meaningful with that time.

The vision to build a Men's Shed began with Peter Lewis, a previous

Elder of Mackay Church of Christ, and became a reality with the assistance of Pastors Michael Thurlow and Myles Waldron. Ken Crozier, together with a core group of Church members (Ken 'Blisters' Waterson, Lionel Bell, Noel Abel and George Lenton), continues to keep the momentum going.

"The project stalled a number of times. At one stage, the shed sat on site in kit form for more than a year! Eventually we prayed for the Lord's help for it to go ahead; shortly afterwards five men in two trucks arrived to lay a concrete slab for the shed."

Filled with donated equipment, fundraising continues to cover the shed's ongoing costs. With its growth in popularity, a much-needed extension has provided more room for machinery and tools. This could be built thanks to a generous donation from local Souths football club, along with proceeds from sausage sizzles and the raffle of a wooden dingy made – of course – by its own members. ■



■ Members gather at Beaconsfield Road Men's Shed.

“

So this shed is more than a place for tools; it's where friendships are built and stories are shared.

”



Bringing hOPe to the community of Gladstone

Arise in community need has influenced Gladstone Church of Christ to re-open the doors to the hOPe SHOP.

After being closed for more than eight weeks, a desire to thrift is not the only reason the church has relaunched the op shop.

The hOPe Shop has been addressing a need in the community for cheap clothing, food and small home essentials since 2018.

Shop caretaker Lyall Muller said in the first week of the hOPe Shop re-opening he has seen many members of the community shed tears of joy and thankfulness as they are once again offered hope and support.

hOPe Shop was born out of Gladstone Church of Christ's HopeLINK ministry,

and created a space for social groups, counselling services and mentoring to take place, providing physical and financial relief to the community.

"We don't just offer pre-loved items, we offer a safe space for men and women to connect to their community expressed through God's love," Lyall said.

Since establishing the HopeLINK outreach ministry in 2009, the program has grown to run mentoring mums' programs, financial counselling, male support groups, Inside Circle, CAP Christians Against Poverty, a playgroup and emergency relief for those in need.

Gladstone Church of Christ recently teamed up with Foodbank Queensland to provide discounted groceries to those in need.

hOPe Shops generosity also extends to assisting those escaping domestic violence situations, providing them with household necessities.

From its beginnings HopeLINK has sought to identify and respond to the needs of vulnerable people in the Gladstone area, linking people to established local services or developing programs that address those needs where no support currently exists.

The hOPe Shop relies on the generosity of the Gladstone community and volunteers to continue providing essential relief and support to those in need.

The hOPe shop is open Wednesday-Friday, 8.30am-2pm and Saturday from 8.30am-1pm. ■

Home Assist Secure celebrates client's

72nd wedding anniversary

Cherishing 72 years of marriage is definitely a cause for celebration for Southport's Rex and Shirley Abel.

An inspiration to three children, seven grandchildren and six great grandchildren, after more than seven decades Rex and Shirley still have the gift of completing each other's sentences.

Sharing some very simple secrets to a lasting marriage, Shirley said the couple try not to argue, find compromise and always make the time for each other.

The couple met through a mutual friend who introduced them on a blind double date to the movies.

Three years later Shirley and Rex tied the knot on 1 May 1945.

Their love story began in Melbourne, where they built a life for themselves and their children before retiring in sunny Gold Coast.

Purchasing a beautiful property in Southport, Rex and Shirley continue to keep the flame alive well into their 90's with the assistance of Churches of Christ in Queensland Home and Community Care's Home Assist Secure Program.

With Home Assist Secure, the couple find more time to spend with each other, while the team from Churches of Christ in Queensland complete maintenance work around their home.

Receiving \$500 a year towards labour, the Abel's have had a new oven installed, a washing machine repaired, hand rails installed in the bathroom, and replaced door hinges and light fixtures.

"The Home and Community Care team have been so wonderful, they've

really been able to assist us continue living in our home.

"A few months ago my oven door wasn't closing, and I thought it was time to replace the whole thing. I gave the team a call and they came without any trouble, remove the old one and installed my new oven so quickly.

