

mercy foundation®

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WELCOME TO 2011 from the CEO...

As we are all too well aware, it has not been a great start to the new year for many in Queensland, Northern NSW and Victoria. The floods have been devastating and we all wish our neighbours well as they recover and begin on their path to recovery.

One of our close partner organizations on the Australian Common Ground Alliance, Micah Projects in Brisbane, have been very closely involved in evacuations in Brisbane and providing help to many, including the rough sleepers in the city. We wish them the very best over the coming months.

The awful natural disaster that we have so recently witnessed in Australia, as well as being a tragedy of giant proportions, has also served as a reminder of how important home is for all of us. Those who have had to leave their homes and those who have had their homes destroyed – will be looking to re-build or to clean up and move back in as soon as possible. Being homeless, for whatever reason, is a stressful and distressing experience.

Perhaps sometimes we lose sight of this when people are made homeless for other reasons – their own 'private disasters'. However, the result is the same and the solution to it is just the same: Housing solves homelessness.

The Mercy Foundation has now informed all short listed applicants that their full proposal for a Grant to End Homelessness has been extended until mid February. Full applications were due on 31 January. This has been done to ensure that any organisation that may have been adversely affected by the floods had more time to complete its final proposal. I'd also like to take this opportunity to remind small community groups and organisations that applications for small grants from the Mercy Foundation are due by 31 March 2011. See our website for details.

Felicity Reynolds

Thank You...

to all our supporters throughout 2010. We greatly appreciate your support, both financially and in a volunteer capacity, in working towards an end to chronic homelessness for our society's most vulnerable people. A special thank you to Freehills, UBS, Bayview Boulevard, Common Ground NY, Monte Sant Angelo and the Sisters of Mercy North Sydney.



Aussie spirit at it's greatest - Woolloomooloo's homeless emptied their pockets and raised over \$100 for flood victims at a recent event.

2010 in REVIEW IDENTIFYING AND ASSISTING THE MOST VULNERABLE

Solving chronic homelessness for our most vulnerable people continues to be the mission of the Mercy Foundation. Our activities continue to focus on realising this goal.

One of the key activities we were involved with in 2010 was the Vulnerability Index project. It involved surveying rough sleepers on the streets and in shelters and using that data to develop an index of their vulnerability. The result is a list that prioritises chronically homeless people by vulnerability. Armed with this information, service providers are able to locate and assist the most vulnerable of our community to find the housing and support

that they need. We will be continuing to work in partnership during 2011 to encourage additional housing and support opportunities for this group. The first Australian group to run this project was Micah Projects in Queensland with the 50 Lives 50 Homes campaign.

Our friends at Home Ground Services in Melbourne were next to run this project and we coordinated the project in Sydney in November 2010.

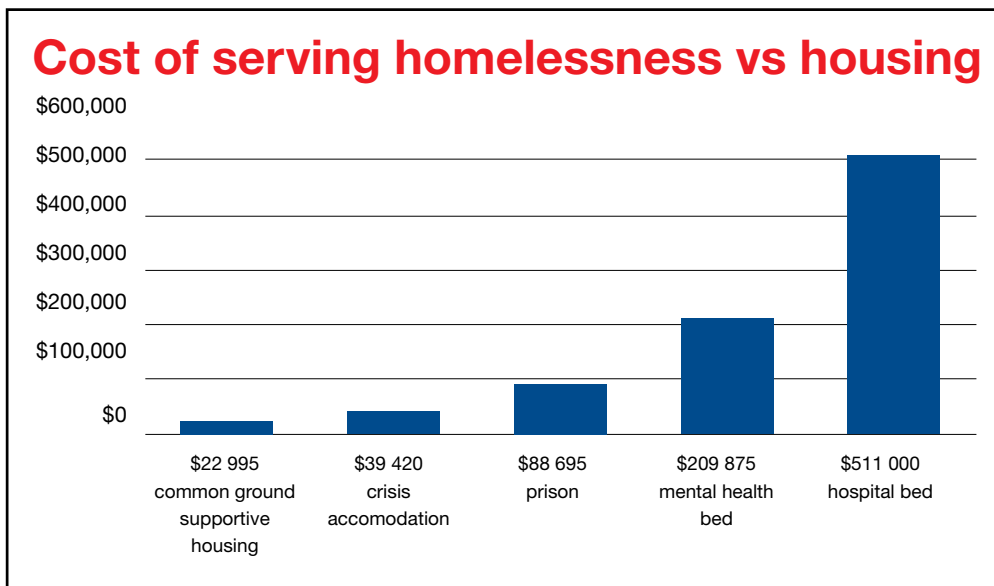


Two volunteers interviewing one of the rough sleepers during Registry Week in Sydney November 2010

