

From the CEO

The Mercy Foundation continues to respond to the needs of the day while challenging the structures and systems that perpetuate poverty and disadvantage. Mercy values of compassion, respect, empowerment, justice and dignity inspire and guide us.

Ending homelessness is the key mission of the Mercy Foundation. We intentionally support projects that are evidence-based and focus on marginalised women and people experiencing long term homelessness. Ending homelessness restores hope and dignity and enables people to move on with their lives. Ending homelessness is possible as illustrated by the terrific work of our grant recipients, as noted on this page.

This year marks 10 years since we launched Home in a Box. Home in a Box is not only a practical contribution to help families and individuals to set up their homes after experiencing long term homelessness, it is also respectful and dignifying. Read more about the Home in a Box project on page 3.

The winning entries from the Mercy Youth Awards are now on our website. Please take a moment to view the fabulous artworks. Students were asked to respond to 'what does home mean to me' and their responses and artworks illustrate why home is so important to us all.

I take this opportunity to thank the Mater Hospital Sydney for their generous donation to the Mercy Foundation. We share a long history with the Mater, with common values and origins. This donation will make a significant impact on our work.

Thank you to all our supporters and donors. Your endorsement of our work is greatly appreciated and encouraging. On behalf of all of us at the Mercy Foundation, we wish you a Happy Christmas and may this season fill your heart with peace and joy.

With much gratitude,
Sue Mowbray

Ending homelessness

We commend the efforts of four organisations that are effectively addressing and preventing homelessness through the Grants to End Homelessness program.

Brigid Justice provides assistance to women who are homeless due to domestic violence and unable to obtain their property settlement due to lack of resources. The grant set up a fund which is repaid by women once they receive their settlement. A total of 7 women were assisted by the program, and the fund is now supporting more women to exit homelessness.

Lighthouse Foundation's Young Women's Freedom Program provides safe accommodation and support for girls and young women impacted by early and forced marriage. A grant to help establish a second home to help survivors gain independence is now assisting three young residents.

St Kilda Gatehouse Step Up Program provided women experiencing chronic homelessness with housing and support and a number of other services. A total of 68 women were assisted with housing supports and 28 were assisted into housing.

Bridge for Asylum Seekers Safe Homes Project has assisted 15 women and their children with housing supports. Of that group, 11 women and their children have successfully moved into new accommodation.

Thank You to the Mater Hospital Sydney

We gratefully acknowledge the Mater Hospital Sydney as a major financial supporter of the Mercy Foundation. This donation will help us create more warm and welcoming homes through our Home in a Box program and will enable us to fund more projects that will end or prevent homelessness, address human trafficking and slavery in Australia and support more communities working to address social

justice issues. The Mater has supported the Mercy Foundation over many years, through donations, fundraising, gifts from the Christmas Giving Tree and more. We are sincerely grateful for their generosity and support.



MATER HOSPITAL
A FACILITY OF
ST VINCENT'S
HEALTH AUSTRALIA

May this Christmas Season
BRING PEACE AND JOY TO YOUR
hearts, homes, family and friends.

WE WISH YOU A
Happy Christmas and a joyful 2024!



Social Justice Small Grants

This year the Mercy Foundation supported 11 organisations through the Social Justice Small Grants program. The projects prioritised the growing epidemic of domestic and family violence in Australia, particularly towards women and girls and individuals experiencing inequality, discrimination or marginalisation.

These successful organisations are:

- MHOA (Manufactured Home Owners Association (VIC) Inc.
- Wombat's Wish
- Prison Fellowship
- Strong Mothers
- Bidi Koorliny
- Womens Resource Service
- Australian Young Christian Workers Movement Inc. (YCW) VIC
- Her Space Victoria
- Refugee Advice and Casework Service (RACS)
- Eritrean Families in Hume and the North Inc. (EFHAN)
- Gallipoli Turkish Cultural Foundation

Wombat's Wish

This organisation was awarded a grant to provide a weekend grief camp for young people between the ages of 5 to 17 years following the death of a parent. The project has been completed with 10 children across 6 families attending camps in November 2023. The camp provided support to children who have lost a parent due to mental health issues or violence. The children have lived in domestic violent situations and have complex trauma relating to the violence witnessed. A team of psychologists, mental health workers and counsellors provided support, counselling, and healing to the children over the weekend grief camp. Continued support is offered to the families after the camp.