"They have just been incredible from the start. You just ring up and they're there for you. We've been living in our home since 2005 and every now and then it needs a little TLC. We have been so happy with the services," Mrs Abel said.

Learning about Rex and Shirley's 72nd wedding anniversary during a phone

call to schedule their next visit, the Home Assist team organised a delivery of chocolates and flowers to make it a special occasion for the couple who were unable to spend it celebrating with their loved ones.

Churches of Christ in Queensland has continued to support their valued home and community care clients throughout the pandemic, ensuring extra hygiene precautions are taken and physical distancing is maintained. The leading not-for-profit has helped Gold Coast seniors and those across Queensland crucially remain safe and connected in their own homes during this unprecedented time. ■



Paula opened her heart and her home

For many people when they reach their retirement years, they dream of enjoying an 'empty nest', hitting the road and seeing where it takes them.

When Paula retired, she did just that. She became a grey nomad and enjoyed the fun and excitement that lifestyle brought with it. But for all the adventure, it left her wanting more.

Paula has been a foster carer with Churches of Christ in Queensland for four years and the Townsville-based retiree wouldn't have it any other way.

Paula provides long-term care and emergency care. Currently, she has five children living with her long-term.

"When you can take somebody who's wounded and trusts nobody and they're only 13 and they know they can't rely on adults and finally, that child is scared to death but they trust you to handle something, it's everything, it's a game changer," Paula said.

"They get into your heart, and they just take up residence there. Whether you want them to or not. That's what they do."

While Paula said that it is difficult, and there are some nights that she goes to bed and thinks 'you've got to be joking' and she dreams for selling everything and taking off in her motorhome once more, she knows she never will.

"Even though on this side of the coin it's difficult. The other side of the coin is like, the sun coming out over a field of flowers. It's so rewarding. That why wouldn't you do it," she said.

"We can open our hearts, we can step up and we can look after these children. Because you know that saying we've all heard it. If not now, then when. If not me then who. So we can do that and we can help fix our communities by stepping up."

Paula, who has adult children and step-children and assisted in raising other family members, is one of the few carers in Townsville who takes placements of teenagers, providing a safe place and welcoming young people in for a range of respite, emergency and short and long term placements. She calls on her experience working in Australia and internationally in early childhood and her own family.

Dedicated foster carers, just like Paula, are currently playing a vital role in caring for children and young people in need of foster care. Unfortunately though, more foster carers are needed to meet unprecedented demand. Queensland currently has the highest

ever ratio of children and young people requiring foster care.

We believe that every child needs a safe and caring home and to belong. Unfortunately, some families and home environments can be complicated and experience significant challenges. During such times, it can be unsuitable and unsafe for children and young people to remain in their family home.

We are here to support them during this time, providing supportive home environments through our foster and kinship care services or residential and supported independent living homes. We help them to maintain and build positive, healthy relationships in safe homes where they can find belonging while they maintain connections to their family, kin, culture and community.

It takes a community to provide a safe and caring home to belong. Anyone who is interested in becoming a foster carer or just wants to start the conversation and find out more is encouraged to visit www.ittakesacomunity.com.au today. ■





New season for health

In 2013 a new service was born to provide vital health resources to the people of Northern Vanuatu.

The Medical Santo health clinic has grown to become an essential and respected service that works closely with the Vanuatu Government and hospital to in delivering health services and responding to natural disasters.

Chief Executive Officer Gary Edwards said the growth of the service and the impact it is having in its community has been exciting to see.

“The team at Medical Santo have truly brought the light of Christ into their community and delivered compassionate and skilled care, in what has often been challenging



Then Chief Executive Officer Churches of Christ in Queensland, Dean Phelan (right), with Kenneth Tabi from Waterfall Village on Pentecost Island, at the opening of the new Medical Santo Clinic building in 2013.

circumstances. They have operated in a country with limited access to the medical equipment and supplies we take for granted here in Australia.

The impact they have had and the commitment and dedication shown by staff and the invaluable volunteers has been outstanding,” Gary said.