Vulnerability Index (VI) Results for Sydney's Registry Week

Of the 262 people surveyed in Sydney, 139 were found to be vulnerable, representing 53% of the sample. The average age of the vulnerable group was 46, and there average time spent homeless was 11 years. These figures are substantially higher than those in the USA. A summary of results can be found on our website www.mercyfoundation.com.au

The VI Results also compared the costs of a year in Common Ground housing versus other crisis and emergency shelters. The graph clearly shows that supportive housing such as Common Ground is the most economic solution. When you combine this fact with the growing bank of evidence that supports the effectiveness of supportive housing in breaking the cycle of homelessness, the solution to ending chronic homelessness is clear— permanent, supportive housing.



[Read more about the Vulnerability Index project and Registry Week on our website.](#)

2010 GRANTS TO END HOMELESSNESS

Our grants to end homelessness program is run annually and awarded to community projects that focus on ending homelessness. In June 2010 we awarded grants to end homelessness to 6 organisations.

Murwillumbah Community Centre

Helping chronically homeless individuals and families find stable housing and support

Newtown Neighbourhood Centre

Assisting chronically homeless people acquire secure housing and helping them address challenges to stay housed.

Guthrie House Providing an outreach service to women who have been involved in the criminal justice system. The service helps them find permanent accommodation

and offers ongoing case management.

Blue Mountains Youth Accommodation Support Service (BMYASS)

Project 40 provides permanent housing and support to individuals and families experiencing homelessness in the Blue Mountains.

Nepean Youth Accommodation Service

An early intervention program to prevent youth entering homelessness and chronic homelessness.



Manager, Wendy Constantine and housing worker Rhonda Robertson of Murwillumbah Community Centre.

The Mercy Foundation is committed to social justice and structural changes, resulting in greater social equity and inclusion in our community. At the heart of all projects and activities is the service of human dignity. Our focus is on ending chronic homelessness for individuals in extreme need and returning dignity to their lives.

HOME in Queanbeyan Update

HOME in Queanbeyan approached the Mercy Foundation for a grant to end homelessness in early 2010. Under this project, 24 hour supported housing is provided to those in the Queanbeyan community with a mental illness and who cannot live independently, are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The project has been strongly supported by local businesses and community groups.

HOME in Queanbeyan opened on 1 July 2010. HOME is made up of 20 self-contained apartments and a community area where lunch is provided each day. There are now 11 people living at HOME in Queanbeyan,

with 7 more referrals for accommodation now approved by the Board. The ages of residents range from 24 up to 64, both male and female. Each resident has a caseworker through the local mental health team. The residents have settled in well, with some already attending TAFE and joining the local gym.

“The provision of long term, supported accommodation for the chronically mentally ill who are presently unable to live with the basic dignity to which every human being is entitled is not simply a ‘good idea’. It is an absolute must”. The Hon. Sir William Deane, Patron, HOME in Queanbeyan.

SYDNEY'S FIRST COMMON GROUND COMMUNITY GETS CLOSER...

Sydney's first Common Ground building is now underway and due for completion later this year. The building will provide 104 self contained units, one and two bedroom apartments, plus on site support services.

The building will bring about an end to homelessness through long term housing and

support for at least 60 homeless people.

Mercy Foundation's CEO Felicity Reynolds was invited to the pouring of the foundations in September 2010. Common Ground communities are already established in Melbourne, Hobart, Adelaide and underway in Brisbane.



Ready to Work's Managing Director, Rachael Hain and Workshop Facilitator Janine Tomlinson.

Ready to Work, Perth

In June 2010, a small grant was awarded to Ready to Work, a not-for-profit charity in Western Australia, to run a series of workshops to assist disadvantaged women to enter or re-enter the work force. The services are provided by a community of Western Australian women who know what it takes to develop confidence, prepare for interviews and employment, to dress for success and to perform to the best of their ability in the workplace and in the broader community.

The workshops are designed to motivate, upskill and inspire women, addressing issues such as self esteem, self confidence, career planning, goal setting and overcoming real and perceived barriers. The first of these

workshops was run in September 2010. Feedback was extremely positive from our attendees with regard to strategies and options to expand their experience and assist them in further obtaining employment.