The Mercy Foundations congratulates all organisations awarded a Social Justice Small Grant on the positive impacts their projects have made on vulnerable individuals in their communities.

Working towards a Restorative Peer Process

Restorative justice addresses the harm of wrong doing and initiates the repair and building of people and relationships. A Social Justice Small Grant awarded to the Bidi Koorliny Aboriginal Corporation helped fund the first stage of setting up the Bidi Warkoolin (Right Way Forward) Restorative Peer Process.

This approach to justice is adapted within a framework of Aboriginal values and customs. The program emphasises the importance of repairing country, family and respect.

The project aimed to empower Noongar people living in a regional town to become more involved in how to provide justice and care in their community. The Bidi Warkoolin project provided the groundwork needed to establish a community-based restorative peer process.

Gallipoli Turkish Cultural Foundation

"Love and Tranquility: Healthy Relationships" program was held for Young CALD Couples in Western Sydney. The project involved a free series of workshops designed to promote healthy relationships and prevent domestic and family violence. It targeted young couples in the 18-34 age group, particularly those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The program was delivered in a highly interactive format and livestreamed for viewers who were unable to make the sessions in person. It was facilitated by a marriage celebrant, relationship coach and an experienced marriage counsellor.

Fifty participants attended the workshops and another 38 participated via the livestream. The resource materials developed for the program will enable more program sessions to be conducted in the future.



Home in a Box



Celebrating 10 years of being at the service of human dignity with our Home in a Box project!

People fall into homelessness for many reasons, but the solution is always the same. Everyone needs a safe, affordable, permanent home, with access to whatever supports are needed to face any challenges that may arise in the future.

Home in a Box was developed in consultation with a young woman who had lived-experience of rough sleeping. She shared the difficulties she experienced when she was finally housed, attempting to settle in and make a home without any possessions. Recognising there was a need to fill this gap, Home in a Box was created. Home in a Box is designed to help people settle into their new home, find routine and restart their lives.

Home in a Box consists of brand new, high quality sheets, towels, a dinner set, glasses, cookware, kitchenware, cutlery, toaster and kettle and dustpan and brush.

Over ten years, with the support of generous donors, we have helped create a home for more than 560 households, consisting of mums and children, single women and men, all of whom had experienced homelessness.

Our regular contact with agencies throughout Sydney reinforces the value and need of the Home in a Box service.

Recently, caseworkers shared the story of a 63 year old woman who was homeless with her cat. The woman had been sleeping rough for over a year, and since engaging with a caseworker and a dedicated team, she was offered a permanent property which she accepted. The woman suffers from complex mental health issues and will continue to be supported into the future.

Another caseworker shared the story of a young Aboriginal single mother with a three year old daughter. She left her home in Queensland over a year ago to escape domestic violence and had since been couch surfing with family. Supported by a caseworker, she signed a lease with a community housing provider and our Home in a Box has helped make a comfortable and welcoming new home.

At our recent end of year celebrations, we were delighted that several caseworkers were able to join us and share first-hand stories of clients that had received a Home in a Box with our Sisters of Mercy and gathered friends. They discussed the positive and lasting impacts Home in a Box brings to the lives of vulnerable and disadvantaged families and individuals leaving homelessness and starting a new life.

Thank you to all our generous donors and suppliers of the Home in a Box project, for helping us establish a welcoming home for more than 500 families and individuals who have experienced homelessness. We greatly appreciate your support