Now, Medical Santo has entered a new era, with the establishment of Pacific Island Health and Education Limited (PIHEL), an Australian-based charity to deliver the vital health services, education and training required in the island nation.

Executive Chair and Chief Executive Officer of Pacific Island Health and Education, Gerry Weatherall, said the scope and need of the charitable health services provided by Medical Santo since opening had substantially increased.

“The founding members of Medical Santo have recognised over recent years that we needed to identify and address the risks impacting the sustainable future of the health services Medical Santo provides,” Gerry said.

“There is a need to further advance a major objective of Medical Santo in securing long-term sustainability of good health outcomes for the people of Northern Vanuatu. Achieving this necessarily requires the development of capability in education and training and importantly providing the infrastructure for long term employment in the medical, nursing and allied health fields.

“After much prayer, consultation with Vanuatu stakeholders, discussion with similar entities engaged in

charitable activities overseas and legal representatives, the founders of Medical Santo decided to create an Australian registered company limited by guarantee.

“The founders wanted to ensure PIHEL would always be identified as a Christian Organisation that existed to fulfil the call of Jesus to minister to all in need and be recognised as having its roots in Queensland and Vanuatu Churches of Christ,” Gerry said.

The founders include Allen Cox, Gerry Weatherall and Richard Huston.

A dream fulfilled

In 2008 a casual discussion between two Church of Christ members, one from Vanuatu and one from Queensland, started a dream that grew into a remarkable project that only God could have planned.

Vanuatu is a close neighbour to Australia, and in the 1800s workers from Vanuatu were used on our sugarcane farms.

In the 1880s John Thompson provided medical assistance to these sugarcane workers in Queensland. By 1883, the Foreign Mission Committee of the Churches of Christ supported his work, and so began our commitment to supporting people from this island nation.

By 1980, through direct action and partnering with others, medical centres were established in Vanuatu. Following Vanuatu’s independence in the 1980s, the responsibility of medical facilities was handed over to the government of the new nation and, despite best



h services in Vanuatu

efforts, the medical centres have faced many challenges.

The medical services were stretched to the limit, and the ni-Vanuatu people were suffering and dying from preventable illnesses. Church of Christ members in Vanuatu and Australia dreamed of being able to provide quality medical care services in Northern Vanuatu to help the people.

Medical Santo was born out of recognition of the long-standing relationship between the people of Vanuatu and Churches of Christ in Queensland, and a God-given conviction that something had to be done, and done urgently.

Responding to nature's fury

For a small island nation in the middle of the South Pacific, Vanuatu bears the brunt of Nature's fury at times, with cyclones, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions frequently devastating the archipelago.

Medical Santo provides vital medical support in response to these natural disasters. Working closely with the Ministry of Health, the service supports communities and displaced peoples with urgent medical care and supplies.

The clinic also works with the local

hospital and the Vanuatu Government Ministry of Health to deliver education to local health workers. This service equips the local services with broader knowledge to be able to treat the multitude of health conditions prevalent in the community.

In April this year, the service again jumped into action after Cyclone Harold, a category 5 storm, devastated the country. On Monday 6 April, Cyclone Harold tore across Vanuatu, impacting more than half of the country's population, and causing widespread destruction to houses, vegetation, and infrastructure, including water and electricity.

This devastation came as Vanuatu was already in a State of Emergency to prevent the spread of COVID-19. In this time of crisis Medical Santo provided vital medical care and assistance to families and children.

Outreaching, educating and responding

In the northern islands of Vanuatu, there are remote communities scattered throughout the jungle-filled terrain, many almost inaccessible, requiring long, slow four-wheel drive

journeys along bumpy roads.

Medical Santo initiated outreach services to many remote communities to provide vital health care, running clinics and supporting people living with disability to access the services they need.

For some residents of these communities, their visit to the outreach clinic was the first time they have ever received medical attention.

Volunteers make it all possible

Without the support of volunteers from across the globe, Medical Santo would not be able to deliver the vital services.

In 2018-19, 108 volunteers gave their time to help at the clinic, including 41 doctors, nurses, midwives, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, dentists and a maxillofacial surgeon.