Upon completion of the workshops, the women were then invited to the Ready to Work premises where they were provided with appropriate work attire and access to mock interviews to practice interview techniques. Once clients enter the workforce, they are eligible to attend career workshops where topics such as finance, budgeting, work etiquette and personal presentation are discussed.

2010 SMALL GRANTS



The Mercy Foundation has a special interest in supporting community initiatives that address social injustices towards women and women with accompanying children

The Mercy Foundation has been supporting community initiatives that address social injustice particularly where women and children are involved for over 20 years. In 2010 we funded the following programs:

- A financial literacy course to assist disadvantaged women in Adelaide
- A holiday program for indigenous children near Katherine, NT.
- A program for women and children who have experienced domestic violence, abuse and neglect
- A camp for indigenous males in the Flinders Ranges to address their physical, mental and spiritual well being.
- A personal development program for children with disabilities from the Chinese community
- Interpreters to assist asylum seeker women in their applications for refugee status.
- An early development program for young

mums and their children in a disadvantaged area of Brisbane to assist in developing literacy, numeracy, social skills and parenting skills.

- A newsletter, translated to Arabic and Dari to inform refugees and asylum seekers about issues and changes that may affect them.

- An art therapy program for disadvantaged women in Victoria to help develop self esteem, confidence, a supportive social network and the rare opportunity to enjoy a creative outlet.

Please note the closing date for our small grants program is 31st March 2011. Application forms are available from our website

THANK YOU TO SCHOOLS

Last year, we asked a number of schools if they could help us with fundraising through our "Key to End Homelessness" Toolkit. In return for a \$5 donation, the donor receives a key pin and a tax deductible receipt.

In 2010, four schools took on the challenge—Mercy College Coburg, Mackillop College

Bathurst, OLMC Parramatta and St Joseph's Mildura. Thank you for your great efforts!



..... OUR VOLUNTEERS

In 2010 we moved premises from Waterloo to North Sydney. With the move, we were fortunate to gain 2 new volunteers, Sr Patricia Barton and Sr Bernadette Mansour, both Sisters of Mercy from the North Sydney congregation. Thank you to both of you for your commitment, encouragement and assistance over the last 6 months or so.

We are also very grateful to the army of volunteers that helped us out during Registry Week. Over 70 volunteers were needed to make this project go ahead. This entailed turning up for a 3.30am start over 3 days. Amazing dedication and enthusiasm. Thank you!!

"A special thank you to Mr Paul Phelps from Mosman Gourmet Meats, who donated a delicious ham for our Christmas Raffle. The Sisters of Mercy North Sydney raised \$700.00 from his timely gift."

congratulations to grocon

Each year, the Mercy Foundation's Social Justice Award is given to a person or organisation that has made a major contribution to addressing homelessness in Australia. In 2010 the Mercy Foundation awarded its Social Justice Award to Grocon, in recognition of its corporate leadership and financial and practical support for Common Ground permanent supportive housing projects throughout Australia.

Grocon built the Common Ground Elizabeth Street development in Melbourne 'at cost' and has pledged the same support to all capital cities. Grocon has also offered a number of positions to homeless and formerly homeless people to work on each of these construction projects. Grocon's commitment to Common Ground is an excellent example of corporate social responsibility.

HOMELESSNESS, Asylum Seekers and Refugees

In 2010, the Mercy Foundation worked with a number of organisations in assisting asylum seekers and refugees. A disturbing new segment of homeless women and children has been identified by both the House of

Welcome and the Asylum Seekers Resource Centre in Melbourne. The House of Welcome estimates that between 75 and 80% of their clients are experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness. Both these NGOs

provide a valuable service, assisting asylum seekers in finding housing and support. The Mercy Foundation has recently supported both these organisations through our small grants program.



Yes, I would like to help the Mercy Foundation in its mission to solve homelessness.

Please complete this form and post it to Mercy Foundation,
40 Rocklands Road North Sydney NSW 2060.

If you would prefer to make a credit card donation, please visit our website to make a secure online donation at www.mercyfoundation.com.au.

Alternatively, call 02 9911 7390 and our staff will process your donation for you.

I would like to donate: \$ _____ Name _____

Postal Address: _____ Postcode _____

Enclosed is my cheque/money order. (Please make cheques payable to Mercy Foundation)

Please contact me about workplace giving, helping out with fundraising or making a Bequest.

I cannot give now but please send me regular updates from the Mercy Foundation.

Donations over \$2 are tax deductible

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 *at the service of human dignity*