Ongoing support

Churches of Christ in Queensland will continue to support Medical Santo financially through PIHEL, promote this valuable work and encourage people to volunteer and financially assist this outreach. We look forward to this new phase of support to Medical Santo over the years ahead. ■

In the 2018-19 period, the service treated 10,717 patients, 94 per cent from the local community. Through their outreach services, they also saw 2058 patients, many of whom would not have otherwise received medical care. The Community Based Rehabilitation Program visited 1149 clients, helping to provide the support the individuals, their families and communities need.

Q&A

Networking sat down with **General Manager Clinical and Care Governance Sheelagh Henson** for a Q&A about her role in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and tips she has for remaining safe from infections year-round.

Q What does your role as General Manager Clinical and Care Governance entail?

In my role I am responsible for the operational management of clinical governance over our seniors and supported living services, and provide professional advice to the Chief Executive Office and Executive team.

The purpose of my team is to embed clinical and care governance accountability and understanding in a way that is meaningful and easy to understand. I am supported by a dedicated team, the Churches of Christ in Queensland Board and the multiple teams we support. It is a privilege.

Q What is clinical governance and why is it important?

Clinical and Care Governance provides an environment where excellence in clinical care flourishes.

Clinical and Care Governance at Churches of Christ provides the community with the assurance and the confidence that there are systems in place to deliver safe and high quality care and continue to improve the care and services we deliver. The pillars of clinical and care governance are education and training; clinical effectiveness; research and

development; openness; risk management; and information management.

Q What led you to your current position?

'What is your WHY and how do you bring this to life'.

The passion to make a difference and to work with a team with the same commitment to making a difference in the lives of others. Having worked as a registered nurse, midwife and infection control clinician across aged care, acute care and community I could see the importance of best practice, analysis, learning for our future without forgetting the reason why we are all here.

Q As the General Manager of Clinical and Care Governance, you played an important role in the organisation's response to the threat of COVID-19. Can you tell us more about this?

As part of the COVID-19 Taskforce, I met daily with the other members with a focus of reviewing the clinical severity of this pandemic, the immediate impact on our vulnerable clients, our organisational preparedness and

management. The spread of the virus was a challenge especially in the aged care residents and clients and immediate strategies were implemented to protect our most vulnerable clients and residents that we provide care for.

Q What do you think we have learnt as a society from the pandemic that will stay with us?

'Lifting the lid on what we thought was impossible and making it possible'.

Practically our lessons have been on the importance of hand hygiene, considering others and staying home when unwell and social distancing.

Gratitude for our lives and freedom we have in Australia. The importance of communication with each other and the importance of relationships both at work and socially.

Q What have you missed doing most during isolation?

For me this has been seeing my daughters in Melbourne, we do skype most nights but this does not replace a hug. Socially, I have missed gathering with friends over dinner or going to a movie, all the things we took for granted for so long without realising how special they were.



Q Australians are now more aware of germs and the importance of hygiene, which is a good thing. Do you think this will impact the spread of other infections?

Hand washing and hand hygiene is the single most important strategy in preventing the spread of infections to you and to others. Hand hygiene whether washing your hands or using an alcohol rub is something that everyone can do to reduce the risk of themselves getting sick or from passing a virus or germ to another person. Clean hands certainly do save lives!

Q Each year the flu also kills many people, particularly those who are older. How can we prevent the spread of the flu each year?

Influenza is spread very easily, mainly through large droplets produced from sneezing and coughing. These droplets fall and settle on surfaces and can then pass from your hands to your nose, mouth or eyes. Unfortunately people with influenza can be infectious for 24 hours before they feel unwell and remain infectious for approximately one week after the

symptoms start. For the majority of people the symptoms are

- Temperature
- A dry non-productive cough
- Headaches
- Sore throat
- Generalised aches throughout the body, and fatigue

Sometime the elderly present with differ symptoms such as increased tiredness and confusion and they more often develop serious respiratory complications.

It is most important if you are feeling unwell to stay home and if possible away from others. Although it is so tempting to go to work, join friends for dinner or socialise it is so important that you consider how your actions could affect others, particularly those that are vulnerable, and stay away. Remember the basic infection control measures, these basic steps can save lives! Wash your hands, cough or sneeze into a tissue and then dispose of it. If you have no tissue cough into your arm. Maintain safe distancing from others where this is possible.

Seasonal influenza vaccinations are recommended for all people over the age of 6 months to protect them from the Seasonal influenza that has been identified that year.

“

Keep a safe distance from people, especially those coughing or sneezing and where possible keep at an angle, not standing directly in front of them.

”

Q What are your top three tips for surviving cold and flu season?

Hand washing is our Golden Standard in Infection Control, where this is not possible alcohol based hand rubs may be used to clean your hands and prevent transmission of germs and viruses.

Keep healthy, eat well, moderate exercise and a good night's sleep.

Keep a safe distance from people, especially those coughing or sneezing and where possible keep at an angle, not standing directly in front of them. ■

{ People & Events }

in our communities



#Waveforvolunteers

As part of National Volunteer Week, we recognised our 1,060 exceptionally skilled and valued volunteers who are not only an asset to our organisation, but strengthen our communities as well. Thank you to our dedicated volunteers for your generous contribution, providing uplift and wellbeing wherever you go!



Restrictions no deterrence for Kevin in celebrating 87th birthday

Kevin, from our Stanthorpe Aged Care Service, celebrated his 87th birthday. Kevin didn't let the current restrictions stop him from getting dressed up and enjoying cake and a cuppa for his birthday!

Mavis Davis latest centurion

The wonderfully named Mavis Davis has celebrated her amazing 100th birthday on 13 April at Oak Towers Aged Care Service. The spritely centenarian showed off her letter from Her Majesty the Queen with fellow residents and staff.



Moonah Park residents play hallway bingo

With physical distancing measures in place residents at our Moonah Park Aged Care Service in Mitchelton were having a ball of a time playing hallway bingo.



Generous donation of hampers by Cornerstone Building Development

We are incredibly thankful to Cornerstone Building Development, who last week donated 30 hampers to our housing tenants. The hampers have made a world of difference to those who whose livelihoods have been impacted by COVID-19.

Homesteads Aged Care Service turned 24

Residents and staff celebrated Homesteads Aged Care Service in Nerang turning 24 in April.



Turning a hobby into the gift of charity

Over the past decade, Grace Dunn has knitted more than 594 singlet and hat sets for newborn babies in Africa, India and Nepal. What started as a little project for the Gracehaven Aged Care Service resident, has turned into a wonderful hobby. Great work Grace!



Bundaberg's resident knitters

Alongside Grace, Eunice and Alison, are also residents at our Gracehaven Aged Care Service who have been knitting for children in the Bundaberg region for more than a decade. Beanies, bonnets, booties, baby blankets and mittens are lovingly produced and distributed to the local maternity and children's wards. They also knit trauma teddies for the local police and ambulance stations for officers to give to children in need of comfort. All the wool and wadding is donated by visitors, family and staff.



Bringing joy to Bribie residents through song and dance

Bribie Island Community Kindergarten put on a show at the entrance of our Bribie Island Aged Care Service for residents that had them up on their feet and dancing to the beat.





Chaplaincy retreat

Over 27-28 February, the Church and Community Engagement team gathered at our Little Mountain campus for their inaugural ‘whole of team’ retreat. Regional Engagement Partners, Church engagement team members, our chaplains and support staff all came together for team connection and development. During the retreat, two guest speakers shared with the team. Tim Lovell from Goodlife Community Centre (and church) and Peter Janetski spoke to the team about stress, burn-out and how to develop resilience. For many, the best part was the team connections that develop in such a time away. Enjoying meals, and just hanging out together was great. Director Tim McMenamain also spoke to the team, urging them to operate from a platform of gratefulness in all they do.

Thank you to our Family Day Care educators

For National Family Day Care Week we recognised and celebrated our devoted Children, Youth and Families educators who continue to provide quality care to more than 735 children and their families. Our Family Day Care educators play an important role in the development and wellbeing of children in Queensland, and have been working tirelessly to ensure the needs of families and children are being met during the challenges of COVID-19.



Friday formal frock-up turns heads in Maryborough

Fairhaven Aged Care Service in Maryborough have ditched casual Friday for a Friday formal frock-up.

Cards for kindness

Fassifern Retirement Village and Residential Aged Care staff were humbled to receive these incredibly thoughtful gifts from Whitehill Church of Christ. What commenced as a “Cards for Kindness” campaign, an initiative to encourage words of thanks for our staff in Boonah, quickly became a project of love, kindness, and appreciation with the distribution of hand-made cards, gifts, chocolates, hand-crocheted teddies and more.



Queensland Women’s Week

To mark Queensland Women’s Week (6-15 March), many of our staff, churches and members of the community joined our Leadership Lunch to discuss the unique strengths and perspectives women of diverse backgrounds bring to leadership. The lunch featured three outstanding women who shared their leadership journey - Theresa Ruig from Vision Australia, Apande Gong from Youth Housing Project and Maja Vranjkovic from Multicultural Australia.

Dr Christian Rowan MP presented the opening address and shared stories about women who have shaped your leadership journey.



Launchpad

It was great to have some of our senior pastors, ministry workers and chaplains come together at our Kenmore Campus earlier in March for a day of connecting to our story. They delved into our DNA and learnt how they can connect with their community through bringing the light of Christ.



The Coronavirus Killer by Jean Dendle

The following poem titled "The Coronavirus Killer" was written by our resident Jean Dendle at Barcoo Living Multi-Purpose Service in Blackall.

*"We have had all the bad things,
In Australia as of now,
Like-wise floods, fires, droughts
and cyclones,
And we are survivors so far.*

*We weren't to see what else was looming,
Something rather sinister and evil
from agar,
We could not have been prepared,
For this COVID-19. Outbreak killer crisis.*

*We've had Spanish, Sars, Hendra,
Bird flu and A and B,
All influenza, nasty to mankind,
We'll cancel that trip planned to
New York,
Just stay indoors and wear some bling.*

*So anchor down and take good care,
Australia is a wonderful land,
Don't forget what's most important,
Stay in isolation, and wash your hands
and face." ■*

{ Events }

Find us on 

June

- 5 JUNE**
World Environment Day
- 6 JUNE**
Queensland Day
- 15-21 JUNE**
Men's Health Week

July

- 5-12 JULY**
NAIDOC Week
- 17 JULY**
National Pyjama Day

August

- 1-31 AUGUST**
Queensland Seniors Month
- 2 AUGUST**
National Tree Day
- 7 AUGUST**
Aged Care Employee Day
- 3-8 AUGUST**
National Homelessness Week
- 14 AUGUST**
Royal National Agricultural
Show Day Queensland

September

- 1-30 SEPTEMBER**
Dementia Awareness Month
- 6-12 SEPTEMBER**
National Child Protection Week
- 7-11 SEPTEMBER**
Women's Health Week
- 6 SEPTEMBER**
Father's Day
- 10 SEPTEMBER**
RUOK? Day
- 10 SEPTEMBER**
World Suicide Prevention Day

October

- 1-31 OCTOBER**
National Safe Work Month

5 OCTOBER

Queen's Birthday (QLD only)

10 OCTOBER

World Mental Health Day

10-18 OCTOBER

Mental Health Week

11-17 OCTOBER

National Carers Week

11-17 OCTOBER

Anti-Poverty Week

16 OCTOBER

World Food Day

17 OCTOBER

International Day for the
Eradication of Poverty

17-23 OCTOBER

Book Week

23 OCTOBER

Loud Shirt Day

24 OCTOBER-1 NOVEMBER

National Children's Week

30 OCTOBER

Day for Daniel

November

1-30 NOVEMBER

Movember

5 NOVEMBER

International Volunteer
Managers Day

9-15 NOVEMBER

National Road Safety Week

11 NOVEMBER

Remembrance Day

December

24 DECEMBER

Christmas Eve

25 DECEMBER

Christmas Day

26 DECEMBER

Boxing Day

31 DECEMBER

New Year's Eve

Bringing the light of Christ
into communities



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